

**“How We Got the Bible”  
Class Syllabus Summer 2004**

**Purpose of this class:**

The purpose of this course is to explore the origin of the Bible and how it has come to us in its present form. Students will learn about the making of ancient books, the textual bases of the Old and New Testaments, ancient versions of the Bible, and English versions of the Bible. This course heavily relies on Neil R. Lightfoot’s book, *How We Got the Bible*, third edition (Baker, 2003). To get the most out of this course, students are requested to purchase this book.

**Class Requirements**

Students are required to attend class. Three unexcused absences will render students ineligible for a passing grade. Students are excused for illness, death in the family, weather, and church and work related events.

This course will have two take-home, open-note exams, from which grades will be taken. Students desiring a passing grade must pass both exams.

**Class Schedule:**

June 1	Course Introduction The Making of Ancient Books
June 8	The Birth of the Bible
June 15	Manuscripts of the New Testament
June 22	The Canon of Scripture Mid-Term Test Given Out
June 29	The Apocrypha Mid-Term Test Returned
July 6	The Development of the English Bible
July 13	Why Versions Differ I Final Exam Given Out
July 20	Why Versions Differ II Final Exam Returned

**Textbook**

Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible*, Third Edition (Baker 2003).

**Recommended Reading:**

Philip W. Comfort, *The Origin of the Bible* (Tyndale, 1992).

\_\_\_\_\_, *The Quest for the Original Text of the New Testament* (Baker, 1992).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament* (Tyndale, 1990).

Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Baker, 1999).

Kurt & Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Eerdmans, 1989).

Bruce Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, second edition (Oxford, 1968)

\_\_\_\_\_, *The New Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content* (Abingdon, 1965).

\_\_\_\_\_, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (UBS, 1971).

**Books That Evaluate Versions:**

Jack P. Lewis, *The English Bible From KJV to NIV* (Baker, 1981).

\_\_\_\_\_, *Questions You've Asked about Bible Translations* (Resource Pub., 1991).

Wayne Jackson, *The Bible Translation Controversy* (Apologetics Press, 1995, 2002).

Philip W. Comfort, *A Complete Guide to Bible Versions* (Tyndale, 1996).

D. A. Carson, *The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Baker, 1979).

James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy* (Bethany House, 1995).

Wayne Grudem, *What's Wrong with Gender-Neutral Bible Translations?* 1997.

Roy Beacham & Kevin Bauder, *One Bible Only?* (Kregel, 2001).

## The Making of Ancient Books

(Adapted from Neil Lightfoot's chapter in *How We Got the Bible*)

Knowing something of the early history of writing and the origin of ancient books will provide an interesting background for the history of the Bible and at the same time help us understand the situations in which the Word of God had its birth.

### Early Writing

Our Bible is a very old book, but there are many older books. Discoveries in recent times show that writing was a well-established art in many countries long before the beginnings of the Hebrew nation in the land of Palestine. The earliest known examples of writing carry into the ancient land of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Because of the abundance of clay tablets, writing was widespread in Mesopotamia at least by 3000 BC. We know also that Egyptian texts reach farther back and have survived in hieroglyphs on monuments, temples, and tombs.



The best example of an early alphabetic script are the so-called Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions. Consisting of a small group of rock-carved graffiti and dating back to about 1500 BC, these inscriptions are located only about fifty miles from the traditional site of Mount Sinai. At least five different systems of writing are known to have existed in the general area of Syria-Palestine when Moses lived. All this means it can no longer be assumed that it was impossible for Moses to have written the books ascribed to him.

### Writing Materials

1. *Stone*. In almost every region the earliest material on which writing has been found is stone. In Babylonia and elsewhere, legal and religious laws were inscribed and erected for public display. Hammurabi (c. 1750 BC), one of the well-known Babylonian kings, set up his stele (an upright stone monument) in order that any oppressed person might read his 250 laws and be granted justice.

a. Gezer Calendar is a kind of poem having to do with various agricultural activities during the months of the year. Scratched on a small piece of white limestone are twenty words of an early Hebrew alphabetic script, dating (c. 925 BC).

b. The Siloam Inscription (700 BC) was written when Hezekiah had a tunnel constructed to convey water into Jerusalem (2 Kings 20:20; 2 Chron. 32:30). The inscription tells of the completion of the S-shaped tunnel dug from opposite ends.

c. The Moabite Stone was found east of the Dead Sea. Containing 34 lines of "Canaanite" script, written in the ninth century BC, it was erected by King Mesha of Moab to commemorate

his revolt against Israel (2 Kings 3:4-27). It is the only inscription outside of Palestine proper that mentions the Divine Name (YHWH) of Israel's God.



Moabite Stone (930 BC)

“And I took from there the altar-hearths of **Yahweh**, and I dragged them before Chemosh. And the king of Israel built **Jabaz** and dwelt in it while he fought with me and Chemosh drove him out from before me. And I took from Moab two hundred men, all its chiefs, and I led them against **Jahaz** and took it to add unto Dibon.”

The earliest writing material mentioned in the Old Testament is stone, and on it was written the Ten Commandments. “And when He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18; cf. 34:1, 28; Deut. 10:1-5).

2. *Ink on plaster.* Moses had said to the Israelites, “So it shall be on the day when you shall cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones, and coat them with lime and write on them all the words of this law...” (Deut 27:2-3). An Aramaic text (700 BC) from the plaster of a temple wall in the Jordan valley says, “This is the record of Balaam, son of Beor...” (Numbers 22-24). This inscription appears like a column of a scroll.

3. *Clay.* The most common writing material in Mesopotamia was clay. The moist clay was made into tablets, then written upon and baked in an oven or allowed to dry in the sun. This is the kind of material referred to in Ezekiel 4:1 when the prophet is commanded to sketch a plan of Jerusalem on a brick. Clay tablets were so durable that a half million or more of them have survived to modern times.

Clay tablets were written upon in cuneiform (wedge-shaped letters). Tablets were made in all shapes and sizes and were used for all types of literary purposes. Historical texts, often in the shape of a barrel, were placed in the cornerstones of buildings, and clay nails were stuck in the walls, inscribed in the king's name in whose time the building was erected. Tablets were kept in special archive rooms, stored on shelves or in baskets or boxes of clay jars (cf. Jer. 32:14).

- a. Ebla in Syria has a library of some 16,000 tablets—royal edicts and letters, which may date as far back as 2400 BC, are written in cuneiform in the “Eblaite” language.
- b. At Tell-El-Armana, in central Egypt, a native woman found several hundred tablets inscribed in cuneiform. The tablets (from 1350 BC) were official correspondence between the pharaohs of Egypt and rulers in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and other places.
- c. At Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit) in Syria, hundreds of cuneiform tablets were found, dating from about the same time.
- d. The chronicles of a number of kings mentioned in the Old Testament have been preserved on clay tablets:
  - Sargon II (721 BC)
  - Sennacherib details siege of Hezekiah in Jerusalem.
  - Ashurbanipal, known as Osnapper in the Old Testament (Ezra 4:10), boasts that he had learned “the entire art of writing on clay tablets.”
  - Nebuchadrezzar II (Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4:28-30) tells of his vast building.
  - Belshazzar, mentioned in Daniel, left clay cylinders of prayers and tablets on various subjects.

4. *Wood and wax.* The OT makes specific reference to writing on wooden rods and sticks (Num. 17:2-3; Ezek. 37:16-17). In Greek and Roman times a whitened board was used for public notices, and this was called an “album.” At the death of Jesus, the inscription on the cross was probably written on a whitewashed board.

Wooden tablets often had an inlay of wax, which could be written upon or erased as occasion demanded. They could be used singly or fastened together and turned like pages of a book. The Romans called a tablet bound together a codex (plural codices), the term that was later employed for a book with many sheets. Isaiah 30:8 and Habakkuk 2:2 may well refer to these wooden writing boards.

5. *Metal.* Gold as a writing surface is referred to in Exodus 28:36. Cuneiform writings appeared on gold, silver, copper, and bronze. They appeared on plaques or tablets made of these metals. In Greece and Rome government records of treaties and decrees were frequently inscribed on bronze tablets. Roman soldiers, at the time of their discharge received small bronze tablets called “diplomas,” granting them special privileges and citizenship.

Two small, silver amulets worn around the neck contained scrolls with the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. The inscription in old Hebrew letters is from the sixth century BC and is the earliest known that contains the words of Scripture.

6. *Ostraca.* Broken pottery was readily available and was used in antiquity very much as we use scrap paper. Large numbers of ostraca have come from Egypt, representing many stages of its history. Two potsherds have been found with the name of Narmer, the first pharaoh of Egypt (c. 3100 BC), on them. Ostraca as writing surfaces have proved practically indestructible. Twenty-five or more have been found with short passages of the NT inscribed on them. Earlier in the fifth century BC, the people of Athens “ostracized” their citizens by writing the names of those who were to be banished on ostraca.

## The Birth of the Bible

Some Definitions:

**Papyrus:** The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament were on papyrus, a plant found along the Nile River. The manuscripts were copied by hand on scrolls (30ft long and 10 inches wide—average). The columns were usually 3 to 4 inches wide. Scribes often wrote on both sides of the roll. Papyrus was used as a writing material in Egypt as early as 3500 B.C. The earliest extant copies of the New Testament were written on papyrus.

**Codex:** A codex is simply what we know today as a book. Leaves of papyrus were sewn together to make a book with columns of text.

**Vellum or Parchment:** goat or lamb skins processed to be written upon with ink. This process was perfected in the second century B.C. and became the dominant means of preserving the New Testament in the fourth century A.D.

**Uncials:** the word “uncial” refers to a style of writing popular until the ninth century. It is characterized by all capital letters, written large enough to be easily read by a reader in public. It had no spaces between words and usually has no punctuation.

BLESSEDRETHEPOORINSPIRITFORTHEIRSISTHEKINGDOMOFHEAVEN  
BLESSEDARETHOSEWHOMOURNFORTHEYSHALLBECOMFORTED  
BLESSEDARETHEGENTLEFORTHEYSHALLINHERITTHE EARTH  
BLESSED  
ARETHOSEWHO HUNGERANDTHIRSTFORRIGHTEOUSNESSFORTHEYSHALL  
BESATISFIED

**Miniscules:** miniscules are characterized by small letters, written in a cursive style. This style of writing became popular in the ninth century. Its advantage was that more words could fit into the same amount of space.

**Paper:** Paper was not used in the West until the twelfth century. Of the 5,400 known mss of the New Testament, about 1,300 are written on paper.

Before the invention of the printing press in 1462, all of the copies of the New Testament were done by hand. Some of these copies were done by professional scribes in scriptoriums and others were done by amateurs. The early copies we have show that later hands corrected the original writings on the manuscripts.

- Of all 5,480 mss we have of the NT, no two are identical.
- People are not capable of copying a lengthy piece of written material without introducing some errors or variants.
- **Exercise:** Sit down and copy out the Gospel of John (any translation). After you have finished, read it through and correct it. Then give the manuscript to two or three friends and have each of them correct your corrected manuscript.

- Ancient *scriptorium*s often had trained scribes who specialized in copying and correcting the writings of the time. They took pride in accuracy but still made mistakes.
- The Massorettes from the sixth to the tenth centuries AD took great care in reproducing the Old Testament.
- Some NT manuscripts were hand copied by good men whose scribal skills were undeveloped.
- In the earliest period, NT documents were copied either for personal use, for reading in the churches, or for the use of sister congregations.
- Collections of several NT books took time as people traveled from place to place.

### Some General Matters on NT Manuscripts.

1. These Manuscripts consist of two classes: (a) Those written in *Uncial* (or capital) letters; and (b) those written in "running hand", called *Cursives*.
2. It is more to our point to note that what are called "breathings" (soft or hard) and accents are not found in any Manuscripts before the seventh century (unless they have been added by a later hand).
3. **Punctuation** also, as we have it to-day, is *entirely absent*. The earliest two Manuscripts (known as **B**, the Manuscript in the Vatican and **Ⲛ** the Sinaitic Manuscript, now at St. Petersburg) have only an occasional dot, and this on a level with the top of the letters.

The text reads on without any divisions between letters or words until Manuscripts of the ninth century, when (in Codex Augiensis, now in Cambridge) there is seen for the first time a single point which separates each word. This dot is placed in the middle of the line, but is often omitted.

None of our modern marks of punctuation are found until the ninth century, and then only in Latin versions and some cursives.

From this it will be seen that the punctuation of all modern editions of the Greek text, and of all versions made from it, rests entirely *on human authority*, and has no weight whatever in determining or even influencing the interpretation of a single passage. This refers also to the employment of capital letters, and to all the modern literary refinements of the present day.

4. Chapters also were alike unknown. The Vatican Manuscript, makes a new section where there is an evident break in the sense. These are called *titloi*, or *kephalaia*. There are no chapters in **Ⲛ** (Sinaitic). They are not found till the fifth century in Codex A (British Museum), Codex C (Ephraemi, Paris), and in Codex R (Nitriensis, British Museum) of the sixth century.

Chapters are quite foreign to the original texts. The first chapters were made by STEPHEN LANGTON, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in 1227. It follows therefore that our modern chapter divisions also are destitute of Manuscript authority.

5. As to verses. In the Hebrew Old Testament these were fixed and counted for each book by the Massorettes; but they are unknown in any Manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. Verses were first introduced in Robert Stephens' (Estienne) edition, published in 1551 at Geneva.

## ***How We Got The Bible (in Greek)*** **by Clint Brown**

Objective: To concentrate on strengthening our faith in the reliability of the Bible by showing how it has been passed down to us through the centuries. God's providential hand can be seen in various areas through the transmission process. I hope to bring these points out in an effort to under gird our faith in the present text of our Bibles (specifically the New Testament text).

I. By around A.D. 100, God had given all the information to man that He was going to give (**Jude 3; Rev. 22:18-19; II Pet. 1:3**).

A. Immediately upon completion of these writings, copies were necessary (**cf. Col. 4:16; I Thess. 5:27**).

B. The only means of duplication until the fifteenth century (in A.D. 1454 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press) was by manual handwriting.

