

# HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE

Sunday Night Seminar  
Tulsa Christian Fellowship  
January/February 2017

## CAVEAT: WHAT THIS COURSE IS NOT

This is not a course in apologetics – i.e., the veracity of Scripture – can we trust the information in Scripture as being accurate? This is a different topic.

In this study, we will be exploring the authorship of the autographs (the original documents) and how the copies of these autographs were transmitted from generation to generation, resulting in the Bible as we know it in the Twenty-first Century. Should our journey end before the close of our eight-week semester, we will take a cursory look at some apologetics issues as they relate to Scripture.

## WARNING!

**As is done with all medications and recommended medical procedures, we must recognize the potential dangers in undertaking our proposed studies. There may be some side effects.**

In this study, we will be examining the Bible and how it has come to us in its present form. There are risks that we encounter in such a study and so, before we begin, we need to acknowledge the spiritual danger posed by such a study.

### The Danger of a Misdirected Focus

One such risk is the human tendency to focus on things that can be seen, touched, and held in our hands. Often this results in the loss of the proper focus of our lives. The tool, the instrument, the vehicle of communication becomes our focus rather than the reason for its existence and its appropriate place in the scheme of things. Unfortunately, this has happened with Scripture.

As the centuries progressed, many Jews fell into this trap. They related to the writings of Moses, as a legal document, rather than focusing on the one who gave the Law and His reason for imparting it. The Mosaic Law was an expression of the Character of God, as it applied to a specific of people, but also, in principle, to all races. Matthew Chapter 23 and Luke Chapter 11 record Jesus' rebuke of the Pharisees for their failure to keep the motive of the Law in mind, when they scrupulously kept the commandments.

*"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. (Matthew 23:23)<sup>1</sup>*

Jesus insisted that scrupulous observance of the Law was important, instructing them not to neglect such observance. Yet, while carefully obeying the Law, the heart behind the Law and the revelation of the character of the Author of the Law must not be forgotten. Their focus on

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations in this study will be from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 edition (The Lockman Foundation)

the Law as a written legal document occupied their thinking, rather than the person behind the document and how the Law was an expression of His Character. The resulting harsh legalism kept them from knowing the heart of Jehovah God.

This same tendency is seen in some quarters of Christianity when the focus is on the Book, rather than on the Author of the Book. This especially is a danger when we are studying about the Bible, rather than studying the message of the Bible. Yet even when we are practicing sound exegesis, parsing Greek and Hebrew terms, studying syntax, evaluating Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, we are at risk of forgetting that our goal is the desire to know Our Lord more deeply and to perceive accurately His Will. Sadly, I must say that in my own background there was a time in which I, and many of those with whom I associated, insisted that the only way God spoke to us was through Scripture. We were a “people of the book.” The manner in which the Holy Spirit led was through our reading of the Bible. A living relationship with Him was not considered possible. Certainly, the Spirit never would lead us in a direction that contradicts Scripture, for He is the author of Scripture, but we must not allow ourselves to relate to a book – we must crave a deepening relationship with the Author of the Book.

The first verse of a prayer song that often has been used as an introduction to communion expresses this beautifully. Truth is, these words would be an appropriate prayer to be offered before hearing an expository sermon as much as they are an appropriate prayer before receiving communion.

Break Thou, The Bread of Life<sup>2</sup>

Break Thou the Bread of Life, Dear Lord, to me;  
As Thou didst break the loaves beside the Sea.  
Beyond the Sacred Page, I seek Thee, Lord;  
My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word.

Thus, when our studies become just the study of a book, rather than the fulfillment of a passion to hear the Voice of Our Lord through the written record that He has given to us, we have lost our proper focus.

CAVAET: This does not mean that, even to the slightest degree, we should downgrade the authority of the revelation of God and His Will as is recorded for us in Scripture. The Bible is God’s objective revelation of Himself, as opposed to the subjective revelation that is displayed in nature, and the subjective conclusions concerning Him that humans tend to draw from life’s experience.

**The Danger of Losing One’s Trust in the Validity and Accuracy of Scripture**

A second danger is the possibility of losing one’s trust of Scripture, as it is codified in our Twenty-first Century Bibles. This has happened for some who have given scholarly attention to the studies of manuscript transmission and the variances that one must admit exist in these documents. It is clear that even though the autographs (the original documents) may be assumed

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<sup>2</sup> Words by Mary A. Lathbury; tune by William F. Sherwin; *Inspiring Hymns* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Publishing we should in any way

to have been accurate and guided by the Holy Spirit, the transmission of these documents through the centuries has not been without obvious flaws.

Some have argued that if God had inspired the original documents, then He would have kept the manuscript copies of these documents without error. The strongest early proponent of this view was J. W. Burgon (1813-1888). Burgon was the Dean of Chichester, a “High-churchman of the old school.”<sup>3</sup> As an ardent high-churchman he could not imagine that, if the very words of Scripture had been dictated by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,<sup>4</sup> God would have allowed them to be corrupted during the course of their transmission. According to Burgon, it was inconceivable that the Textus Receptus, the textual family that was the basis for the King James Version, could be in need of any revision.<sup>5</sup> One significant flaw in Burgon’s argument is the fact that there are variances even among the manuscripts that comprise the Textus Receptus (a matter that will be considered later in this study).

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Recognizing these dangers, it still is of great profit to the Twenty-first Century Christian to know the means whereby we have obtained the sacred documents that comprise our Bibles – the source of our beliefs, our doctrines, and our standards for godly conduct. We owe a great debt to thousands of those of previous generations who devoted much of their lives to the preservation and distribution of what we appropriately label, The Word of God.