C. It is by these handwritten copies, handed down through the centuries, that we have the text of the Bible today.

D. The "autographs" (the very documents that were penned by the inspired authors, Paul, Peter, John, Matthew, Luke, etc.) have not been preserved for us today. We have *copies* of the autographs. (We will discuss the importance of this fact later.)

II. The autographs were written in the "Koine" Greek language; the universal language of the Roman world in the first century. The earliest copies of these autographs are, therefore, in this original language.

III. We have noticed that Greek copies are the primary source of our Bibles. However, there are other sources worthy of consideration...

A. *Ancient Versions* – There was not only a need for copies of the Scriptures in the Greek language, but in various other languages as well. (E.g. Syriac, Coptic, Latin, etc.) The ancient *versions* serve as a valuable witness to the New Testament text.

B. *Church "Fathers"* – Several writings by early Christians have survived the centuries. In personal letters and correspondences these Christians often quoted New Testament passages. These quotations are also an important contribution to our biblical text.

C. *Ostraca* – Pieces of pottery used by the poor on which to write the Scriptures.

IV. With all these different sources, how well attested is the Bible? Do we have an adequate amount of these sources to know if we now have the original words of the apostles and prophets of the first century?

A. Let's first consider some other writings of ancient history and their witnesses...

1. The History of Thucydides (400 B.C.) – 8 *manuscripts*
2. Tacitus, a Roman Historian (A.D. 100) – 2 *manuscripts*
3. Gallic Wars – 10 *manuscripts*
4. Homer's "Iliad" – 643 *manuscripts*

B. How does the New Testament compare to these other books of antiquity.

1. There are over 5,000 *Greek manuscripts* of the New Testament available to us today.
2. Over 2,200 *Lectionaries* (Books used in worship that cite the Bible).
3. Ancient Versions – 9,000 *manuscripts* (largely due to the advance of the Roman religion that spread the Latin Vulgate throughout Europe).
4. Church "Fathers" – *ca. 36,000 citations* – scholars say that all but four verses of the entire New Testament text could be reconstructed from the citations of the early Church Fathers alone!
5. *The New Testament is the best attested book of antiquity by far!* - (Mt. 24:35)

VII. We have mentioned that the only means of copying the Scriptures in the early church was by manual handwriting. By this means we have the many manuscript witnesses to the Bible. *But, probably the most significant date in the history of our Bible is AD 1454, when the German, Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press.*

A. This date should serve as a "benchmark" of sorts whenever studying the history of our Bible.

B. Remember two very important dates: These events brought a desire to have the Scriptures translated into the many extant languages. Until this time the Scriptures (at least in Europe) were primarily in Latin, a language that was not the common language of anyone.

1. 1454 – *Printing press invented* – This ushered in a new era of duplication. All dates in Bible History should be viewed in relation to this date. Interestingly, the very first production from the printing press was The Bible (Jerome's Latin Vulgate) in 1456. [This brought a desire to compile a single Greek text]

2. 1517 – *Protestant Reformation begins* – On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the church door in Wittenburg, Germany challenging Eck to debate the errors of Catholicism, thus ushering in a new era in the history of Christendom.

VIII. With the invention of the printing press in A.D. 1454, men decided to compile a single Greek New Testament.

A. Since mass quantities of identical copies of the New Testament could be easily produced, it became necessary to have a single Greek text.

B. One could either (1) choose a single manuscript from the more than 5,000 extant manuscripts and make that the standard text, or (2) compare *all* of the available manuscript evidence and compile a single text. The latter option would surely be more accurate!

C. Needless to say the method of tedious manual handwriting was soon to pass away as the printing press made its way across the world.

## The State of the Greek New Testament

Date	Collector	Number of MSS	Text Type Available
1516	Erasmus	6	Byzantine
1550	Robert Stephanus	12-15	Byzantine, Western
1598	Theodore Beza <i>Textus Receptus</i>	25	Byzantine, Western
1707	John Mill 30,000 changes	78	Byzantine, Western Church fathers
1881	Westcott & Hort	1500 1 papyrus 64 uncials	Byzantine, Western, Alexandrian, Caesarean, Neutral
2004	UBS 4 <sup>th</sup> and Nestle- Aland 27 <sup>th</sup>	5,480 116 papyrii 299 uncials	Byzantine, Western, Alexandrian, Caesarean, Neutral

“While recognizing variants in manuscripts, scholars are reasonably well agreed on what the reading of the bulk of the New Testament should be. The major doctrines of the New Testament about God, Christ, and the church are not based on textually disputed passages. The major duties of man toward God and his fellowman are not solely laid out in textually disputed passages. The questions of which we speak are not new in the church; they have been under debate for centuries; they need not be disturbing to faith.” (Jack Lewis, *Questions You’ve Asked About Bible Translations*, p. 113.)

### The Causes of Error in the Transmission of the Text of the New Testament

#### I. Unintentional Changes

1. Errors arising from faulty eyesight
  - a. scribes with astigmatism
  - b. the free use of abbreviations
  - c. when two lines in an exemplar happened to end with the same word or words a line or passage may be skipped.
  - d. Wrong word division – The earliest Greek copies were written in *scriptio continua* which were manuscripts that did not contain spaces to divide words. In later centuries however, manuscripts were written in minuscule form (similar to our lower case form), which did contain word divisions. While copying from an early manuscript, a scribe would sometimes fail to divide words properly.

(1) For example, GODISNOWHERE could be divided as "God is now here" or "God is no where." ISAWABUNDANCEONTHETABLE could be divided "I saw abundance on the table" or "I saw a bun dance on the table."

(2) **I Cor. 16:22** – μαραναθα- could be rendered...

μαραν\_αθα - "Our Lord has come"

μαρα\_ναθα - same, or "will come"

μαρανα\_θα - "O Lord come!"

e. If two lines on the same page had a similar ending, the scribe could inadvertently skip from the first "ending" to the second "ending" that had the same letters (**Mt. 25:34-46** contains many of the same words).

(1) Omission of words

(2) Repetition of words (probably **Rom. 8:1**)

## 2. Errors arising from faulty hearing

a. errors arising from words that have the same pronunciation (their, there, they're). In Greek, it could be **e@omen, e@wmen** or **wde, ode**. (**Rom. 5:1**; **Luke 16:25**)

b. *itacsim*: the substitution of one vowel or diphthong for another (**hḡaḡ, uḡaḡ**)

c. **I Cor. 13:3** - καθησομαι – "... give my body *to be burned*..." or καυχησωμαι – "... give my body *that I may boast*..."

d. **I Jn. 1:4** - αμων – "*our joy may be made full*" or υμων – "*your joy may be made full*"

e. **Rev. 1:5** - λουσαντι – "*unto Him that loved us, and washed us*..." or λυσαντι – "*unto Him that loved us, and freed us*..."

f. We can identify with this even in the English language. Has anyone ever mistaken "deer" with "dear" or "hart" with "heart"?

## 3. Errors of the mind

a. substitution of synonymns (**ek, apo** or **oti, dioti** or **perizupet**)

b. variations in the sequence of words (**pantej kai ebaptizovto**, in **Mark 1:5** appears as **kai ebaptizovto pantej, kai pantej ebaptizonto**).

c. transposition of letters (**e@abon, e@al on** in **Mark 14:65**).

d. the assimilation of the wording of one passage to the slightly different wording in a parallel passage, which may have been better known to the scribe. This accounts for many of the alterations in the Synoptic gospels. (cf. **Matt. 19:17**; **Mark 10:17**; **Luke 18:18**.)

## 4. Errors of Judgment

a. Scribes were often sleepy or dull-thinking even though well-meaning.

b. Glosses: words or notes standing in the margins of older copies were occasionally incorporated into the text of the new manuscript. (**John 5:4**; **Rom. 8:1**).

c. **Codex 109** has **Luke's** genealogy of Jesus by following the lines across two columns rather than following the columns. Almost everyone is made the son of the wrong father; and God is called the "son of Aram"; "Phares" is the source of the whole race.

d. **II Cor. 8:4-5** – inserted "it is found this way in many copies" as though Paul had wrote it!

e. Copying marginal "notations" into the actual text may account for **Acts 8:37**, **Rom. 8:1b**, etc.

Remember, these copies, versions, citations, etc. were (until A.D. 1450) *hand written* manuscripts and were therefore subject to human mistakes. Imagine sitting down to copy the entire Bible (or N.T. for that matter) without leaving out a word or possibly duplicating a certain word! Therefore, many different variations are found in the vast array of materials we have. These are sometimes called "Textual Variants." This is why we see "Marginal Notes" in our Bibles today.

## II. Intentional Changes

(Though they were often made by scribes in good faith, they often proved very dangerous. Scribes occasionally made changes thinking they were correcting an earlier error.)

### Changes Involving Spelling and Grammar

1. Harmonistic corruptions
  - a. John 19:20 was introduced into Luke 23:38: "It was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek."
  - b. The shorter form of the "Lord's Prayer" in Luke 9:2-4 was made to agree with Matt. 6:9-13. The words of Paul in Acts 9:5-6 were made to conform to Acts 26:14,15.
  - c. At Heb. 12:20 some add the words of Exodus 19:13.
  - d. **Lk. 11:2-4** – was obviously changed to harmonize with **Mt. 6:9-13**.
  - e. **Mt. 19:17** was evidently changed purposefully to agree with the form of Jesus' words as found in **Mk. 10:18**.
3. Addition of Natural Complements and Similar Adjuncts
  - a. "unto repentance" found in Luke 5:32 was added to Matt. 9:13. "Scribes" added to the chief priests in Matt. 16:3. Pharisees added to scribes in Matt. 27:41.
  - b. In Col. 1:23 Paul is a minister. Some later mss. added "preacher and apostle."
  - c. In Gal. 6:17 "Jesus" becomes "Lord Jesus," "Lord Jesus Christ," and "our Lord Jesus Christ."
4. Clearing Up Historical and Geographical Difficulties
  - a. In Mark 1:2 the composite quotation from Malachi 3:1 and Isaiah 40:3 is introduced by the formula, "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet." Later scribes replaced this with the general statement "by the prophets," thinking they mended the error.
  - b. Some scribes attempted to harmonize John 19:14 (about the sixth hour crucifixion) with Mark 15:25 (third hour crucifixion). John uses Roman time (20:19), while Mark is using Jewish. (Note the footnote in NASB.)
  - c. "After three days" of Mark 8:31 changed to "on the third day" by later scribes.
5. Conflation of Readings

(What would a conscientious scribe do when he found that the same passage was given differently in two or more manuscripts which he had before him? Many scribes incorporated both readings in the new copy which they were transcribing. This is characteristic of the Byzantine type of text.)

  - a. Mark 13:11 "do not be anxious beforehand" and "do not practice beforehand" (Luke 11:14) became both.

- b. Acts 20:28 “church of God” and “church of our Lord” became “the church of the Lord and God.”
6. Alterations Made Because of Doctrinal Considerations
- a. Tatian’s Diatessaron contains several textual alterations which lent support to his views.
  - b. Marcion, the heretic, left out all references to the Jewish background of Jesus.
  - c. Luke 1:3 an addition of “and to the Holy Spirit” to agree with Acts 15:28.
  - d. Changes in Luke 2:33, 41,43,48 from “his father” or “his parent” to Joseph so as to support the virgin birth.
  - e. **Lk. 2:33** – to "preserve" the virgin birth of Christ, scribes changed "His father and mother" to "Joseph and His mother."
  - f. **Mk. 9:29** – the addition of "fasting" to "prayer." "Fasting" is also added to **Acts 10:30** and **I Cor. 7:5**.
7. Addition of Miscellaneous Details
- a. Codex Bezae adds several O.T. names to Jesus’ genealogy, destroying Matthew’s intended pattern of fourteen.

While there have been some errors which have crept into the 5,480 MSS of the NT, *we should not be overly concerned*. The significant point is that all uncials and most minuscules have transmitted the NT text with conscientious exactness. All manuscripts of all types completely agree on more than 80 percent of the New Testament text.

**These copyist errors began to be adopted by later copyists.**

## *The Canon of the New Testament*

Date	Event
c. 45-96 A.D.	Books of the New Testament written
2nd century	Codex (modern form factor) of books developed
c. 110 A.D.	Papias refers to the Gospels of Mark & Matthew
c. 125 A.D.	Earliest extant fragment of any part of the New Testament copied (John 18:38) p52
c. 140 A.D.	Gnostic Marcion attempts first canonical list
144 A.D.	Marcion excommunicated
c. 150 A.D.	Justin Martyr refers to Christians gathering together and "the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as time permits"
c. 160 A.D.	Tatian compiles a "harmony" of the four gospels, called the "Diatessaron"
c. 180 A.D.	Christian prisoners in Scilla, Libya, refer to "the books, and letters of a just man, one Paul" as their defense
c. 180 A.D.	Ireneaus confirms four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John
c. 200 A.D.	Muratorian Canon compiled
324 A.D.	Constantine becomes undisputed emperor of the Roman Empire
325 A.D.	Council of Nicea; Eusebius writes his Church History
332 A.D.	Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea is ordered by Constantine to create 50 volumes "on prepared parchment" of the Holy Scriptures
325 - 350 A.D.	Codex Vaticanus created; contains the complete New Testament as we have it today
c. 350 A.D.	Codex Sinaiticus (now in the British Museum) written; contains most of modern day New Testament, plus the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Letter of Barnabas
367 A.D.	Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, writes his Paschal letter, listing the modern day New Testament canon
393 A.D.	Council of Hippo affirms modern day canon
397 A.D.	Council of Carthage affirms modern day canon
c. 400 A.D.	Jerome (A.D. 346-420) translates Bible into common Latin (the "Vulgate"), using the list of Athanasius

### **The Early Church Fathers**

While (as we shall see) it was the fourth century church fathers who created the official New Testament canon (Eusebius, Athanasius, Jerome, etc.), it was the Early Church Fathers of the first, second, and third centuries that laid the groundwork for the fourth century canon. By reading the works of the early (i.e. pre-Nicene Council) fathers, one can get a pretty good picture of which works they considered authoritative by the number of times they quoted from them. And, conversely, which works they did not consider authoritative, because they either did not reference them, or specifically called them into question (Gospel of Truth, Gospel of Thomas, etc.)