As we proceed in our study, we will examine the authorship of the various books in the Bible, the transmission of biblical literature from one generation to another and from one culture to another, and how books were chosen for inclusion in the canon or for exclusion from the canon. We will conclude with an examination of contemporary versions of the Holy Scriptures.

Before we begin our research in these areas, we will spend a considerable amount of time studying how ancient books were made, because this material is necessary background for our later studies.

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<sup>3</sup> “Burgon’s conservatism can be gauged from a sermon he preached at Oxford in 1884 in which he denounced the higher education of ‘young women as young men’ as ‘a thing inexpedient and immodest.’” Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, Third Edition (New York, Oxford, Oxford Press) 1992, page 135

<sup>4</sup> Burgon accepted the “dictation theory” of inspiration

<sup>5</sup> The King James Only movement looks to Burgon as its scholarly father. Edward F. Hills republished in 1959 Burgon’s 1871 book, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel according to St. Mark Vindicated*. One of the most recent advocates of these views is David W. Cloud. One of Cloud’s best-known works is, *Examining the King James Only Controversy*, (Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, fbns@wayoflife.org). In this document, Cloud seeks to refute James R. White’s, *The King James Only Controversy*, (Minneapolis, Bethany House Publishers, 1995) in which White argues that the modern translations are trustworthy. Another advocate of the King James and a strong foe of all other translations is G. A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (Monroe Falls, Ohio, A.V. Publications, 1993)

Let it be noted that

- the original document, that which was written by the author to which it is ascribed, is called an *autograph*.
- Copies of autographs are called, *manuscripts*.
- A translation of the original language into another language is a *version*.

### THE MAKING OF ANCIENT BOOKS<sup>6</sup>

Palaeography<sup>7</sup> is the study of the forms and processes of ancient handwriting. The making of ancient books – the materials used and how they were assembled – is of primary importance to the question of how we got our Bible. Thus, we begin with a survey of the palaeography of the Bible.

A number of materials were used in ancient times to preserve written communication. Clay tablets, stone, wood, bone, leather, various metals, broken pieces of pottery (potsherds, technically known as *ostraca*) papyrus, and parchment (also known as *vellum*) were used in antiquity to receive writing. Among all of these various materials, the student of the palaeography of Scripture is interested, chiefly, in the last two (especially when involved in the study of the New Testament) but some help is found in scraps of writings on the other elements – especially, notes on ostraca.

In the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, skeptical Bible critics argued that writing was unknown during Moses' lifetime and therefore, he could not have written first five books of the Bible. These critics have been silenced by discoveries made in recent decades revealing that writing was a well-established art, long before the birth of the Jewish nation and Moses' composition of the Pentateuch.

No one knows when or where writing began, but the earliest known examples of writing are found in Egypt and Mesopotamia. As attested by the abundance of clay tablets, writing was widespread in Mesopotamia at least by 3000 BC.

Egyptian texts reach further back in time. Originally, various record-keepers and merchants used pictographs to record information, especially quantities of materials traded and shipped.

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<sup>6</sup> The material from this section, The Making of Ancient Books, is a compilation of material from these sources:

- Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got the Bible* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books) 2003, pages 11-20
- Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament* (New York, Oxford University Press) 1992, pages 3-19
- Andreas J. Kostenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert Plummer, *Going Deeper into Greek* (Nashville, B&H Academic) 2016, pages 17-29
- Mary Bellis, "A Brief History of Writing," <http://inventors.about.com/od/timelines/fl/A-Brief-History-of-Writing.htm>
- Nicole Silvester, "Stylus, Quill, and Pen: The Short History of Writing Instruments," <http://brighthubeducation.com/history-homework-help/123138>
- *Ink*, <https://en.wikipedia.org/W/index.php?title=ink>

<sup>7</sup> Also spelled, *paleography*

Merchants used clay tokens in this manner. Trade tokens have been found that date from around 8500 BC.

In time, pictographs evolved into hieroglyphics. Hieroglyphs are a form of picture writing based on a complicated system of consonants. Some have survived in the hieroglyphs on monuments, temples, and tombs. For some reason, the Egyptians did not take the next step and invent an alphabetic script. Based on what we know at this time, somewhere between Egypt and Mesopotamia, in the area near Syria-Palestine, unknown Semitic people developed the alphabet. The time was at least as early as 1700 BC, and from this first alphabet, all other alphabets derived.

The best examples of an early alphabetic script are the so-called, Proto-Sinaitic Inscriptions. These inscriptions are a small group of graffiti, carved in rock, dating to about 1500 BC. Interestingly, these inscriptions are about fifty miles from Mount Sinai, where Moses and the Israelites camped in 1447 BC. Not only that, at least five different systems of writing are known to have existed in the general area of Syria-Palestine during Moses' lifetime.<sup>8</sup>

### **Stone<sup>9</sup>**

In almost every region, the earliest material containing writing is stone. In Egypt and Mesopotamia, the earliest known inscriptions are on stone. One reason for this, of course, is the durability of stone. In Babylonia, for example, legal and religious laws were inscribed on stone and erected for public display. One of the well-known Babylonia kings, Hammurabi (c.1750 BC), set up his stele (an upright stone monument) so that any oppressed person might read his 250 laws and on that basis, seek justice.

The oldest substantial portions of Hebrew script found in Palestine also are on stone. Two of the best surviving examples are the Gezer Calendar and the Siloam Inscription. The Gezer Calendar is a poetic description of the various agricultural activities during certain months of the year. It consists of twenty words of an early Hebrew alphabetic script, scratched on stone during the lifetime of Solomon (c. 925 BC).

The Siloam Inscription was placed on the wall of the tunnel that King Hezekiah constructed to carry water into the city of Jerusalem (II Kings 20:20; II Chronicles 32:30). The tunnel was dug from opposite ends and the inscription celebrates the completion of the S-shaped tunnel where the diggers, coming from opposite directions, met one another.

Another well-known stone inscription is the Moabite Stone, found in the area east of the Dead Sea. Consisting of thirty-four lines of "Canaanite" script, written in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century BC, it was erected by King Mesha of Moab, to celebrate his revolt against Israel (II Kings 3:4-27). This is the only inscription outside of Palestine proper that mentions the Divine Name (YHWH) of Israel's God.

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<sup>88</sup> D. J. Wiseman, "Archaeology and Scripture," *Westminster Theological Journal*, 33 (1971) pages 138-139; as cited in Neil R. Lightfoot, *How We Got Our Bible* (Grand Rapids, Baker Books) 2003, page 13

<sup>9</sup> Lightfoot, page 13

Of further interest is the fact that the first mention of writing in the Old Testament is Jehovah's inscribing on tablets of stone, the Ten Commandments.

The earliest instruments used for writing on stone would have been a stone of harder consistency than the receptor stone, and then later, a metal stylus of some sort.

Similar to stone as a vehicle for writing, is plaster - probably inscribed with writing done with some form of ink.

*"So it shall be on the day when you shall cross the Jordan to the land which Jehovah your God gives you, that you shall set up for yourself large stones, and coat them with lime<sup>3</sup> and write on them all the words of this law, when you cross over, in order that you may enter the land which Jehovah your God gives you, a land flowing with milk and honey, as Jehovah, the God of your fathers, promised you. (Deuteronomy 27:2-3)*

*just as Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded the sons of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, an altar of uncut stones, on which no man had wielded an iron tool; and they offered burnt offerings on it to Jehovah, and sacrificed peace offerings.<sup>32</sup> And he wrote there on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written, in the presence of the sons of Israel. (Joshua 8:31-32)*

Two inscriptions in plaster have been discovered rather recently. One is of special interest. It is an Aramaic text on the plaster of a temple wall in the Jordan Valley. The first line reads, *This is the record of Balaam, son of Beor...* This clearly is a reference of the biblical Balaam (Numbers Chapters 22-24), but the inscription is important for another reason – its style. It consists of a number of straight lines, and has the appearance of a column of a scroll. Both its upper margin and its left margin are ruled, and its headings are in red. The writing dates to c.700 BC, and thus gives us a glimpse of the appearance of a scroll in Isaiah's lifetime.

### Clay<sup>10</sup>

The most common writing material in Mesopotamia was clay. Moist clay was made into tablets, written upon, and then baked in an oven or allowed to dry in the sun. This is the type of material referenced in Ezekiel 4:1 when the prophet is instructed to sketch a plan of Jerusalem on Brick.

*"Now you son of man, get yourself a brick, place it before you, and inscribe a city on it, Jerusalem." (Ezekiel 4:1)*

Clay tablets are so durable that more than 500,000 of them have survived and have been studied and deciphered in modern times.

Clay tablets were written in cuneiform (wedge-shaped) letters and they came in all shapes and sizes. They were used for all types of literary purposes. Historical texts often were barrel shaped and were placed in the cornerstones of buildings. Clay nails were stuck into walls – the nails contained the king's name at the time of the erection of the building. Long texts were combined in a series of tablets, often requiring many tablets to make a "book." They were kept in special rooms, stored on bookshelves, baskets, boxes, and clay jars.

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<sup>10</sup> Lightfoot, pages 14-15

*"Thus says Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel, "Take these deeds, this sealed deed of purchase, and this open deed, and put them in an earthenware jar, that they may last a long time."  
(Jeremiah 32:14)*

In Ebla, Syria, a library of 16,000 tablets has been unearthed – royal edicts, letters, treatises, hymns to gods, etc. These tablets date as far back as 2400 BC and are written in cuneiform in the “Eblaite” language.

At Tell-el-Amarna, in central Egypt, a native woman found several hundred tablets inscribed in cuneiform from about 1350 BC. They contain the official correspondence between Egyptian pharaohs and rulers in Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia, and other places. At Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit) in Syria, hundreds of cuneiform tablets from the same era have been found.

Other significant clay tablet findings are tablets on which leaders recorded important events. Some of these are:

- Sargon II claims the capture of Samaria (721 BC)
- Sennacherib details the siege of Hezekiah (701 BC)
- Ashurbanipal (known as Osnapper in the Old Testament -Ezra 4:10) declares that he had learned the entire art of writing on clay tablets. It is he who sent out scribes to copy and translate into Assyrian all of the books that they could find. Thousands of these have survived and are housed in the British Museum in London.
- Nebuchadrezzar II (usually known as Nebuchadnezzar) relates how he rebuilt the city of Babylon (Daniel 4:28-30)
- Belshazzar, mentioned in Daniel, left clay cylinder tablets containing prayers and several other subjects.

### **Wood and Wax<sup>11</sup>**

The Old Testament makes specific reference to writing on wooden rods and sticks.

*"Speak to the sons of Israel, and get from them a rod for each father's household: twelve rods, from all their leaders according to their fathers' households. You shall write each name on his rod,<sup>3</sup> and write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi; for there is one rod for the head of each of their fathers' households. (Numbers 17:2-3)*

*"And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, 'For Judah and for the sons of Israel, his companions'; then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, his companions.'<sup>17</sup> "Then join them for yourself one to another into one stick, that they may become one in your hand. (Ezekiel 37:16-17)*

In Greek and Roman times, a whitened board was used for public notices and this was called an “album,” from the Latin word, *alba*, meaning white (in the sense of lusterless). This probably was the sort of plaque placed above the head of Jesus on the cross.