It has been estimated by several Biblical scholars (Bruce Metzger and Sir David Dalrymple among them) that the whole New Testament can be reconstructed from references from the Early Church Fathers in the second and third centuries. The following astonishing table, from Josh McDowell's "Evidence That Demands a Verdict" (p. 52), shows 36,289 New Testament references from just seven Early Church Fathers:

Writer	Gospels	Acts	Pauline Epistles	General Epistles	Revelation	Total
Justin Martyr	268	10	43	6	3	330
Irenaeus	1,038	194	499	23	65	1,819
Clement Alex.	1,017	44	1,127	207	11	2,406
Origen	9,231	349	7,778	399	165	17,922
Tertullian	3,822	502	2,609	120	205	7,258
Hippolytus	734	42	387	27	188	1,378
Eusebius	3,258	211	1,592	88	27	5,176
Totals	19,368	1,352	14,035	870	664	36,289

Another valuable clue passed down from the early church was which works were read in worship services. For example, Justin Martyr (c. 150 A.D.) refers to the reading of the "memoirs of the Apostles" (assumedly, the Gospels) during Sunday worship services:

"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things." (Justin Martyr, "First Apology", Chapter 67)

## Forming The Canon

### **Marcion - the first attempt at a canon**

While the books that now comprise the New Testament were in widespread use from the first century, it actually took quite a while to turn them into an official "canon". The first attempt at creating an official list of books for inclusion in the New Testament was by a gnostic shipowner named Marcion (c. 85 - c. 160 A.D.). As a gnostic, Marcion believed that there were two Gods in the universe - the God depicted in the Old Testament, and the God represented by Jesus in the New Testament. To accommodate these (and other) gnostic beliefs, Marcion created a list of books that he considered authoritative, based on his theological views. These included a condensed version of the Gospel of Luke (lacking the Nativity and Resurrection scenes), and 10 of Paul's letters. While the gnostic theology of Marcion was roundly condemned by the Early Church Fathers, his list was the first known attempt at defining a New Testament canon, and it prodded the Early Church Fathers to give greater consideration to those books that should be considered authoritative.

### ***Muratorian Canon (c. 200 A.D.)***

One of the first known attempts by the Early Church Fathers to define a canon (and to refute the list postulated by Marcion) was in a fragmentary list (85 lines) dated to c. 200 A.D., named (after its 18th century discoverer, Lodovico Muratori) the Muratorian Canon. The Muratorian Canon is remarkably similar to our modern day New Testament, lacking only Philemon, Hebrews, James, I Peter, II Peter, and III John. The Muratorian Canon also adds (curiously) the Old Testament Apocryphal book "Wisdom of Solomon", as well as the "Revelation of Peter" (see chapter entitled "Books that almost made the New Testament").

Marcion (c.140)	Irenaeus (c. 180)	Murator Canon (c. 200)	Eusebius (c. 325)	Athanasius (367 A.D.)
	Matthew	(Matthew)	Matthew	Matthew
	Mark	(Mark)	Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke	Luke	Luke	Luke
	John	John	John	John
	Acts	Acts	Acts	Acts
Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
I Cor.	I Cor.	I Cor.	I Cor.	I Cor.
II Cor.	II Cor.	II Cor.	II Cor.	II Cor.
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Ephesians (Laodiceans)	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
I Thess.	I Thess.	I Thess.	I Thess.	I Thess.
II Thess.	II Thess.	II Thess.	II Thess.	II Thess.
	I Timothy	I Timothy	I Timothy	I Timothy
	II Timothy	II Timothy	II Timothy	II Timothy
	Titus	Titus	Titus	Titus
Philemon			Philemon [?]	Philemon
			Hebrews [?]	Hebrews
	James [?]		James [?]	James
	I Peter		I Peter	I Peter
			II Peter [?]	II Peter
	I John	I John	I John	I John
		II John	II John [?]	II John
			III John [?]	III John
		Jude	Jude [?]	Jude
	Revelation of John	Revelation of John	Revelation of John [?]	Revelation of John
	Shepherd of Hermas	Wisdom of Solomon (Apocrypha)		
		Revelation of Peter		

Roy W. Hoover, "How the Books of the New Testament Were Chosen," (*Bible Review*, April 1993).

### **Eusebius (c. 260 - c. 340 A.D.) and his Ecclesiastical History**

Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea, at the request of Emperor Constantine, wrote a church history around the time of the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.). In the preface, he identifies that this is the first Church history ever attempted:

"It is my purpose to write an account of the successions of the holy apostles, as well as of the times which have elapsed from the days of our Savior to our own; and to relate the many important events which are said to have occurred in the history of the Church; and to mention those who have governed and presided over the Church in the most prominent parishes, and those who in each generation have proclaimed the divine word either orally or in writing...This work seems to me of especial importance because I know of no ecclesiastical writer who has devoted

himself to this subject; and I hope that it will appear most useful to those who are fond of historical research." (Eusebius, Book 1, Chapter 1)

In the course of his 400 page work, Eusebius grants the reader several glimpses as to which writings of the New Testament are "accepted", "disputed", and "rejected" at the time of the Council of Nicea. (Note that Eusebius lists the Revelation of John under both the "accepted" and "rejected" columns!) Eusebius also includes a final category, reserved for the writings of heretics - "absurd and impious". It is important to note that Eusebius goes to great pains to draw a distinction between "rejected" books that "although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers" (Shepherd of Hermas, Epistle of Barnabas, Revelation of Peter), and heretical books in the "absurd and impious" category (Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Peter, etc.)

## **Accepted**

"SINCE we are dealing with this subject it is proper to sum up the writings of the New Testament which have been already mentioned. First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels; following them the Acts of the Apostles. After this must be reckoned the epistles of Paul; next in order the extant former epistle of John, and likewise the epistle of Peter, must be maintained. After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the accepted writings." (Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 25)

## **Disputed/Rejected**

"But of the writings of John, not only his Gospel, but also the former of his epistles, has been accepted without dispute both now and in ancient times. But the other two are disputed. In regard to the Apocalypse, the opinions of most men are still divided. But at the proper time this question likewise shall be decided from the testimony of the ancients." (Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 24)

"Among the disputed writings, which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name. Among the rejected writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles [the Didache]; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews, with which those of the Hebrews that have accepted Christ are especially delighted. And all these may be reckoned among the disputed books. But we have nevertheless felt compelled to give a catalogue of these also, distinguishing those works which according to ecclesiastical tradition are true and genuine and commonly accepted, from those others which, although not canonical but disputed, are yet at the same time known to most ecclesiastical writers." (Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 25)

"These things are recorded in regard to James, who is said to be the author of the first of the so-called catholic epistles. But it is to be observed that it is disputed; at least, not many of the ancients have mentioned it, as is the case likewise with the epistle that bears the name of Jude, which is also one of the seven so-called catholic epistles. Nevertheless we know that these also, with the rest, have been read publicly in very many churches." (Eusebius, Book 2, Chapter 23)

## **Absurd and Impious**

"...we have felt compelled to give this catalogue in order that we might be able to know both these works and those that are cited by the heretics under the name of the apostles, including, for instance, such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles, which no one belonging to the succession of ecclesiastical writers has deemed worthy of mention in his writings. And further, the character of the style is at variance with apostolic usage, and both the thoughts and the purpose of the things that are related in them are so completely out of accord with true orthodoxy that they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious." (Eusebius, Book 3, Chapter 25)

### ***Athanasius (c. 296-373 A.D.)***

Athanasius served as the Bishop of Alexandria for 45 years. In 367 A.D. "the thirty-ninth Letter of Holy Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, on the Paschal festival" was written. It contains the New Testament canon as we know it today, in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches:

"...it seemed good to me also, having been urged thereto by true brethren, and having learned from the beginning, to set before you the books included in the Canon, and handed down, and accredited as Divine; to the end that any one who has fallen into error may condemn those who have led him astray; and that he who has continued steadfast in purity may again rejoice, having these things brought to his remembrance."

"Again it is not tedious to speak of the [books] of the New Testament. These are, the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Afterwards, the Acts of the Apostles and Epistles (called Catholic), seven, viz. of James, one; of Peter, two; of John, three; after these, one of Jude. In addition, there are fourteen Epistles of Paul, written in this order. The first, to the Romans; then two to the Corinthians; after these, to the Galatians; next, to the Ephesians; then to the Philippians; then to the Colossians; after these, two to the Thessalonians, and that to the Hebrews; and again, two to Timothy; one to Titus; and lastly, that to Philemon. And besides, the Revelation of John." (Athanasius, "Festal Letter 39")

"These are fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these." (Athanasius, "Festal Letter 39")

Athanasius goes on to describe several other books which, while not canonical, should be read by those "who wish for instruction in the word of godliness". These books include parts of the Old Testament Apocrypha, the second century Didache ("The Teaching of the Apostles"), and the Shephard of Hermas:

"...that there are other books besides these not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness. The Wisdom of Solomon, and the Wisdom of Sirach, and Esther, and Judith, and Tobit, and that which is called the Teaching of the Apostles, and the Shepherd..." (Athanasius, "Festal Letter 39")

## **The Councils of Hippo and Carthage**

The list of the canonical books of the New Testament, published by Athanasius in 367 A.D., was officially adopted by three later councils, including the Council of Hippo in 393 A.D., and the Councils of Carthage in 397 A.D. and 419 A.D.

## Other voices

While the New Testament canon as we know it was set by the end of the fourth century, not everyone since then has totally agreed with its contents. Among the dissenters:

- St. Jerome (c. 342-420 A.D.) translated the Bible into common Latin (the "Vulgate"), a translation used by the Roman Catholic Church for the next 1500 years. In a letter from 414 A.D., Jerome suggested that the Epistle of Barnabas should be included in the canon, since Barnabas was a companion of Paul, and an apostle.
- The modern Syrian Church's canon (called the Peshitta) dates from the 5th century, and lacks II Peter, II & III John, Jude, and Revelation

A number of the Protestant Reformers, including Calvin, Luther, and Zwingli questioned the validity of some of the books of the New Testament canon. Martin Luther, in his preface to the German New Testament in 1522, established a criterion for the canon based on books that "revealed Christ." He referred to the Book of James as "a right strawy epistle", and he wasn't too enamoured with Revelation, Hebrews or Jude, either!

### Concerning the Authority and the Canonization of the New Testament:

#### R. Laird Harris:

"Before the close of the first thirty years after the death of the apostle John, there are three quotations of different New Testament books (including a Gospel) as Scripture, and by twenty years after John's death, three other Epistles of Paul are referred to by name in a manner implying the fullest authority--there is no contradictory voice."1

"With this we conclude the survey of the scanty but precious literature of the first thirty years after the death of the last apostle. And what is the conclusion? Simply that, in a casual but revealing manner, the bulk of the writings of the New Testament were already, in this early age, known and used, as profitable...leaving only the two small Epistles of John and the single chapter of Jude without attestation."2

It is quite striking that the formation of the canon of the New Testament did not consist in the selection by chance or purpose of a few books out of a welter that had early gained recognition. Quite the opposite. There was no large number that gained recognition only to lose it."3

#### FF. Bruce:

"These quotations (passages of the New Testament by Clement, Ignatius, Barnabas, Polycarp, Basilides, Dinysius, and Hegesippus) do not amount to evidence for a New Testament canon; they do show that the authority of the Lord and his apostles was reckoned to be not inferior to that of the law and the prophets. Authority precedes canonicity; had the words of the Lord and his apostles not been accorded supreme authority, the written record of their words would never have been canonized."4

"What has always been believed (or practiced) is the most potent factor in the maintenance of tradition. Suggested innovations have regularly been resisted with the argument 'But this is what we have always been taught' or 'what we have always done.' It was so in the early centuries with the recognition of certain books as holy scripture, and it is still so (whether this is consciously realized or not... if any church leader came along in the third or fourth century with a previously unknown book, recommending it as genuinely apostolic, he would have found great difficulty in gaining acceptance for it: his fellow-Christians would simply have said, 'But no one has ever heard of it!' (We may think for example of the widespread hesitation in accepting 2 Peter.) Or, even if the book had been known for some generations, but had never been treated as Holy Scripture, it would have been very difficult to win recognition for it as such."5

“For many centuries inspiration and canonicity have been closely bound up together in Christian thinking: books were included in the canon, it is believed, because they were inspired; a book is known to be inspired because it is in the canon.”<sup>6</sup>

“The letter to the Hebrews needs no apostle’s name to certify its credentials as an original first-century presentation of significance of the work of Christ as his people’s sacrifice and high priest. ‘Whether then it was I or they,’ says Paul, referring to others to whom the Lord appeared in the resurrection, ‘so we preach and so you believed’ (1 Cor. 15:11)--and his ‘they’ can properly be extended to include all the New Testament writers. With all the diversity of their witness, it is witness to one Lord and one gospel.”<sup>7</sup>

“The New Testament writings provide incontrovertibly our earliest witness to Christ, presenting him as the one in whom the history of the salvation, recorded in the Old Testament, reached its climax. What Hans Lietzmann said of the four gospels in the early church may be said of the New Testament writings in general: ‘the reference to their apostolic authority, which can only appear to us as a reminder of sound historical bases, had the deeper meaning that this particular tradition of Jesus--and this alone--had been established and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit working authoritatively in the Church.’ Within ‘this particular tradition’ different strands of tradition may be recognized, but the church, in earlier and in more recent days, has been more conscious of the overall unity than of the underlying diversity, and has maintained ‘this particular tradition’ over against others which conflict with the New Testament witness but cannot establish a comparable title to apostolic authority.”<sup>8</sup>

“In the canon of scripture we have the foundation documents of Christianity, the charter of the church, the title-deeds of faith. For no other literature can such a claim be made. And when the claim is made, it is made not merely for a collection of ancient writings. In the words of scripture the voice of the Spirit of God continues to be heard.”<sup>9</sup>

“**One thing must be emphatically stated.** The New Testament books did not become authoritative for the Church because they were formally included in a canonical list; on the contrary, the Church included them in her canon because she already regarded them as divinely inspired, recognizing their innate worth and generally apostolic authority, direct or indirect. The first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books were both held in North Africa--at Hippo Regius in 393 and at Carthage in 397--but what these councils did was not to impose something new upon the Christian communities but to codify what was already the general practice of those communities.”<sup>10</sup>

### **B.B. Warfield:**

“The Canon of the New Testament was completed when the last authoritative book was given to any church by the apostles, and that was when John wrote the Apocalypse, about A.D. 98... Certainly the whole Canon was not universally received by the churches till somewhat later. The Latin church of the second and third centuries did not quite know what to do with the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Syrian churches for some centuries may have lacked the lesser of the Catholic Epistles and Revelation. But from the time of Irenaeus down, the church at large had the whole Canon as we now possess it. And though a section of the church may not yet have been satisfied of the apostolicity of a certain book or of certain books; and though afterwards doubts may have arisen in sections of the church as to the apostolicity of certain books (as e.g. of Revelation): yet in no case was it more than a respectable minority of the church which was slow in receiving, or which came afterward to doubt, the credentials of any of the books that then as now constituted the Canon of the New Testament accepted by the church at large. And in every case the principle on which a book was accepted, or doubts against it laid aside, was the historical tradition of apostolicity.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Rene Pache:**

“The fact is that, right from the start, the writings incontestably apostolic were considered as being themselves the Scriptures, and then were added to the already existing sacred books. The first Christians, therefore, did not first of all make a canon of ‘new books,’ of which they only gradually recognized the same divine character and the same authority which the ‘old books’ had.