Wooden tablets often had an inlay of wax which could be written upon (with a stylus) and erased if need be. The Assyrians made extensive use of such tablets, as did the Romans. These were “notebooks” and could be used singly, or fastened together so that they could be turned like pages in a book. The Romans called such an arrangement of bound together tablets, a *codex*,

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<sup>1111</sup> Lightfoot, pages 15-16

(plural, *codices*). This term later was employed for a book with many sheets. Isaiah 30:8 and Habakkuk 2:2 possibly refer to such wooden writing boards.

*Now go, write it on a tablet before them And inscribe it on a scroll<sup>12</sup>, That it may serve in the time to come As a witness forever. (Isaiah 30:8)*

*Then Jehovah answered me and said, "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run. (Habakkuk 2:2)*

### **Metal<sup>13</sup>**

Gold, as a writing surface, is referenced in Exodus 28:36

*"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and shall engrave on it, like the engravings of a seal, 'Holy to Jehovah.' (Exodus 28:36)*

Cuneiform writings were made on gold, silver, copper, and bronze. Plaques and tablets were made of these metals. In Greece and Rome, government records of treaties and decrees frequently were inscribed on bronze tablets. Roman soldiers, at the time of their discharge from the army, were presented with small bronze tablets called, "diplomas," which granted them special privileges and citizenship.

Of special interest was the discovery of two small silver scrolls that had been worn as necklace amulets. They are from the Sixth Century BC (Isaiah's era) and are inscribed in old Hebrew Letters. One contains the priestly blessing from Numbers 6:24-26, *Jehovah bless you, and keep you, Jehovah make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; Jehovah lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.*

### **Ostraca**

In contrast to precious metals, ostraca (broken pottery) was a very common writing material. It was used in the same manner that scrap paper is used currently. Large numbers of ostraca have been discovered in Egypt and Palestine, with all sorts of relevant information written on them. Two have been found in Egypt containing the name of Narmer, who was the first Egyptian Pharaoh (c. 3100 BC).

In Palestine, an ostraca has been found with the name of Pekah, who was the King of Israel (c. 735 BC). Another interesting one found in Palestine, dating to about 1100 BC, with some minor differences, contains the Hebrew alphabet of twenty-two letters.

In Samaria, Ostraca have been found that note the goods received in the royal palace in the time of Jeroboam II (c. 750 BC).

The Lachish Ostraca contain letters between an officer at Lachish and a subordinate, when the kingdom of Judah was under attack by Nebuchadnezzar. These letters frequently use the Divine Name, YHWH. One begins, "May YHWH cause my lord to hear tidings of peace."

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<sup>12</sup> NOTE: The NAS here renders the Hebrew term, סֵפֶר , as, *scroll*. The exact nature of how this word should be rendered in this passage is uncertain. It can refer to any medium on which something is written: a document, a missive, a book, a scroll, etc.

<sup>13</sup> Lightfoot, page 16



In the Fifth Century BC, the people of Athens “ostracized” unpopular fellow citizens by writing on ostraca the names of those to be banished from the city.

Ostraca have proven to be almost indestructible. More than twenty-five have been found with short passages of the New Testament written on them.

### **Papyrus<sup>14</sup>**

The manufacture of papyrus was a flourishing business in Egypt. The papyrus plant grew plentifully in the shallow waters of the Nile delta.<sup>15</sup> Job 8:11 contains the query, *Can papyrus grow where there is no marsh?* The papyrus plant grew to a height of 12 to 15 feet. In cross-section, the plant was triangular and about as thick as a man’s wrist.

When the plant was used to make the writing material known by the plant’s name, *papyrus*, the stalk was cut into sections of about one foot long. Then each section was split open lengthwise and the pith, which consisted of fibres, was cut into thin strips. A layer of these strips was placed on a flat surface, with all of the fibres running in the same direction (horizontally or vertically). On top of this layer, was placed another layer with the fibres running at right angles to the first layer. A flat press was placed on top the fibres and they were pressed together until they formed one fabric. This produced a fabric that had the strength nearly equal to the best paper produced today. Over the centuries, the fabric often became so brittle that it could be crumbled into powder (See ADDENDUM A for a picture of ancient writing materials).

A vocabulary of terms has descended from the once-flourishing papyrus world.

- The term, *papyrus*, is the origin of our term, *paper*.
- The Greek term, *chartes* (Latin, *charta*) denotes a sheet of papyrus, from which we derive the English term, *chart*.
- The Greek term, *biblos*, is another term for papyrus, *biblion*, was the ordinary word for a papyrus roll. This is the origin of the English term, *book*, and even more closely related, *Bible*.

### **Parchment<sup>16</sup>**

The manufacture of parchment for writing purposes has an interesting story (probably a legend) associated with it. According to Pliny the Elder,<sup>17</sup> it was King Eumenes of Pergamum, a city in Mysia (in Asia Minor) who promoted the preparation and use of parchment. Eumenes (probably Eumenes II, who ruled from 197-159 BC) planned to found a library that would rival the world-famous library at Alexandria, Egypt. The Egyptian ruler Ptolemy (probably Ptolemy Epiphanes,

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<sup>14</sup> Lightfoot, pages 17-18; Metzger, pages 3-4

<sup>15</sup> The delta is the portion of Egypt through which flows several branches of the Nile. This portion of the Nile is called the “lower Nile,” because it is downstream – where the Nile waters flow into the sea.

<sup>16</sup> Lightfoot, page 18; Metzger, pages 4-5

<sup>17</sup> Gaius Plinius Secundus (AD 23 – August 25, AD 79), came to be known as Pliny the Elder. Pliny was a Roman author natural philosopher, as well as naval and army commander of the early Roman Empire. He was a personal friend and advisor of emperor Vespasian. Pliny had a very inquisitive mind and when not engaged in military duties, he spent his spare time studying, writing or investigating natural and geographic phenomena in the field. He wrote an encyclopedic work, *Naturalis Historia* (*Natural History*), which became a model for all other encyclopedias.