“They received the new books one after another in the apostolic circle as being just as much the Scriptures as were the older writings. They simply joined them to the already existing collection, until finally the new books thus affixed became numerous enough to be considered as a section of the Scriptures.”<sup>12</sup>

**Eric Sauer:**

“The Church itself had in no way to ‘complete’ or even to create the biblical Canon, but simply to acknowledge it. . . . The Canon of Holy Scripture... was finished and complete from the very first moment when the last New Testament book had come into existence... The decisive factor was the Spirit-wrought authority of the Bible itself... as the result of the divine inspiration.”<sup>13</sup>

**Philip Schaff:**

“The principal books of the New Testament, the four Gospels, the Acts, the thirteen Epistles of Paul, the first Epistle of Peter, and the first of John, which are designated by Eusebius as ‘Homologumena,’ were in general use in the church after the middle of the second century, and acknowledged to be apostolic, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, and therefore authoritative and canonical....

“Concerning the other seven books, the ‘Antilegomena’ of Eusebius, viz. the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Apocalypse, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of James, and the Epistle of Jude,--the tradition of the church in the time of Eusebius, the beginning of the fourth century, still wavered between acceptance and rejection.”<sup>14</sup>

**Kenneth Scott Latourette**

“Only gradually was universal assent given to the twenty-seven books which now comprise the New Testament. Some books were later than others in winning inclusion.... “The first list which has come down to us of the twenty seven books which embraces only those which appear in our New Testament is in a letter written by Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in the year 367. While it was not until long after that date that uniform agreement on the list was found among all teachers in the Catholic Church, by at least the end of the second century a body of writings embracing a majority of the present twenty-seven was being regarded in the Catholic Church as the New Testament and was being placed alongside the Jewish scriptures.”<sup>15</sup>

**R.M. Grant:**

"We have tried to show that while there was considerable dispute in early Christianity over some of the New Testament books, the major writings were accepted by almost all Christians by the middle of the second century. Indeed, soon after the end of the first century we find the Pauline epistles and most of our four gospels well established, not only among the more 'orthodox' but in such Gnostic schools as those of Basilides and Valentinus. ...Historians love novelties and exceptional cases and they do not always pay enough attention to elements of traditional continuity in history. On balance, it would appear that the early history of the Canon, though certainly marked by diversity of judgment, was essentially a slow and gradual process of sifting, ratification, and rejection. In the course of this process, which went on in the continuing life of the Church as a whole, Christians came to recognize that the twenty-seven books now accepted represented classical responses to God's revelation in Christ."<sup>16</sup>

**B.F. Westcott:**

"From the close of the second century the history of the Canon is simple, and its proof clear. It is allowed even by those who have reduced the genuine Apostolic works to the narrowest limits, and from the time of Irenaeus the New Testament was composed essentially of the same books which we receive at present, and that they were regarded with the same reverence as is now shewn to them." <sup>17</sup>

"Thus it is that it is impossible to point to any period as marking the date at which our present Canon was determined. When it first appears, it is present not as a novelty but as an ancient tradition. Its limits were fixed in the earliest times by use rather than by criticism; and this use itself was based on immediate knowledge."<sup>18</sup>

**Jeremy C. Jackson:**

"The sometimes confusing and torturous establishing of the twenty-seven-book New Testament canon does not satisfy our desire for a clear-cut selection. It is nevertheless striking that the very books which were regarded as Scripture from early on and were later accepted definitively in 367 in the East and at the Council of Carthage in 397 in the West--these books turn out after centuries of minute scholarly investigation to be the best and earliest and most authentic records of Christ's life and work."19

**Don Shakelford:**

"Although not all the books were known in one place, all the New Testament books were accepted as divine and authoritative by Christians somewhere. No writing known as apostolic was rejected anywhere. Within one generation after John completed his writings, all twenty-seven books of the New Testament were cited as Scripture by some church leaders. Within two centuries, all but less than a dozen verses of the New Testament were quoted in from three to four thousand citations that are now preserved."20

**W.G. Kummel:**

"The attitude of Christians toward norms of Christian doctrine and Christian life that we found at the end of the apostolic age (i.e., toward the end of the first century A.D.) may be found at the beginning of the postapostolic age as well, especially in the earliest of the apostolic fathers. Side by side and of equal value are the 'Scripture' and the **logoi tou kuriou** or the 'words of the holy prophets' and 'the **evtolh tou kuriou** which has been handed down from the apostles' (1 Clem. 13: Iff., 46:2f, 7f, 2 Pet. 3:2)."21

**Geoffrey W. Bromiley:**

"The authors of the New Testament undoubtedly belonged to the church and to that extent the church undoubtedly created the fact of the canon. Yet inasmuch as these authors played a unique role in composing their writings, the church at large found itself confronted by a quasi-extraneous fact in its encounter with these writings. It gave evidence of this in its awareness that the definition of the canon was not just a matter of giving some of its own productions the preference over others, but rather of the recognition of an authoritative status that some works enjoyed by objective and inherent right. The church had no authority to make its own canon. It had to recognize, endorse, and proclaim a canon that was already there."22

"The Fathers believed without hesitation that God had caused the Bible to be written. They accepted without cavil both its inspiration and its reliability. Where they encountered individual difficulties, they either suspended judgment or sought explanation in a way that would preserve biblical infallibility. Believing that Scripture came from God, they construed it as a coherent and consistent divine message, not abstractly, but in relation to the work of God that had begun in the Old Testament and in accordance with prophetic intimation had reached its climax in the New."23

Endnotes:

- 1 R. Laird Harris, *Inspiration and Canonicity of the Bible* (Zondervan, 1969), p. 209.
- 2 *ibid.*, pp. 208,209.
- 3 Hanis, *Inspiration and Canonicity*, p. 217.
- 4 F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Intervarsity Press, 1988), P. 123.
- 5 Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, pp. 262,263.
- 6 *ibid.*, p. 263.
- 7 *ibid.*, p. 277.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 278.
- 9 *Ibid.*, p.283.
- 10 F.F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* fifth ed. (Eerdmans, 1960), p. 27.
- 11 B.B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Baker, 1970), p. 415.
- 12 Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, trans. Helen I. Needham (Moody, 1969), pp. 179,180 citing B.B. Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, pp. 412,413.
- 13 Eric Sauer, *From Eternity to Eternity*, p. 133, cited in Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, p. 181.
- 14 Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Eerdmans, 1959), 11:517,518.

- 15 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, rev. ed. (Harper & Row, 1975), 1:134.
- 16 R.M Grant, "The New Testament Canon," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, ed. P.R. Ackroyd and C.P. Evans (Cambridge, 1970), 1:308.
- 17 B.F. Westcott, *The Canon of the New Testament*, sixth ed. (Macmillan, 1889), p. 6. 18Ibid., p. 501.
- 19 Jeremy C. Jackson, *No Other Foundation* (Westchester, Ill.:Comerstone Books, 1980), p. 61.
- 20 Don Shakelford ed., *New Testament Survey* (Searcy, Ark.:Resource Publications, 1987), pp. 54,55. 21 W.G. Kummel, *Introduction to the New Testamen*, rev.ed. (Abingdon, 1975), p. 479.
- 22 Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Fathers and Holy Scripture," in *Scripture and Truth*, eds. D.A. Carson and John D. Woodbridge (Baker, 1992), p. 202.
- 23 Ibid., p. 218.

## **The Apocrypha: Inspired of God?**

*by Wayne Jackson*

**Christian Courier: Archives**

The qualified teacher needs to be able to give a reasonable explanation to his Catholic friends for the absence of those seven books in the versions we use.

### **The disputed books**

The “Apocrypha” is a collection of documents, generally produced between the 2nd century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., which were not a part of the original Old Testament canon. The names of these books are: I Esdras, II Esdras, The Rest of Esther, Song of the Three Holy Children, History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, I Maccabees, and II Maccabees. The last seven of these are incorporated into Roman Catholic editions of the Bible. The Catholic Council of Trent (1546) affirmed the canonicity of these books, as found in the Latin Vulgate, and condemned those who reject them.

The title, “Apocrypha,” is a transliterated form of the term *apokruphos*, meaning “hidden.” A plural form of the word is used in Colossians 2:3, where Paul declares that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are “hidden” in Christ. The adjective “apocryphal” has come to be applied to those books that do not bear the marks of divine inspiration. There are several reasons why the Apocrypha is to be rejected as part of the Bible.

### **General Principles**

1. There is abundant evidence that none of these books was ever received into the canon (that which conforms to “rule”) of the Hebrew Old Testament. Though they appear in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament - known as LXX), that is not necessarily a reliable criterion. Professor G.T. Manley notes: “[These books] do not appear to have been included at first in the LXX [3rd/2nd centuries B.C.], but they found their way gradually into later copies, being inserted in places that seemed appropriate...” (**The New Bible Handbook**, Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962, p. 39).
2. The apocryphal books are not in those most ancient works which allude to the Old Testament Scriptures. For example:

(a) Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria (20 B.C. - A.D. 50), wrote prolifically and frequently quoted the Old Testament, yet he never cited the Apocrypha, nor did he even mention these documents.

(b) Josephus (A.D. 37-95) rejected them. He wrote: “We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine...” (*Against Apion* 1.8). By combining several Old Testament narratives into a “book,” the thirty-nine of our current editions become the twenty-two alluded to by Josephus.

(c) The most ancient list of Old Testament books is that which was made by Melito of Sardis (cf. A.D. 170); none of the apocryphal books is included (cf. Eusebius, **Ecclesiastical History** 4.26.14).

(d) In the early 3rd century A.D., neither Origin nor his contemporary, Tertullian, recognized the books of the Apocrypha as being canonical.

(e) Though some of the apocryphal books were being used in the church services by the 5th century A.D., they were read only by those who held inferior offices in the church (see: T.H. Horne, **Critical Introduction to the Holy Scriptures**, Philadelphia: Whetham & Son, 1841, Vol. I, p. 436).

3. The apocryphal books were produced in an era when no inspired documents were been given by God. Malachi concludes his narrative in the Old Testament by urging Israel: “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances.” He then projects four centuries into the future and prophesied: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come...” (Mal. 4:4-5). This text pictured the coming of John the Baptist (cf. Mt. 11:14; Lk. 1:17). The implication of Malachi’s prophecy is that no prophet would arise from God until the coming of John. This excludes the apocryphal writings.

Josephus confirms this when he declares:

“It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time.”

He further says that no one “has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them . . .” (*Against Apion* 1.8).

F.F. Bruce contended that there “is no evidence that these books were ever regarded as canonical by any Jews, whether inside or outside Palestine, whether they read the Bible in Hebrew or in Greek” (**The Books and the Parchments**, London: Pickering & Inglis, 1950, p. 157).

4. Jesus Christ and His inspired New Testament penmen quoted from, or alluded to, the writings and events of the Old Testament profusely. In fact, some 1,000 quotations or allusions from thirty-five of the thirty-nine Old Testament books are found in the New Testament record. And yet, significantly, not once is any of these apocryphal books quoted or even explicitly referred to by the Lord, or by any New Testament writer. Noted scholar Emile Schurer argued that this is really remarkable since most of the New Testament habitually quoted from the LXX (**Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1894, Vol. I, 99).

“Despite the fact that New Testament writers quote largely from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew Old Testament, there is not a single clear-cut case of a citation from any of the fourteen apocryphal books . . . . The most that can be said is that the New Testament writers show acquaintance with these fourteen books and perhaps allude to them indirectly, but in no case do they quote them as inspired Scripture or cite them as authority” (Merrill F. Unger, **Introductory Guide to the Old Testament**, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951, p. 101).

5. Finally, it must be observed that the apocryphal books, unlike the canonical books of the Old Testament, make no direct claims of being inspired of God. Not once is there a, “thus says the Lord,” or language like, “the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.” In fact, some of the documents actually confess non-inspiration! In the Prologue of Ecclesiasticus, the writer states:

“Ye are intreated therefore to read with favour and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have laboured to interpret, we may seem to fail in some of the phrases” (**The Apocrypha**, New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1894).

6. Too, there is the matter of literary style. Dr. Raymond Surburg has written:

“When a comparison is instituted of the style of the Apocrypha with the style of the Biblical Hebrew Old Testament writings, there is a considerable inferiority, shown by the stiffness, lack of originality and artificiality of expression characterizing the apocryphal books” (**The Christian News**, November 24, 1980, p. 7).

### **Evidence negating inspiration**

The Apocrypha contains a great variety of historical, geographical, chronological, and moral errors. Professor William Green of Princeton wrote: “The books of Tobit and Judith abound in geographical, chronological, and historical mistakes...” (**General Introduction to the Old Testament**, New York: Scribner’s & Sons, 1899, p. 195). A critical study of the Apocrypha’s contents clearly reveals that it could not be the product of the Spirit of God. The following examples are ample evidence of this:

1. Rather than the creation being spoken into existence from nothing by the word of Almighty God, as affirmed in the Scriptures (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6-9; Heb. 11:3), the Apocrypha has God creating the world out of “formless matter” (Wisdom of Solomon 11:17).
2. According to the prophet Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem on the tenth day, fifth month, or the nineteenth year of his reign (Jer. 52:12-13). Subsequent to this, both the prophet and his scribe, Baruch, were taken into Egypt (Jer. 43:6-7). According to the Apocrypha, however, at this very time Baruch was in Babylon (Baruch 1:1-2).
3. There are two contradictory accounts of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, that dreaded enemy of the Jews. One narrative records that Antiochus and his company were “cut to pieces in the temple of Nanaea by the treachery of Nanaea’s priests” (II Maccabees 1:13-16), while another version in the same book states that Antiochus was “taken with a noisome sickness” and so “ended his life among the mountains by a most piteous fate in a strange land” (II Maccabees 9:19-29).
4. Tobit is said to have lived 158 years (14:11), yet, supposedly, he was alive back when Jeroboam revolted against Jerusalem (931 B.C.), and then still around when the Assyrians invaded Israel (722/21 BC) a span of some 210 years (Tobit 1:3-5)!
5. The Apocrypha teaches the erroneous doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, suggesting that the kind of body one now has is determined by the character of his soul in a previous life. “Now I was a goodly child, and a good soul fell to my lot; Nay rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled” (Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20). The foregoing was a common belief among heathen peoples, but certainly it is contrary to the biblical view that the soul of man is formed with him at conception (Psa. 139:13-16; Zech. 12:1).
6. The Apocrypha teaches that prayer may be made for the dead. “Wherefore he made the propitiation for them that had died, that they might be released from their sins” (II Maccabees 12:45). Roman Catholics cite this passage to find support for their dogma of praying for the dead to be released from purgatory (obviously there’s no New Testament passage to buttress the notion), but the effort is vain.
7. The Apocrypha suggests that one may atone for his sins by the giving of alms. “It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin” (Tobit 3:9).
8. The moral tone of the Apocrypha is far below that of the Bible. Note some examples:

(a) It applauds suicide as a noble and manful act. II Maccabees tells of one Razis who, being surrounded by the enemy, fell upon his sword, choosing “rather to die nobly” than to fall into the hands of his enemy. He was not mortally wounded, however, and so threw himself down from a wall and “manfully” died among the crowds (14:41-43).

(b) It describes magical potions which are alleged to drive demons away (Tobit 6:1-17).

(c) The murder of the men of Shechem (Gen. 34), an act of violence which is condemned in the Scriptures (cf. Gen. 49:6-7), is commended and is described as an act of God (Judith 9:2-9).

These, along with various other considerations, lead only to the conclusion that the Apocrypha cannot be included in the volume of sacred Scripture.

### **REASONS FOR REJECTING THE APOCRYPHA FROM THE CANON**

(Copied, with minor variations, from the fact sheet distributed by Clyde Woods in a session of Critical Introduction to the Old Testament in the fall of 1986).

- The books were never included in the Hebrew canon.
- Josephus expressly excludes them.
- Philo, the Jewish philosopher in Alexandria (ca. 20 BC – AD 40) quoted the O.T. Scriptures very frequently, yet never quoted the Apocrypha nor even mentioned these books.
- Targums (Aramaic paraphrases) were provided for the canonical books but were not provided for the Apocrypha.
- These books are never quoted in the New Testament
- Most of the Apocrypha material existed and was likely incorporated in Septuagint editions in the New Testament period, yet it is never cited by Jesus or the apostles. The oldest copies of the Septuagint now in existence date from the fourth century AD, plenty of time for them to have been incorporated in later editions.
- NT references rather allude to the commonly accepted Hebrew canon.
- Christian tradition offers no real support for accepting the Apocrypha as canonical.
- These books are not included in the canonical lists of the early centuries.
- Jerome expressly supported the strict Hebrew canon and emphatically rejected the Apocrypha as secondary.
- Books of the Apocrypha were considered suitable for reading and instruction but they were not considered authoritative in the early centuries.
- The Apocrypha bears no internal marks of inspiration.
- No Apocrypha writer actually claims inspiration; indeed, some disclaim it.
- These books contain historical, geographical, and chronological errors.
- Doctrinally, the books at times contradict the canonical Scriptures.
- Stylistically, the books are inferior to the canonical Scriptures.
- Stories in the Apocrypha contain some legendary and fantastic materials.
- The moral and spiritual level is beneath that of the canonical Scriptures.
- Proper dating of the Apocrypha shows its non-canonical character.
- These books were written later than those of the Old Testament.
- Portions of these books even date from the Christian era.

The Apocrypha was first declared canonical by the reactionary Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1546). This conciliar decision was transparently dogmatic. This action was passed by a narrow majority.

### **The Apocrypha is rejected from the canon of Scripture for numerous reasons.**

Besides the fact that Jesus and the apostles never once quoted from it; and aside from its obvious lack of inspiration (it "just doesn't sound like" scripture; "My sheep hear My voice," John 10; etc.) – there are many solid reasons for rejecting its contents from being included with the canonical scriptures. [Much of

the following material comes from Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 125.]

**A. The Apocrypha contains chronological errors and statements contrary to history.**

- Baruch 1:2 (comp. Jeremiah 43:6-7)
- Bel and the Dragon 22 (Xerxes did it); Bel and the Dragon 33
- Tobit 1:4 (Tobit is said to live in Nineveh in 722 BC, and yet he also saw the division of the united kingdom in 931 BC. [1 Kings 12:19-20])
- Esther 11:2-4 (the dates of Mordecai's captivity [597 BC] and dream [485/484 BC] would make him 112 years old)
- 1 Esdras 5:56 has the second year of Cyrus rather than the second year of Darius; in 5:73 Cyrus (c. 530 BC) died more than two years before the reign of Darius (c. 522/521-486 BC.)
- Tobit 1:15 "But when Shalmaneser died, and his son Sennacherib reigned in his place," Shalmaneser died before the fall of Samaria, and Sennacherib was Sargon's son.
- Tobit 14:15 " Before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, and he saw its prisoners being led into Media, those whom King Cyaxares of Media had taken captive." Nineveh's conquerors were Nabopolassar and Cyaxares (612 B.C.).
- Judith 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC) ruled over Babylon after Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC.
- Judith 2:1 Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Babylonians, and Holofernes [v.4] may be from a much later time.
- Judith 4:3-4 and 5:19 Nebuchadnezzar sent the Jews into exile, and they returned under Cyrus (538 BC).
- Bel and the Dragon 33 Habakkuk wrote before 612 BC [Hab. 1:6], making unlikely a visit to Daniel almost 75 years later (539 BC).

**B. It contains geographical errors.**

- Tobit 1:4; 6:1; 9:2 (This was an 11 day journey from Ecbatana to Rages but made to seem shorter.) The Tigris River is west of Nineveh; Persia is east.
- Judith 1:6 Hydaspes, a river in India, is erroneously placed in Mesopotamia.
- Judith 2:21 The 300 miles separating Nineveh and Bectileth makes a 3-day march impossible.
- Judith 2:24 The normal route is south from Cilicia to Damascus, not following the Euphrates River.
- 1 Maccabees 9:2 says "Gilgal" when it should have said "Galilee" (cf. Josephus, Ant. 12:11.1, sections 420-421)

**C. Mistakes**

- Baruch 6:1-3 (Epistle of Jeremiah) 70 years called seven generations
- 2 Esdras 6:42 says that God in creation gathered the waters to a seventh part of the earth, whereas in fact water covers 70% of the earth's surface.
- 2 Esdras 3:1 has Ezra in Babylon 30 years after the fall of Jerusalem, whereas Ezra lived a century later.
- 2 Maccabees 1:19 Persia should be Babylon (2 Kings 24:14)

**D. Many false teachings are represented, and evil practices that the inspired Word of God condemns are condoned.**

1. Prayers for the dead. 2 Maccabees 12:40-45. A post-death visit by Jeremiah in 15:14.
2. Salvation by good works (almsgiving, etc.).
  - Sirach 3:3, 14-15 (kindness to parents atones for sin)
  - Sirach 3:30 (almsgiving atones for sins)

30:11-12 2; Esdras 7:7; 8:33, 36; Tobit 12:9, 8a; 14:11

3. The use of magic.
  - a. In demon exorcism. Tobit 6-8
  - b. In healing. Tobit 11
  - c. "Good luck" (fortune). Sirach 8:19
4. The intercession of angels. Tobit 12:15 (Raphael)
5. Suicide. 2 Maccabees 14:41-46
6. Mourning for the dead. Sirach 38:16-23 (especially verses 20-21)
7. Sinless lives of Old Testament personalities. Prayer of Manasseh 8
8. 2 Esdras 6:55 The Bible never says the world was created for Israel
9. 2 Esdras 8:4-5 possibly suggests the pre-existence of souls

#### **E. Contradictions**

1. 1 Maccabees 4:26-35 contradicts 2 Macc. 10:37-11:12, which puts Lysia's defeat after the death of Timothy.
2. 1 Maccabees 4:30-35 contradicts 2 Macc. 11:6-15, which says it was a negotiated peace.
3. 1 Maccabees 6:8-9 contradicts 2 Macc. 9:5-12, which says that the king was struck with a repulsive physical disease.
4. 2 Maccabees 8:9 contradicts 1 Macc. 3:38-4:25, which says that Gorgias, not Nicanor, was leader.
5. 2 Maccabees 8:13 contradicts 1 Macc. 3:56, which cites other reasons for the troop reduction.
6. 2 Maccabees 10:3 contradicts 1:19-2:1 on how altar fire was restarted and contradicts 1:54 and 4:52, which say 3 years instead of 2.
7. 2 Maccabees 10:37 contradicts 12:2, 18-25, where Timothy reappears (cf. 1 Macc. 5:11-40).
8. 2 Maccabees 11:13-15 contradicts 1 Macc. 4:35, which says that no peace was made.
9. 2 Maccabees 13:16 contradicts 1 Macc. 6:47, which says the Jews fled.

#### **F. Some of the miracles and events described are simply fabulous and silly.**

Tobit 6:2-7, 16-17, etc. (placing incense smoke on the organs of a man eating fish to ward off evil spirits; the demon was in love with the woman and had killed her last seven husbands on their wedding night)

**G. Only three divisions of the Old Testament are described in Luke 24:44. Matthew 23:35** and Luke 11:51 also witness the arrangement and compass of the Old Testament – not allowing for any books outside the time from Genesis to 2 Chronicles. The books of the Apocrypha form no part of the canon, but rather serve as witnesses to life and thought in the inter-testamental period.

## The Problem of So Many English Versions

### Introduction:

1. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic;
  - a. the Old Testament mostly in Hebrew, but parts of Daniel in Aramaic
  - b. the New Testament is written in Greek
  - c. Most of the 68 quotes of the Old Testament found in the New Testament come from the LXX (Septuagint) a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.
2. The LXX began in the third century B.C. when Demetrius of Phaleron, Ptolemy Philadelphus invited Jewish scholars to Alexandria to prepare a Greek translation for the library there. It is reported that seventy scholars worked on it, thus the name “Septuagint.” The LXX was the Greek Bible of the early church.
3. In time, Greek was not the language of most Christians. Consequently, the Bible was translated into Syriac, Ethiopic, Coptic (Egypt), and Latin. Jerome was commissioned to translate the entire Bible into Latin and succeeded amid opposition in 404 A.D.
4. The first English translation came at the hands of John Wycliffe in 1382 A.D. Opposition grew quickly to his translation. The Council of Constance in 1415 ruled that Wyclif’s body be disinterred and burned, and the ashes thrown into the river Swift. Only 300 manuscripts survive of this early translation.
5. In 1453 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press, which greatly reduced the cost of books and greatly assured accuracy and agreement of the copies. This invention along with the Reformation played a part in the demand for a Bible in English vernacular.
6. William Tyndale completed his New Testament in 1525. He said that if God spared his life before long, he would make the boy who drove the plough to know more Scripture than the cleric (priest) did. His New Testaments were first printed outside of England in Cologne and Worms and smuggled into England. Church officials identified his writings with Lutheranism and vigorously opposed their circulation. Tunstal, Bishop of London, claimed to find 3,000 errors in Tyndale’s New Testament. It is estimated that 92 percent of Tyndale’s translation was carried over into the King James Version. Tyndale was condemned and burned at the stake in 1536.
7. Other early English Versions include:
  - a. Coverdale 1535
  - b. Matthew’s Bible 1537
  - c. Great Bible 1539 the first Bible to be authorized by the king of England. But in 1553 the public reading of Scripture was condemned. Church Bibles were confiscated, martyrs abounded.
  - d. Geneva Bible 1560 the first English Bible printed with verses in paragraphs (Calvinism)
  - e. Bishops’ Bible 1568 (Anglican)
  - f. Rheims-Douay 1582 (Catholic)

### I. The King James Bible 1611

1. The KJV was born out of a need to still the voices of critics who had opposed the Bishops’ Bible and out of a need to bring uniformity into a confused situation. The desire was to make one translation out of many good ones, to which men could not justly take exceptions.” (1604)

2. King James himself never contributed any money to its production nor gave us any record of his official authorization of the finished product. In no sense does the word “authorized” refer to Divine authorization.
3. There were perhaps twenty-five New Testament manuscripts known in 1611; 1,500 in 1885; and now 5,480 Greek manuscripts and fragments.
4. The translators were made up of 54 people, of whom we know only 47 names. The preface makes it clear that the translators of 1611 did not claim they were inspired or made a perfect translation.
5. The Council of Trent in 1545 declared the Latin Vulgate to be the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church. The KJV was heavily influenced by Latin.
6. The translators of the KJV anticipated much opposition to their efforts from Catholics and from non-conformists.
  - a. Hugh Broughton declared in 1612 after examining the translation that it was so poorly done that it would grieve him as long as he lived. He insisted that he would rather be tied between wild horses and torn apart than to let it go forth among the people. He contended that the translators had put the errors in the text and the correct readings in the margins.
  - b. In 1629 John Lightfoot objected to the Apocrypha’s being included between the two Testaments.
  - c. printing errors plagued early editions.
  - d. Printing outside of England of the KJV was not permitted until after America had broken away from British rule. The first English Bible printed in America (1782) was the King James Version.
  - e. In time the KJV came to be loved by English speaking people, much because English law demanded that it be used. Its value, however, was that it was easily understood for two centuries by the common man.
5. The current KJV differs in significant details (though not in general content) from the one issued in 1611. Early editions had many printing errors.
  - a. Matt. 26:36 KJV “then cometh Judas” rather than “then cometh Jesus.”
  - b. “Wicked Bible” omitted not in the seventh of the ten commandments.
  - c. “Unrighteous Bible” the “unrighteous inherit the Kingdom”
  - d. “Vinegar” Bible has the parable of the “Vinegar”
  - e. “Ears to Ear” Bible (ears to hear)
  - f. by 1613, as many as 413 changes were made in the KJV
  - g. Dr. Anthony Scattergood added 7,250 marginal reference notes in 1683.
  - h. Bishop Ussher’s chronology was added to the margin in 1701.
  - i. Benjamin Blayney made extensive revisions in 1769 adding 76 notes and 30,495 new marginal references. Spelling and punctuation were modernized.
  - j. Currently, the KJV is not the most completely intelligible to all readers; it is no longer the most accurate and the most readable English rendering of the Word of God.