205-182 BC), resented Eumenes efforts to produce a library that might rival the Egyptian library at Alexandria. So, Ptolemy put an embargo on the export of papyrus sections. Eumenes, determined to go ahead with his plans, developed the production of vellum, which received its Greek name from the city of its origin – *περγαμηνή* (*pergamene*) from whence the English word, *parchment*, is derived.

Whether or not the details of this story are true, (parchment, was used for writing purposes long before Eumenes<sup>18</sup>), it is probable that high quality parchment was developed at Pergamum, and that city did become famous for the manufacture and export of this writing material, and as noted earlier, the product came to be known by the name of the city, Pergamum.

Both terms, *parchment* and *vellum*, are used interchangeably for the writing material produced from the skin of animals, but more exacting writers reserve the term, *vellum*, for a finer, superior quality of parchment.

Parchment is made from the skins of cattle, sheep, goats, and antelopes, and especially from the young of these animals. The hair first is removed by scraping, then the skins are washed, smoothed with a pumice stone, and then dressed with chalk. The skin is stretched and dried under tension. Parchment is not tanned, so it is not the same as leather. Because it is not tanned, it is subject to changes in humidity, and if it becomes overly wet, it reverts to rawhide.

Deluxe parchment editions were made of vellum dyed a deep purple and were written upon with gold and silver inks. Ordinary editions were written with black or brown ink. The heading and initial letters were colored with blue, yellow, or most often with red ink. From the use of red ink to begin a document we have in English the term, *rubric* (from the Latin, *ruber*, meaning, “red”), referring to the heading of a document or the first words of a paragraph, i.e., “the following facts are under the rubric of...”

Vellum or parchment continued to be used until the late middle ages. Parchment slowly was replaced by paper, made of cotton, hemp, or flax. Paper was invented in China and was introduced into Europe by Arabian traders.

### Writing Instruments

**INSTRUMENTS USED IN WRITING ON CLAY:** Damp clay required a writing instrument that would leave a clear mark, but not crumble the clay surface. In time, scribes developed a tool made from a reed. One end of a triangularly shaped reed was squared. With this end of the reed the scribe pressed triangular marks and straight lines into the clay. Curves were too difficult to execute clearly, so cuneiform text was based on the triangles and lines.

**INSTRUMENTS USED IN WRITING ON WAX:** As noted above, for many centuries wooden tablets filled with wax were used for making temporary notes. Roman scribes made much use of this form of literature. They were faced with the same difficulty in making curves, as were those who wrote on clay. The Roman alphabet, which also was used for writing on stone, consisted of

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<sup>18</sup> The first mention of skins used for writing is found in the fourth Egyptian Dynasty (2550-2450 BC) David Diringer, *The Book before Printing: Ancient, Medieval and Oriental*, Dover Publications, New York 1982, p. 172.

straight lines. The stylus used to write on the wax tablets was long and thin, like a pen. It was made of wood or metal (most often the stylus was bronze). It had a sharp point on one end, used for writing, and a flat paddle-like opposite end, used for erasing (by smoothing out the wax).

**INSTRUMENTS USED IN WRITING ON PAPYRUS (paper, later):** The Egyptians developed a reed pen for writing on papyrus. These pens were of various lengths. One end was cut to a point, forming a nib, and the nib was slit to facilitate movement of ink (modern liquid ink pens are exact replicas of the Egyptian nib). These had to be dipped into the ink, even as is done in modern non-fountain pens.

Later, when paper began to replace papyrus, a brush with thick tapered animal hair often was used for writing.

The ink used with these early instruments was made from carbon particles or lamp black, mixed with gum or animal glue to act as a bonding agent.

**INSTRUMENTS USED IN WRITING ON PARCHMENT:** Scribes initially used reed pens but later, pens cut from the feathers of large birds (quills) became dominate. Scribes using such pens always had a small knife (a pen knife) with them to sharpen the nib of the pen.

### **The Forms of Ancient Books**

Literary works that were produced during the period in which Scripture was produced customarily were produced in the form of a scroll, made of parchment or papyrus. Jewish tradition states that Moses wrote the Pentateuch as a papyrus scroll. This clearly was the format for the rest of Scripture.

A papyrus scroll was made by gluing together, side by side, separate sheets of papyrus, then winding the resulting long strip around a stick. Each of these scrolls was called a *volume*, which is derived from the Latin word, *volumen*, meaning, “something rolled up.”

The length of each volume was limited by the convenience and inconvenience of handling a roll. The normal literary Greek roll seldom exceeded 35 feet. Ancient authors would divide long literary works into several “books,” each book being a single volume. Each of the two longest books of the New Testament, The Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, would have filled an ordinary papyrus scroll, of 31-35 feet in length. No doubt, this is why these two books were made available as two volumes rather than one; the early church usually considered them to be a single literary work, i.e., Luke/Acts in two volumes.

The writing on each page was in a series of columns, each column being 2 or 3 inches wide. The height of a column was determined by the height of the papyrus sheet.

Sometimes, but rarely, a scroll was written on both sides of the papyrus (note Revelation 5:1, *And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals*). A scroll on which the writing was on both sides of the papyrus was called an opisthograph.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Greek, ὀπισθεν (*opisthen*), meaning, *from behind*, or *on the back*

A scroll was inconvenient to use. With one hand the scroll was unrolled and with the other hand the scroll was rolled up as the reading progressed. The Christian community found it difficult to find specific passages in their volumes when written on a scroll. Early in the Second Century (some say by the close of the First Century) the *codex* came into extensive use in the Church. A codex was made by folding one or more sheets of papyrus in the middle and then sewing them together at the fold. This had a great advantage over the scroll:

- It permitted all four Gospels or all of the Epistles of Paul to be bound into one book;
- It facilitated the consultation of specific texts;
- It was better adapted to writing on both sides of a page, thus keeping down the cost of production.

Some argue that in an effort to differentiate themselves from the Jewish synagogue, where the Old Testament in the form of scrolls was the usual format, the Gentile churches were the first to adopt the codex.

Parchment had advantages over papyrus for the making of scrolls and codices. Parchment was tougher and longer lasting than papyrus. Also, parchment leaves could receive writing on both sides without any difficulty (because of the vertical fibres on the backside of papyrus, writing on that side was difficult). As noted earlier, there were drawbacks to parchment, one being that humidity changes caused the edges to become puckered and uneven. Furthermore, according to Galen, the famous Greek physician of the Second Century, parchment was harder on the eyes than papyrus, because it reflected light and was shiny.

When creating a parchment codex, attention was given to the placement of the pages. Since the hair side of parchment is darker than the flesh side, when making a codex the most pleasing effect on the reader was obtained by having the hair side of one page face the hair side of the other page and the same being true of the flesh side of the parchment.

In times of economic depression, when the cost of parchment increased, an older manuscript would be re-used. The original writing was scraped and washed off, the surface re-smoothed, and the new literary material written on the salvaged parchment. A document on re-used parchment was called a palimpsest (“re-scraped” from the Greek, *πάλι* and *ψάω* [*palin* and *psaw*]). One of the most important parchment manuscripts of the New Testament is a palimpsest, named, codex Ephraemi rescriptus. Originally written in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD, it was erased in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century and the sheets were used to record a Greek translation of thirty-eight sermons, originally written in Syriac, by St. Ephraem, a Syrian Church Father of the fourth Century. By the application of certain chemical regents and ultraviolet-ray lamps, scholars have been able to read much of the almost obliterated underwriting.

In 692, the council in Trullo<sup>20</sup> issued a canon (number 68) condemning the practice of reusing parchment from manuscripts of the Scriptures for other purposes. Those who ignored the canon,

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<sup>20</sup> The Council at Trullo (after the palace hall in Constantinople where it met) also is called the Quinisext Council. It was convened in 692 by the Byzantine emperor Justinian II to issue disciplinary decrees related to the second and third councils of Constantinople (held in 553 and 680–681). They were the fifth and sixth ecumenical councils—hence the name Quinisext (the two Latin words for *fifth* and *sixth*). The two ecumenical councils had dealt only with doctrinal matters.

The Quinisext Council prepared 102 canons, many of which were directed against Western Church customs and legislation; they also showed the differences between the Eastern and Western churches (*e.g.*, clerical celibacy was rejected in the East). The Western Church and the Pope were not represented

were to be punished with a one-year excommunication. Despite the canon and the threat of being excommunicated for one year, the practice continued. Of the 250 uncial manuscripts known today, 52 are palimpsests.

### THE FORM OF WRITING

The form of writing is important in our study of how we got our Bible, because one of the means whereby the date and the regional origin of a manuscript can be determined, is the style of script used in the text. Both Hebrew and Greek script evolved over the centuries. Here is an overview of that evolution.

#### Hebrew Script<sup>21</sup>

**Pictograph:** As is true of other ancient writing systems, the Hebrew alphabet originally was pictographic. In pictograph, the various symbols originally represented something: a man, an eye, an ox, etc. To our modern eyes, these are not always apparent. Here is how the early Hebrew pictograph script appeared and its relationship to the later developed Hebrew alphabet. The names under each pictograph is the modern name given to that letter of the alphabet (Hebrew is read right to left, thus the first letter is *alef* and the last is *tav*).



**Phoenician Script:** The Phoenician alphabet was a precursor to the script of the Hebrew alphabet. The Phoenician alphabet developed from the proto-Canaanite alphabet. Phoenician script was created sometime between the 18th and 17th centuries BC.

hēt h	zayin z	wāw w	hē h	dālet d	gīmel g	bēt b	'ālef '
sāmek s	nun n	mēm m		lāmed l	kaf k	yōd y	tēt t
tāw t	śin/šīn š		rēš r	qōf q	šādē š	pē p	'ayin '

at the council. Justinian wanted both the Pope (the Western Church) and the Eastern bishops to sign the canons. Pope Sergius I (687–701) refused to sign, and the canons were never fully accepted by the Western Church.

<sup>21</sup> The material in this section, describing the History of Hebrew script is an edited version of material found at [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit\\_One/History/history.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Grammar/Unit_One/History/history.html)

Proto-Hebrew (Ketav Ivri): There was a phase in which the Phoenician script was used to write Hebrew, but the next development of an Hebrew script has been labeled, *The Proto-Hebrew Script*. It also is known as early Aramaic Script. The Moabite Stone is an important existing example of this script. This was the form of Hebrew script used by the Jewish nation prior to the Babylonian Exile (Orthodox Jews consider this form of Hebrew to have been used until the time of the Exodus). There is no doubt that this form of Hebrew script was replaced by the Hebrew square script (*Ketav Meruba*) at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC.<sup>22</sup>



Classical Hebrew (Ketav Ashurit): After the Babylonian captivity, Ezra the Scribe led the Jews in adopting Ketav Ashurit as the script. It came to be known as *Leshon HaKodesh* (the holy language). This script became the official script in which all copies of the Torah scroll had to be copied.<sup>23</sup>

This form of Hebrew, beginning to be used five centuries before Christ, has remained unchanged through the centuries.<sup>24</sup>



<sup>2222</sup> This alphabet was based on the Phoenician alphabet, with adaptations, such as the addition of vowel letters (aleph, hey, vav).