## II. The Need for Revision

The Oxford English Dictionary recently completed its supplement to the original edition with more than 75,000 entries of words that have come into use in this present century. No one can tell how many words have gone out of use in that same period. Note these examples:

- “Jacob sod pottage.”

- “Lot was sore vexed by the filthy conversation of the people of Sodom”
- “The people could not get to Jesus because of the press”
- “Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray...”
- “Take no thought saying, What shall we eat, or, What shall we drink, or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” (Do you obey this command as stated?)
- “Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles” (1 Pet. 2:12)

The task of translation is on-going not only in English but also in all the languages of the world. The whole Bible has now been translated into 314 languages, and the New Testament into 715. The KJV, the NIV, or the NASB cannot meet the needs of those who do not speak English. Are there inspired translations in languages other than English?

Though some people have at times tried to claim inspiration for the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the KJV, translation is not an inspired activity. There are no perfect translations, old or new. Inspiration did not operate in 1611 or 1901 and then leave all other translations to fallible human activity.

Jack P. Lewis said, “I am quite willing for any person to point out any defect he thinks he sees in any translation, old or new. I reserve the right, however, to make up my own mind about whether I think he is right or wrong, and about whether he is being fair. I insist that he not change yardsticks when he measures the new translations from that which he uses with the old ones. In other words, I am not willing to listen to him when he is examining new translations with microscopic lenses but then puts on blinders when any questions about the old ones come up.” (*Questions You’ve Asked About Bible Translations*, p. 28)

When Erasmus first printed the Greek New Testament in March 1516 in his bilingual Greek and Latin text, he used somewhat carelessly about five manuscripts. None were earlier in date than the twelfth century, and adequate textual criticism was not done at that time to establish the best readings for the printed text. In some instances when the Latin and Greek manuscripts differed with each other and the Greek seemed defective, Erasmus made a Greek translation from the Latin and put that into his printed Greek text. The result is that some of his Greek readings are found in no known Greek manuscript. Erasmus’s Testament went through five editions with corrections and changes made in the process.

The translators of the KJV chiefly used Theodore Beza’s editions of 1588-89 and 1598 of the Greek New Testament. These editions were largely in agreement with the text of Erasmus and Estienne (Robert Stephanus). It is estimated that by 1611 not more than twenty-five manuscripts were used. None of these were earlier than the Middle Ages. Beza’s Testament was later published by the Elzevir brothers, who in a publishing blurb called this the “text now received by all” (*Textus Receptus*). The text remained the standard for two hundred years. In about a dozen places it has readings supported by the Latin Bible but by no Greek manuscripts. The Textus Receptus is more like the text type called Byzantine than the others; yet it is not identical with it, for it rests on only a few of the many manuscripts in the Byzantine grouping.

## **Evaluating the Versions**

Anyone who seeks to fairly evaluate versions should take the time to read the preface or introduction to that version. It is only just that those who labored to bring about a translation or paraphrase have a right to explain what they did and why.

Versions should be judged in part by what they hope to achieve. The CEV, for instance, was written for the ear, as a version to be read aloud in the assembly. The Message, on the other hand, as a paraphrase should be considered more as a commentary. Dynamic equivalent translations begin with a different philosophy of translation than do literal translations. This will account for the change in much of its wording.

The best versions try to achieve two things: accuracy and readability. They want to render faithfully the message of the original writings in a language that the reader can easily understand. This is not an easy task. Sometimes accuracy robs the translation of readability, and sometimes readability robs the translation of accuracy.

## **Four Methods of Translation**

### **Highly Literal**

Often these versions, while highly literal, fail to deal with the various shades of meanings within a word. They also fail to deal adequately with idioms, pun, plays on words, structures, acrostics, and alliteration. Because the source language (Greek or Hebrew) is unlike English, they may appear awkward, strain the English language to the breaking point, and be difficult to read. In some cases they make understanding almost impossible.

### **Modified Literal—Formal Equivalence**

This type of translation is best suited for scholarly work and serious study. It takes into account the form and meaning of the words. It uses more than one word if a word has different shades of meaning or if the receptor language requires it. These versions are often difficult to read for the young, because they are more interested in literally translating than in ease of understanding.

### **Idiomatic—Dynamic Equivalent**

This type of translation demands that the original languages be understood by the reader in the receptor languages. It strives for understandability, sometimes at the sacrifice of accuracy. It has a tendency to interpret rather than to translate. Dynamic Equivalent translations strive to give not only the information of the text but also its ideas and impact. It strives to respect both languages and to make whatever adjustments are necessary to say in the receptor language what has been said in the original. It asks what is the point, the meaning of the text. Occasionally to reach its goals, forms must be changed in the receptor language, which provides a free expression.

### **Unduly Free—Paraphrase**

These loose versions often give information not in the text. They substitute meanings and do not respect the form in the original. A paraphrase is not actually a translation; it is an interpretation. It is the meaning an author assigns to his understanding of the Bible.

## Popular Versions in Current Use

### King James Version (KJV)

The King James Bible has with good reason been termed, "the noblest monument of English prose" (RSV preface). Above all its rivals, the King James Version has had the greatest impact in shaping the English language. It is a literary masterpiece. But, lest anyone wishes to revere it because it was "good enough for St. Paul," we must remember that the King James Bible of today is not the King James of 1611. It has undergone three revisions, incorporating more than 100,000 changes! Further, there are over 300 words in the King James that no longer mean what they meant in 1611. If one wishes to use a Bible that follows the same Greek and Hebrew texts as the King James, use the New King James Version. The KJV was translated from the original languages by committee. Unexcelled in literary quality, although now archaic. Does not reflect the best text base on recent scholarship (some editions give explanatory notes on the text). Translated in 1611 by 47 scholars using the Byzantine family of manuscripts, *Textus Receptus*. Its Elizabethan style Old English is difficult for modern readers, especially youth. This is still a good translation for those who can deal with the language.

### Revised Standard Version (RSV)

The RSV was completed in 1952 and was intended to be a revision of the King James. Of course, it used the ancient MSS of the NT, resulting in the omission of several verses and words. But the wording was still archaic. The RSV attempts to be a word-for-word translation where possible. Debatable whether more a revision of KJV or a fresh translation from the original (by committee). Probably more the latter in NT. Preserves some of KJV sound of "Bible English", but is somewhat modernized. Accused by ultra-conservatives of deliberate "liberal" bias (along with TEV and others) but has weathered the storm and is considered by some church leaders as the best all-purpose translation. Adequate, though not the best for deeper study in author's opinion.

### New American Standard (NASB)

The NASB is something of an evangelical counterpart to the RSV. There are three major differences between the RSV and the NASB: first, the NASB is less archaic in its wording. Second, its translators were more conservative theologically than the RSV translators. Third, because of the translators' desire to adhere as closely to the wording of the original, often this translation is stilted and wooden. Still, the NASB is the best *word-for-word* translation available today. From the original by interdenominational committee. Patterned after American Standard Version of 1901. Literalness, careful work and good notes make it one of the best study Bibles. Translated in 1971 by 58 scholars of the Lockman Foundation, from Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* and Nestle's Greek New Testament 23rd ed., which include the Alexandrian Family codices. Though academic in tone, it is said to be the most exact English translation available. A very good version.

### New International Version (NIV)

The NIV was published in 1978. It is more a phrase-for-phrase translation than a word-for-word translation, and the scholars were generally more conservative. It is perhaps the best phrase-for-phrase translation available today. However, its major flaw is in its simplicity of language. The editors wanted to make sure it was easy to read. In achieving this goal, they often sacrificed

accuracy. Over 100 translators completed this work in 1978 which was composed from Kittel's, Nestle's and United Bible Society's texts, which include the Alexandrian Family codices. This is considered an "open" style translation. It is a good, easy to read version. From the original, by a large interdenominational but conservative committee. Well balanced - good for study, faster reading, or public reading. Based on reliable Greek text. Somewhat inconsistent in modernizing terminology. Pleasing, very readable format (few footnotes). Many feel it will become the most used Bible of the future, especially for evangelicals. NIV provides a good compromise with being faithful to the original form, but adjusting itself for clear understanding as necessary. It rewords idioms in the original languages to make them clear and also converts ancient measures. It is a very popular version.

### **The New King James Version (NKJV)**

130 translators, commissioned by Thomas Nelson Publishers, produced this version from the Byzantine family (*Textus Receptus*) in 1982. This is a revision of the King James version, updated to modern English with minor translation corrections and retention of traditional phraseology. This is a very good version. Though his name is never found in printed copies of this version (at his insistence), Batsell Barrett Baxter was heavily involved as the general editor of the NKJV.

### **Today's English Version (TEV) or Good News Bible (GNB)**

From the original. NT by one man, approved by committee. It is aimed particularly at those for whom English is a second language and those with little formal education. Achieves its goal and is very readable, good format. Translates dynamics well but not dependable for deeper study if used by itself. Can sometimes be offensive.

### **New English Bible (NEB)**

From the original by interdenominational British committee. Exciting literary style, very readable but with distinct British flavor and idiom. Excellent for non-churched. Departures from the original text and too much liberty in certain renderings make it undependable as a study Bible.

### **J.B. Phillips Translation (Phillips)**

From the original but definitely a paraphrase by J.B. Phillips, a competent Greek scholar. More than any other, makes the Bible "live" for educated or literary people, although in British expression. Does not read like a translation. Provokes new insight and understanding which should, however, be checked with more literal translations and by deeper study. Excellent for the educated, unchurched person as well as the thinking Christian.

### **Living Bible (LB)**

LB is a paraphrase done by one man, Kenneth Taylor, by paraphrasing the American Revised Version. It is not a translation as such, but is built on an existing version. Definitely not to be relied on for interpretations or study. It is very easy to read. Kenneth Taylor provides his own warning about the use of paraphrases in the preface. This is not a genuine translation, but is a type of phrase-by-phrase commentary that was originally intended to help the author's own children understand the scriptures. It is useful for inspiration and commentary, but for serious Bible study it should only be used in conjunction with a legitimate translation.

### **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)**

A revision of the Revised Standard Version, it is generally literal and very accurate. The NRSV follows the same principle of translation as the RSV, though has now become more "gender-inclusive" in its approach. At times this is very helpful; at other times, it is misleading.

**God’s Word Translation (GW)**

Published in 1995 by the God’s Word to the Nations Bible Society as a “closest natural equivalent” translation. Its layout is eye-appealing and helpful for outlining. It uses gender-neutral language. Avoids the use of theological terms, which are difficult to understand. Perhaps the best use of the dynamic equivalent format.

**New Century Version (NCV)**

The NCV is designed to be easy to read. It includes glossaries explaining specific Biblical terminology. The NCV is linked strongly to the International Children’s Version and was translated by members of the church of Christ. Other versions done by this same group include the Version for the Deaf and the Easy-to-Read Version.

**Contemporary English Version (CEV)**

The CEV is designed to be easily readable and understandable by modern readers. The language is contemporary English and it follows the dynamic equivalence method. This version was designed to be read aloud to listeners and appeals more to the ear than to the eye.

**The Message (M)**

The Message is a paraphrase done by Eugene Peterson. Unlike Kenneth Taylor of the Living Bible, Eugene Peterson knows Biblical languages and translated from them rather than working from another English version. This version is still very free and often misses the meaning of the text.

**The English Standard Version (ESV)**

The ESV was completed in 2001. The words and phrases themselves grow out of the legacy of versions such as Tyndale, King James, and the Revised Standard. The ESV is an “essentially literal” translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise words of the original text and the personal style of each Biblical writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. The ESV uses as its textual base the Masoretic text found in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the UBS Greek text. Footnotes include textual variants and difficulties.