<sup>23</sup> The Dead Sea Scrolls were written during a transitional period. Some were written in Ketav Ivri and some written in Ketav Ashurit.

<sup>24</sup> Commentaries could be written with a different script, the Rashi style, so named in honor of Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105 AD), a.k.a. Rashi, one of the greatest medieval Jewish scholars.

Modern Hebrew Cursive: The modern Hebrew script (used in Israel today) derives from Polish-German Jews. This style is of no interest to us in the studies of manuscripts. We include it merely for information.



### Greek Script

The Greeks were the first Europeans to write with an alphabet. All modern European alphabets, although not easily recognized as such, are descendants of the Greek alphabet. An early tribe of the Greeks were the Mycenaean. This tribe adopted the Minoan syllabary to write an early form of Greek – which palaeographers have labeled, Linear B. Because of its origin, Linear B also is known as Mycenaean, where Agamemnon is said to have ruled.

Linear B was used between 1500 and 1200 BC. Most of the Linear B inscriptions were accounting records, listing materials and goods. Here is the Linear B syllabary, with approximation of later Greek script's equivalent below the Linear B symbols.<sup>25</sup>



A logogram is a symbol that represents whole words and represents certain items. It is not surprising that logograms were an important part of Linear B, since it was used mainly for trade. Some of the logograms resemble the things they represent, so they could be called pictograms. Not all the logograms have been deciphered. Here are some more frequently used logograms.

<sup>25</sup> Omniglot.com *Linear B*. Note that this Linear B has 60 characters, whereas Koine Greek (the language of the New Testament) has 24.



This syllabary was not well suited for literary purposes. With the flourishing of Greek literature, the Greeks began to develop an alphabet. As was true of Hebrew, the original Greek alphabet was adopted from the Phoenician script (illustrated in the preceding section on Hebrew script). This was begun in 9<sup>th</sup> Century BC. Interestingly, in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, the Greek historian, Herodotus, called the Greek script, *phoinikeia grammata* (φοινικῆια γράμματα) which means, Phoenician letters. They did change some of the sounds which the Phoenician script represented.

Another stage of development was the direction of writing and reading Greek. Early Greek was written right to left, as was true of Hebrew and most other early literature. Here is an alphabet found on Crete that was used on Crete, c.800 BC (to be read right to left). It is uncertain as to what names were given to the letters – the symbols below the alphabet (contemporary Greek script and English equivalent) are somewhat speculative. Some letters had more than one form and in some documents the letters are reversed in form.<sup>26</sup>



In time, the direction of writing changed to *boustrophedon* (which means, “ox turning”). In boustrophedon writing, the first line is written right to left, the second line left to right, the third

<sup>26</sup> Omniglot.com, *Greek Script*



line, right to left, etc. Here is an example of boustrophedon writing from a section that begins with a line running left to right:<sup>27</sup>



Ionic Greek inscription in  
boustrophedon, Sigeion stela

Boustrophedon was an intermediate stage and by the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, left to right hand writing became the prevailing practice. This practice became the standard for Greek, Latin, and for all modern languages. There were many early variants to the Greek alphabet, each suited to a local dialect. Eventually, the Ionian alphabet was adopted by all Greek-speaking states.

The script for the Ionian script went through some development stages, with two styles of script being used. *Cursive* (“running hand”) could be written rapidly and was used for non-literary, everyday documents, such as letters, accounts, receipts, petitions, deeds, etc.

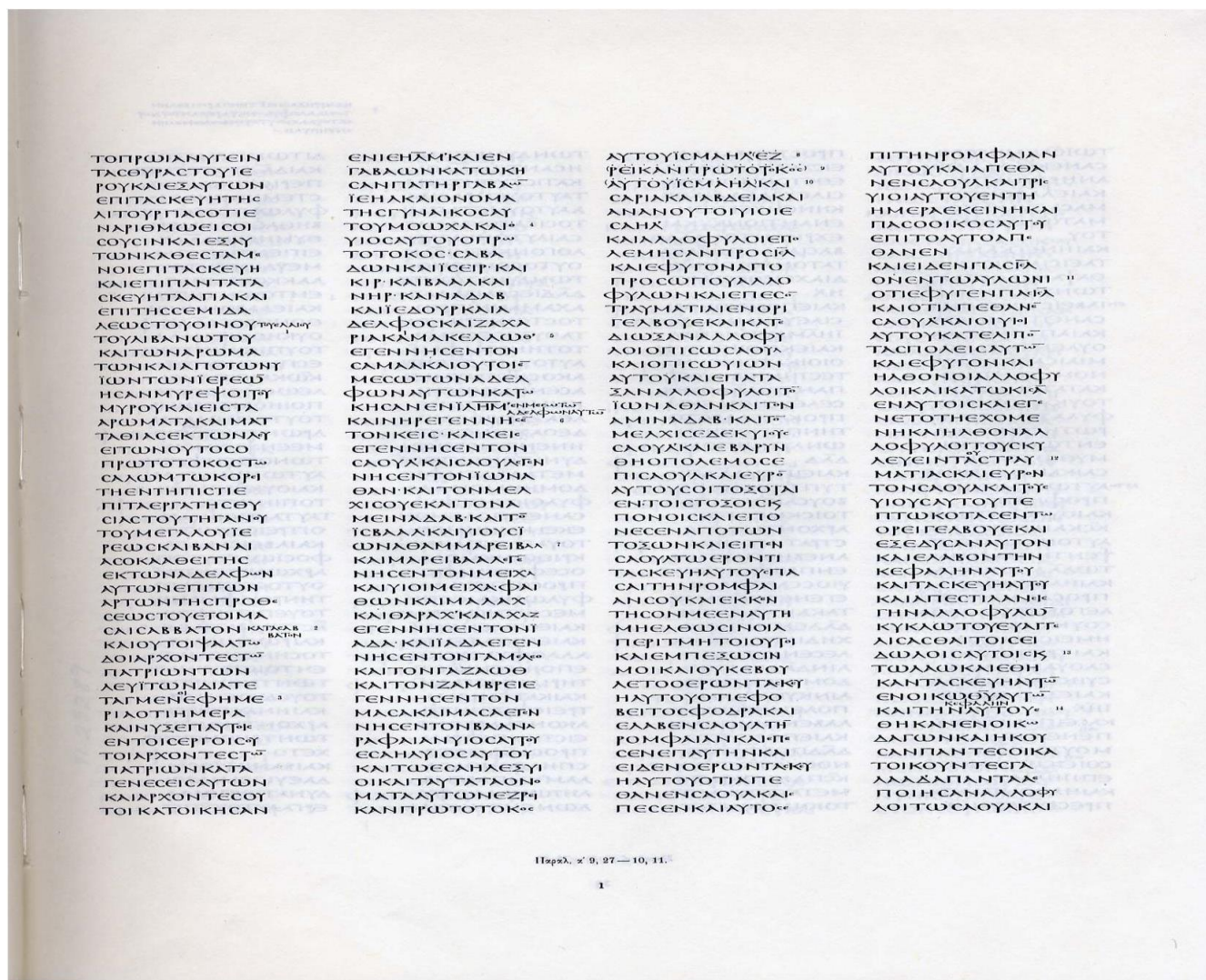
Literary works were written in a more formal style of writing, called, *uncials*. This book-hand was more formal and larger. It was written deliberately and with carefully executed letters. Some of the most beautiful specimens of uncial Greek writing are biblical manuscripts from the 3<sup>rd</sup> through the 6<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD.