Highly Literal	Modified Literal Formal Equivalence	Idiomatic Dynamic Equivalence	Unduly Free Paraphrase
Revised 1881 ASV 1901 Young’s Literal Interlinears	KJV, NKJV RSV, NRSV NASB McCord	NEB, NIV TEV GW Contemporary EV New Living	Phillips Living Bible The Message

**Comparing the Versions**

## A study of Matt. 15:7-14

### **Hypocrite (15:7)**

You hypocrites. (NASV, KJV, NIV, NRSV, GW, PH, TEV)  
Hypocrites (NKJV, McC)  
You are hypocrites! (ERV)  
Frauds! (Message)  
Show-offs (CEV)

### **Commandments Of Men (15:9)**

Commandments of men (KJV, NKJV, McC)  
Man-made commandments (TEV)  
Precepts of Men (NASV, PH)  
Human precepts (NRSV)  
Rules taught by men (NIV)  
Rules people have made (ERV)  
Rules made up by humans (CEV, GW)  
Whatever suits their fancy (Message)

### **Hear And Understand (15:10)**

Hear and understand (NASV, KJV, NKJV)  
Listen and understand (NRSV, NIV, ERV, McC, TEV)  
Listen and take this to heart (Message)  
Listen and understand this thoroughly! (PH)  
Pay attention and try to understand (CEV)  
Listen and try to understand (GW)

### **What Comes Out Of The Mouth (15:11)**

what comes out of the mouth (NRSV, KJV, NIV, NKJV, PH, TEV)  
what proceeds out of the mouth (NASV)  
what goes out (McC)  
the things a person says with his mouth (ERV)  
words that come out of your mouth (CEV)  
what you vomit up (Message)

### **Rooted Up (15:13)**

rooted up (NASV, KJV)  
will be uprooted (NRSV, NKJV, GW, McC)  
pulled up by the roots (NIV, ERV, Message, CEV, PH)  
pulled up (TEV)

### **Pit (Abyss) (15:14)**

Pit (NASV, NRSV, NIV, GW, McC,)  
Ditch (KJV, NKJV, Message, CEV, PH, TEV)  
Hole (ERV)

New Revised Standard

<sup>7</sup> You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said:

MT 15:8 "This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; MT 15:9 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines." "

MT 15:10 Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: <sup>11</sup> it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." <sup>12</sup> Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" <sup>13</sup> He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. <sup>14</sup> Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. <sup>n</sup> And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit."

#### King James Version

<sup>7</sup> Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, <sup>8</sup> This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. <sup>9</sup> But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

MT 15:10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: <sup>11</sup> Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. <sup>12</sup> Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? <sup>13</sup> But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. <sup>14</sup> Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

#### New International Version

<sup>7</sup> You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

MT 15:8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. MT 15:9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." "

MT 15:10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand.

<sup>11</sup> What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

MT 15:12 Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

MT 15:13 He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. <sup>14</sup> Leave them; they are blind guides. <sup>n</sup> If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

#### New American Standard Vers.

<sup>7</sup> "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, <sup>8</sup> THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,

BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. <sup>9</sup> BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN."

MT 15:10 And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. <sup>11</sup> "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." <sup>12</sup> Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" <sup>13</sup> But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. <sup>14</sup> "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

#### Easy-To-Read Version

"You are hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he spoke about you, Isaiah said:

These people say they honor me, but they don't really make me an important part of their lives.

Their worship of me is for nothing. The things they teach are only rules that people have made."

Jesus called the people to him. Jesus said, "Listen and understand what I am saying, It is not the things a person puts in his mouth that make him wrong. It is the things a person says with his mouth that make him wrong."

Then the followers came to Jesus and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees are angry because of what you said?"

Jesus answered, "Every plant that my Father in heaven has not planted himself will be pulled up by the roots. Stay away from the Pharisees. They lead the people, but they are like blind men leading other blind men. And if a blind man leads another blind man, then both men will fall into a hole."

#### New King James Version

"Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

This people draws near to Me with their mouth,

And honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

And He called the multitude and said to them, "Hear and understand: Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

## Appendix A

## Some Archaic and Misleading Words Found in the King James Version

*(Jack P. Lewis, Questions You Have Asked About Bible Translations, pp. 280-304)*

KJV	Modern Meaning	Location
Bruit	noise; sound; report	Jer. 10:22; Nahum 3:19
Concourse	assembly	Prov. 1:21; Acts 19:40
Leasing	lies; deceit	Ps. 4:2; 5:6
Straitened	restricted; distressed	2 Cor. 6:12
Bowels	affections	2 Cor. 6:12
Abjects	outcasts	Ps. 35:15
Daysman	arbitrator	Job 9:33
Simple	credulous; apt to believe on slight evidence	Prov. 14:15; 21:11; etc.
Noisome	evil	Ps. 91:3; Ezek. 14:15,21; Rev. 16:2
Savourest not	do not set their minds on	Mt. 16:23; Mk. 8:33
Emulations	envy or jealousy	Gal. 5:20
Astonied	astonished	Ezra 9:3,4; Job 18:20; Jer. 14:9
Wot	know	Gen. 21:26;39:8; 44:15; Ex. 32:1,23
Approve	test; discern	Phil. 1:10
Upward	forward	Hag. 2:15,18
Study	be diligent	1 Thess. 4:11; 2 Tim. 2:15
Gainsayers	those who speak against	Tit. 1:9
Implead	indict	Acts 19:38
Reins	kidneys—used figuratively as the heart is now used	Job 19:27; Rev. 2:23
Convince	convict	Jn. 8:46; 1 Cor. 14:24; Tit. 1:9; Jas. 2:9; Jude 15
Suborned	instigated secretly	Acts 6:11
Honest	excellent	Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; 13:7; Phil. 4:8; 1 Pet. 2:12
Offend	to cause to stumble	1 Cor. 8:13; 2 Cor. 11:29; etc.
Do you to wit	make known to you	2 Cor. 8:1
Minished	diminished	Ex. 5:19; Ps. 107:39
Declined from	turned from	Deut. 17:11; 2 Chron. 34:2; Ps. 119:51, 157
Compass... round about	surround	Gen. 19:4; Job 16:13; Luke 19:43
Suffer	permit	Mt. 24:43; Luke 4:41; 22:51; Acts 14:16; 16:7; 19:30; etc.
Dayspring	daylight; dawn	Job 38:12; Luke 1:78
Espy	examine; search; spy	Gen. 42:27; Josh. 14:7; Jer. 48:19
Forward	to desire	2 Cor. 8:10
Outwent	go there ahead of	Mk. 6:33

Chief estates	leading men	Mk. 6:21
Descry	reconnoiter	Judges 1:23
Coasts	borders; area	Mt. 2:16; 16:13; etc.
Uppermost rooms	chief places	Mt. 23:6; Mk. 12:39; cf. 1 Chron. 4:41; Luke 14:7
By and by	immediately	Mt. 13:21; Mk. 6:25; Luke 17:7; 21:9
Furlong	1/8 mile or 220 yds.	Luke 24:13; Jn. 6:19; 11:18; Rev. 14:20; 21:16
Let	hindered	Rom. 1:13; 2 Th. 2:7
Fell not out by the way	did not quarrel	Gen. 45:24
Neesings	sneezings	Job 41:8
Quick	alive	Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5
Hap	chance; fortune; luck	Ruth 2:3
Tired	attired; adorned	2 Kings 9:30
Crisping pin	pin for curling hair; handbag (RSV)	Isa. 3:22
Sup up	gulp down; consume	Hab. 1:9
Stomacher	clothing	Isa. 3:24
Caul	network cap	Isa. 3:18
Wimple	shawl; turban	Isa. 3:22
Galleries	locks of hair	Song 7:5
Mounts	mounds	Jer. 32:24; 33:4; Ezek. 17:17
Head stone or headstone	chief cornerstone	Ps. 118:22; Zech. 4:7
Cunning	skilled	Ex. 38:23; Song 7:1; Is. 3:3; 40:20
Passengers	passers-by	Prov. 9:15; Ezek. 39:11, 14-15
Imagine	plot evil	Ps. 62:3; 140:2; Prov. 12:20; etc.
Brigadine	coat of mail	Jer. 46:4; 51:3
Habergeon	coat of mail	2 Chron. 26:14; Neh. 4:16
Mad	insane	Acts 12:15; 26:24-25; 1 Cor. 14:23
Deceitfully	negligently	Jer. 48:10
Idol	worthless	Zech. 11:17
Swellings	conceit; arrogance	2 Cor. 12:20
Conversation	behavior	1 Pet. 2:12; 2 Pet. 2:7; 3:11; etc.
Ensample	example	Phil. 3:17; 2 Thess. 3:9; 2 Pet. 2:6
Conversant	to be with; live among	Josh. 8:35; 1 Sam. 25:15
Escheweth	avoids	Job 1:1,8; 2:3; 1 Pet. 3:11
Provoked	stimulated	2 Cor. 9:2
Charity	love	1 Corinthians 13; etc.
Fined	refined	Job 28:1; cf. Prov. 25:4
Shamefacedness	modesty	1 Tim. 2:9
Supple	cleans	Ezek. 16:4
Evil	bad company	1 Cor. 15:33

communications		
Chambering	sexual excess	Rom. 13:13
Sottish	foolish	Jer. 4:22
Howbeit	nevertheless	1 Tim. 1:16; Heb. 3:16
Taber upon	beat upon	Nahum 2:7
Sick of love	lovesick; sick from love	Song 2:5; 5:8
Enssue	pursue	1 Pet. 3:11
Emulation	commendable desire of superiority	Rom. 11:14
Pitiful	full of pity	Lam. 4:10; Jas. 5:11; 1 Pet. 3:8
Communicate	share; give	Gal. 6:6; Phil. 4:14
Simplicity	liberality; generosity	Rom. 12:8
Meetest	the most suitable; fittest	2 Kings 10:3
Grudges	grumbles	Ps. 59:15
Occupiers	traders	Ezek. 27:27
Avouches	acknowledges	Deut. 26:17,18
Hast holpen	has helped	Ps. 86:17
Bewray	expose	Prov. 27:16; 29:24
Careful	anxious; concerned	Lk. 10:41; Phil. 4:6, 10
Be Attent	be attentive	2 Chron. 6:40; 7:15
Bethink thyself	have a change of heart	1 Kings 8:47; 2 Chron. 6:37
High day	much day left	Gen. 29:7
Advised	considered	2 Sam. 24:13; 1 Chron. 21:12
Thoroughly	completely	2 Cor. 11:6; 2 Tim. 3:17
Apt	able, skilled	2 Kings 24:16; 2 Tim. 2:24
Approve	put to the test; examine	Phil. 1:10
Know nothing by ourselves	know nothing against ourselves	1 Cor. 4:4
Unwittingly	without intent	Lev. 22:14; Josh. 20:3,5
An hungered	hungry	Mt. 25:35,37,44; Lk. 6:3
Ought	anything	Jn. 4:33; Acts 4:32; 24:19; 28:19
Hungerbitten	starved; famished	Job 18:12
Suffer	permit	Mt. 19:14; Acts 21:39; 2 Cor. 11:19-20; etc.
Purtenance	inner parts	Ex. 12:9
Bakemeats	baked goods	Gen. 40:17
Liquor	grape juice; wine	Ex. 22:29; Num. 6:3; Song 7:2
Flagons	pitchers with lids	2 Sam. 6:19; 1 Chron. 16:3
Seemly	suitable	Prov. 19:10; 26:1
Hasty fruit	first ripe fruit	Isa. 28:4
Pilled	peeled	Gen. 30:37,38
Brasen	bronze	Ex. 27:4; 35:16; etc.
Collops	bulges; slices	Job 15:27
Bunches of camel	camel humps	Is. 30:6
Bray them	grind them (in a mortar)	Prov. 27:22

Cracknels	cakes	1 Kings 14:3
Cab	about two quarts	2 Kings 6:25
Nitre	soda	Prov. 25:20; Jer. 2:22
Want	lack	Ps. 23:1
Sup	drink	Lk. 17:8; 1 Cor. 11:25; Rev. 3:20
Surfeiting	dissipation (moral looseness)	Lk. 21:34
Satiated	satisfied	Jer. 31:14, 25; 46:10
Broken meat	broken food, fragments	Mt. 15:37; Mk. 8:8
Sufficed	satisfied	Ruth 2:14,18
The press	the crowd	Mk. 2:4; 5:27, 30; Lk. 8:19; 19:3
Cumbrance	problems (NIV); the weight (RSV)	Deut. 1:12
Old cast clouts	old rags	Jer. 38:11-12
Cogitations	thoughts	Dan. 7:28
Mansion	dwelling place	Jn. 14:2
Purged	cleaned	Mt. 3:12; Lk. 3:17; 1 Cor. 5:7
Besom	broom	Is. 14:23
Quarternions	group of four	Acts 12:4
Translate	transfer	2 Sam. 3:10; Col. 1:13; Heb. 11:5
Carriage	luggage	Judg. 18:21; 1 Sam. 17:22; Is. 10:28; 46:1; Acts 21:15
Several	separate	2 Kings 15:5; 2 Chr. 26:21
Cote	pen	2 Chr. 32:28
Joined hard to	next door to	Acts 18:7
Strawed	scattered	Ex. 32:20; 2 Chr. 34:4; Mt. 21:8; 25:24, 26; Mk. 11:8
Gins	snares	Job 18:9; Ps. 140:5; 141:9; Isa. 8:14; Amos 3:5
Flags	water plants	Ex. 2:3
Middlemost	center	Ezek. 42:5,6
Casement	window	Prov. 7:6
Report	good reputation	3 John 12; etc.
Goodman of his house	head of his house	Mt. 24:43; Lk. 12:39
Addicted himself	devoted himself	1 Cor. 16:15
Rereward	rear; rearguard	Num. 10:25; Josh. 6:9,13; Is. 52:12
Much set by	highly esteemed	1 Sam. 18:30; 26:24
Lothe	loathe, be reluctant	Ex. 7:18; Ezek. 6:9; 20:43
Singular	special	Lev. 27:2
Unlades	unloads	Acts 21:3
Fuller	laundryman	2 Kgs 18:17; Is. 7:3; 36:2; Mk. 9:3
Spoil	rob	Mt. 12:29; Mk. 3:27; Col. 2:8
Vesture	clothing	Gen. 41:42; Dt. 22:12; Ps. 22:18; Mt. 27:35; Jn. 19:24
Hosen	trousers	Dan. 3:21

Road	raid	1 Sam. 27:10
Malefactors	criminals	Lk. 23:32-33, 39; Jn. 18:30
Concision	mutilators of the flesh	Phil. 3:2
Earing time	plowing time	Ex. 34:21; cf. Gen. 45:6
Fetch a compass	go around	Acts 28:13
Nave	hub of a vehicle	1 Kings 7:33
Scrip	bag	1 Sam. 17:40; Mt. 10:10; Mk. 6:8
Haled	dragged	Lk. 12:58; Acts 8:3
Untoward	corrupted, perverse	Acts 2:40

### Readings that Provide Misinformation

1. Acts 12:3. The use of the word *Easter* to translate τὸ πάσχα rather than “Passover.” Although Passover and Easter occur at the same time of year, the use of a pagan holiday to refer to a Jewish event is unfortunate and misleading.
2. 1 Corinthians 14 uses the phrase “*unknown tongue*” six times. The use of the italicized word “unknown” has led many to believe that this gift was an ecstatic utterance rather than a foreign language of the day (cf. Acts 2:4, 11). Translators inserted this word into the text, thinking they would bring about understanding, but it led to a false doctrine.
3. The KJV incorrectly translates the word “hades” (ᾍδης) ten times in the New Testament as “hell.” Hades is the netherworld where the departed spirits of dead people go. The word itself means “unseen” and should not be confused with (**geenna**), which properly refers to hell, the eternal lake of fire. Acts 2:27 in the KJV has Jesus in hell rather than in Hades, the unseen realm. If the reading “hell” were to stand in Acts 2:27, this would contradict Jesus’ own statement in Luke 23:43 where He said He would be in Paradise. While “hell” cannot include “Paradise,” the unseen place “Hades” can and does include both a place of comfort and a place of torment.
4. The Anglican translators of the KJV did not translate the Greek terms **baptizw** or **baptisma**. Instead, they transliterated the words into “baptize” and “baptism.” These words, of course, refer specifically to immersing and immersion in water. By transliterating these words rather than translating them, the translators of the KJV avoided the controversy over sprinkling. The KJV translators opened the door for misunderstanding and disobedience to the gospel. It is an unfortunate thing that some modern versions have joined in the deception. It is interesting to note that the *Living Oracles* of Alexander Campbell and Hugo McCord’s *The Everlasting Gospel* translate these words rather than transliterate them.

### Appendix B

## Twelve Basic Rules of Aland/Aland

1. Only one reading can be original, however many variant readings there may be.
2. Only the readings which best satisfies the requirements of both external and internal criteria can be original.
3. Criticism of the text must always begin from the evidence of the manuscript tradition and only afterward turn to a consideration of internal criteria.
4. Internal criteria (the context of the passage, its style and vocabulary, the theological environment of the author, etc.) can never be the sole basis for a critical decision, especially when they stand in opposition to the external evidence.
5. The primary authority for a critical textual decision lies with the Greek manuscript tradition, with the version and Fathers serving no more than a supplementary and corroborative function, particularly in passages where their underlying Greek text cannot be reconstructed with absolute certainty.
6. Furthermore, manuscripts should be weighed, not counted, and the peculiar traits of each manuscript should be duly considered. However important the early papyri, or a particular uncial, or a minuscule may be, there is no single manuscript or group or manuscripts that can be followed mechanically, even though certain combinations of witnesses may deserve a greater degree of confidence than others. Rather, decisions in textual criticism must be worked out afresh, passage by passage (the local principle).
7. The principle that the original reading may be found in any single manuscript or version when it stands alone or nearly alone is only a theoretical possibility. Any form of eclecticism which accepts this principle will hardly succeed in establishing the original text of the New Testament; it will only confirm the view of the text which it presupposes.
8. The reconstruction of a stemma of readings for each variant (the genealogical principle) is an extremely important device, because the reading which can most easily explain the derivation of the other forms is itself most likely the original.
9. Variants must never be treated in isolation, but always considered in the context of the tradition. Otherwise there is too great a danger of reconstructing a "test tube text" which never existed at any time or place.
10. There is truth in the maxim: *lectio difficilior lectio potior* ("the more difficult reading is the more probable reading"). But this principle must not be taken too mechanically, with the most difficult reading (*lectio difficilima*) adopted as original simply because of its degree of difficulty.
11. The venerable maxim *lectio brevior lectio potior* ("the shorter reading is the more probable reading") is certainly right in many instances. But here again the principle cannot be applied mechanically.
12. A constantly maintained familiarity with New Testament manuscripts themselves is the best training for textual criticism. In textual criticism the pure theoretician has often done more harm than good.

Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament*, pp. 275-276.

## Appendix C

**Greek and English are Not the Same!**  
**Philippians 1:12-14**

1:12 *Γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι,*  
To know now you I wish

*ἀδελφοί, ὅτι τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς*  
brothers, that the things about me rather to

*προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν,* <sup>13</sup>  
advance of the gospel has come,

*ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν*  
so as the bonds of me manifest in

*Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ*  
Christ to become in whole the praetorium

*καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πάσιν,* <sup>14</sup> *καὶ τοὺς*  
and to the rest all, and the

*πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ*  
most (majority) of the brothers in Lord

*πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου*  
having trusted by the chains of me

*περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον*  
more exceedingly to dare fearless the word

*τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν.*  
of God to speak.

**Appendix D**

## **The Transmission of the Old Testament Text: The Talmudists and the Masoretes**

The tradition of the Jewish scribes in copying the Old Testament was that of extreme care and adoration for the scriptures. Samuel Davidson, lists the following rules that the Talmudists followed:

- #1 A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals,
- #2 prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew,
- #3 These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals,
- #4 Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex.
- #5 the length of each column must not extend over less than 48 nor more than 60 lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters.
- #6 the whole copy must be first-lined; and if three words should be written without a line, it is worthless.
- #7 the ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color, and be prepared according to a definite recipe,
- #8 An authentic copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least deviate.
- #9 No word or letter, not even a yod, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him.....
- #10 Between every consonant the space of a hair or thread must intervene;
- #11 between every new parashah, or section, the breadth of nine consonants;
- #12 between every book, three lines,
- #13 The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so.
- #14 besides this, the copyist must be in full Jewish dress,
- #15 wash his whole body,
- #16 not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink,
- #17 and should a king address him while writing that name he must take no notice of him.\*

From the above rules and regulations, it is certain that the text, which we have today, is the true Hebrew Text of the Old Testament.

\*Samuel Davidson, *The Hebrew Text of the Old Testament*, p. 89.

### Appendix E

## 2 Tim. 2:15

*spoudason seauton dokimon parastesai to theo,*  
work hard yourself approved to present (the) to god

*ergaten an-epaischunton, orthotomounta ton logon tes aletheias.*  
worker un-ashamed straight-handling the word the of truth.

### Literal

#### NASV

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

#### KJV

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

#### NKJV

Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

#### NRSV

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved by him, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly explaining the word of truth.

### Dynamic

#### NIV

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

#### TEV

Do your best to win full approval in God's sight, as a worker who is not ashamed of his work, one who correctly teaches the message of God's truth.

#### God's Word

Do your best to present yourself to God as a tried-and-true worker who isn't ashamed to teach the word of truth correctly.

### Paraphrase

#### Phillip's

For yourself, concentrate on winning God's approval, on being a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, and who knows how to use the word of truth to the best advantage.

#### Living Bible

Work hard so God can say to you, "Well done." Be a good workman, one who does not need to be ashamed when God examines your work. Know what his Word says and means.

#### The Message

Concentrate on doing your best for God, work you won't be ashamed of, laying out the truth plain and simple.

### Formal Equivalence (Word-for-Word)

This approach seeks to render the original text in a direct, word-for-word English equivalent. Every word of the original language is rendered into its exact English equivalent. If a Hebrew word literally means "kill," the translator will render it "kill" in English.

This approach has the advantage of traditionally being very accurate and true to the text. It adds additional words only when it is necessary to make the English sentence grammatically correct (usually appearing in italics in the English translation). Formal equivalence makes few interpretive assumptions, allowing the reader full liberty in textual interpretation.

But because of its strictness in translation and the changing nature of languages (such as English), there are also drawbacks to the formal equivalence approach. Particular idioms or slang phrases, when rendered into another language and read by another culture thousands of years later, leave the reader at best confused, at worst grossly misdirected.

Imagine, for example, how a man from India could begin to interpret an English phrase such as "that was a piece of cake," or "keep a stiff upper lip." The words of Scripture were composed in vastly different cultures and times than most of those in which they are now read. How could someone separated by thousands of miles and thousands of years from that original culture begin to recognize what slang phrases and figures of speech mean in his own language? If the Indian man read that the test was "a piece of cake," but was not aware of the meaning of the slang phrase, he would be dreadfully confused.

Formal equivalence generally disregards this fact, rendering the phrase in a literal, word-for-word translation. Take, for example, the King James Version's rendering of 1 Samuel 25:34 ...

*For in very deed, as the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hastened and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.*

The Hebrew word *shathan* literally means "to urinate." In this context, though, it is used as a designation for a male. In other words, those who "pisseth against the wall" are Nabal's men - those "who belong to Nabal." David would not have left any of Nabal's men alive had Abigail not come to him and pleaded with him. This, of course, is but one example to prove the point. Though formal equivalence is admirable in translating as exactly as possible, much is often still 'lost in the translation.'

### **Dynamic Equivalence (Thought-for-Thought)**

Like other methods of translating the Bible from its original languages, dynamic equivalence has its advantages and its drawbacks. In dynamic equivalence, the translator seeks to provide a more accurate translation by paying attention to such things as idiom and slang. The translator translates not word for word, but thought for thought, or phrase by phrase.

As with formal equivalence, the goal is of course accuracy. Dynamic equivalence tries to correct the shortcomings of word for word translating by translating not precisely what the original author wrote, but what he most likely meant. An example or two may help clarify. After exhorting Timothy to honor widows and respect elders, Paul writes:

*Give the people these instructions, too, so that no one may be open to blame. [1 Timothy 5:7, NIV]*

This is a thought for thought translation of what the King James Version renders, word for word:

*And these things give in charge, that they may be blameless.*

Though the latter is a more accurate translation of the text, the former gives a more accurate portrayal of what Paul was telling Timothy. "Give in charge" is rendered "give...instructions;" "people" is inserted where it is implied, though the verse contains no explicit Greek word for "people."

Here is another example. After David began to gain popularity in Israel, King Saul grew more and more suspicious of him:

*Saul was very angry, this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David. [1 Samuel 18:8-9, NIV]*

Compare this dynamic equivalence translation of the last sentence with how it is rendered word for word:

*And Saul eyed David from that day and forward. [1 Samuel 18:9, KJV]*

The Hebrew text does not contain an explicit word for "jealous," though *'avan*, "to watch" or "to eye" implies jealousy. In the context of Saul and David's declining relationship, the dynamic equivalence translator determined that including the word "jealous" more accurately described what the original author was intending.

It should be obvious that the dynamic equivalence approach can be both very helpful and very problematic. It is helpful because translating a verse thought for thought very often does provide insight into the author's meaning that would not have been conveyed in a more strict translation. And again, dynamic equivalence also allows the translator to overcome the boundaries of culture and time by translating idioms and slang in a way modern day English speakers can understand.

The biggest problem with dynamic equivalence is the assumptions the translator often makes. The goal is to provide a more accurate rendering of what the original author meant in the way he used words and constructed sentences. The translator will naturally play a more prominent role of interpreter - for who can say for certain what the author meant? Usually, it is implicit in the context of the verse (as in the case of David and Saul, above). But at times, it is not, and the translator may allow himself or herself to make unfounded assumptions about the author's intent.

### **Paraphrase**

The most liberal translation philosophy, the paraphraser often translates from one English version to another, with little or no attention to the original Greek or Hebrew.

Since a paraphrase is further down the spectrum from dynamic equivalence, it shares many of the same strengths and weaknesses - though greatly magnified. The translator has great freedom to portray what he or she believes the original author intended - or, what the original English translator intended. A word or phrase or entire thought may be restated in an entirely new way, so that its meaning is better understood.

At the same time, doing things brings the translator's interpretation to nearly equal ground with the original author's work. There is often little attempt to retain the original author's words, so long as the same ideas are portrayed. The translator becomes interpreter.

Take, for example, this famous passage, as presented in The Living Bible:

*Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. He created everything there is - nothing exists that he didn't make. Eternal life is in him, and this life gives light to all mankind. His life is the light that shines through the darkness - and the darkness can never extinguish it. [John 1:1-5, LIV]*

Compare the New International Version's edition:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

The Living Bible replaces "the Word" (Greek *logos*) with "Christ" and "Jesus Christ" throughout John 1. Although theologically agreeable to all Christians, this move is highly interpretive.

To further see the stylistic liberties that a paraphraser often takes, let's look at another well-known verse in several different translations:

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. [John 1:14, KJV]*

*The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. [John 1:14, NIV]*

*And Christ became a human being and lived here on earth among us and was full of loving forgiveness and truth. And some of us have seen his glory - the glory of the only Son of the heavenly Father! [John 1:14, LIV]*

*The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, generous inside and out, true from start to finish.*

*[John 1:14, The Message]*

The last two translations, both paraphrases, do not translate the passage based on an original Greek manuscript tradition. Instead, they seek to make the passage more readable and easier for a modern audience to understand. This should be one of the goals of every translation, but paraphrases go too far to sacrifice textual accuracy for readability. They ought to rather be considered interpretations of Scripture - much like a commentary - than Scripture itself.

### **Conclusions**

Which translation method is the best? Which is the most accurate? In translating God's Word into our own language, there are two general principles to follow: strict accuracy to the original languages in which the Bible was written, and understandability to those who will read the translation. If a version of the Bible is not accurate to the original, inspired texts, it is less reliable as God's Word. Likewise, if the language is inaccessible to the reading audience, it does just as little good.

Formal equivalence translations push word for word accuracy, but often sacrifice readability. Paraphrases focus on readability, too often sacrificing textual accuracy. For this reason, I find dynamic equivalence to be the best approach for modern Bible translation.

Dynamic equivalence translators usually do a good job of overcoming the barriers of culture and time by clearly translating idioms and figures of speech from Bible times. They usually adhere strictly to the original languages, yet seek to make the original author's intent as clear as possible to the modern reader. In so doing, of course, some dynamic equivalence translations are better than others. Remember that most translations are best placed somewhere along the spectrum - a little closer to formal equivalence, or a little closer to a paraphrase.