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<sup>27</sup> [Ancientscripts.com](http://Ancientscripts.com), *Greek*

Here is an example of an uncial (Codex Sinaiticus) manuscript followed by an example of a cursive manuscript.

A PORTION OF THE BOOK OF ESTHER IN UNCIAL SCRIPT<sup>28</sup>



<sup>28</sup> [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Codex\\_Sinaiticus\\_Paralipomenon\\_9%2C27-10%2C11.JPG](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fe/Codex_Sinaiticus_Paralipomenon_9%2C27-10%2C11.JPG)



In the 9<sup>th</sup> Century AD, a reform in handwriting was initiated, resulting in a script of smaller letters, called, *miniscule*. Miniscule was an adaptation of cursive and today most use the term, *cursive*, when referring to miniscule script. Here is the form of cursive/miniscule script that was developed at that time and continued to be used during the ensuing years in the production of biblical manuscripts (this is the printed form; handwritten texts would not be this precise).

**Uncial:**

Α Β Γ Δ Ε Ζ Η Θ Ι Κ Λ Μ Ν Ξ Ο Π Ρ Σ Τ Υ Φ Χ Ψ Ω

**Cursive/miniscule:**

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ ν ξ ο π ρ σ τ υ φ χ ψ ω

(Note: in the cursive/miniscule, the sigma, **σ**, becomes, **ς**, when it occurs at the end of a word)

The advantages of using miniscule, rather than uncial, are several. Because the script is smaller, less parchment was required to produce a book, and thus the production of books became more economical. Also, with the manuscript being less bulky, it was easier to handle. Miniscule could be written much more rapidly than uncial, resulting in less time needed to produce a manuscript. These and similar advantages resulted in the change of style's having a significant effect on the production of Greek manuscripts, both secular and sacred.

With the use of the miniscule, and the reduction in cost of producing manuscript, more people of limited means were able to have literature in their possession. Thus, the miniscule was an important element in the dissemination of culture and especially in the dissemination of Scripture.

Miniscule manuscripts of the New Testament outnumber the uncial manuscripts by more than ten to one. One thing that contributes to this is the fact that the uncial manuscripts are older and through the ravages of time more of them would have been destroyed. Yet, the ease of producing miniscule manuscripts is a major factor in the number of miniscules versus uncials.

### **The Work of Christian Scribes**

In the earliest years of the Church, individual Christians (often a local church leader) produced manuscripts for personal use, or for the local congregation of which he was a part. As the Church grew, and new congregations were formed the need for copies of the Scriptures grew to the point that haste in producing manuscripts often resulted in inaccuracies in the copies. Also, when someone was translating a manuscript from Greek into some other language, often the person doing the work was not qualified to do such a task. To this point, Augustine complained that "anyone who happened to gain possession of a Greek manuscript and who imagined that he had some facility in both Latin and Greek, however slight that might be, dared to make a translation."<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, Bk. II, Ch. 11, v. 16 <http://faculty.georgetown.edu/jod/augustine>

By the Fourth Century, when Christianity received official sanction from the Roman government, it became common for commercial book manufacturers (known as *scriptoria*) to produce copies of the various books of the new Testament. The manner in which this was done was for several well-trained scribes to be seated in a *scriptorium* producing manuscripts. The scribes may or may not have been Christians, the criteria was their skill in writing. Each scribe was equipped with parchment, pens, and ink. A reader, known as the lector, would slowly read from a manuscript (the manuscript being read was called, the *exemplar*) and the scribes would write as the lector read the exemplar. In this way, as many manuscripts could be produced as there were scribes in the room.

About 331, Emperor Constantine, a recent convert to Christianity, wanted to secure copies of the Scriptures for use in the church buildings that he planned to erect in Constantinople. He wrote to Eusebius, asking him to arrange for the production of “fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures... to be written on fine parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient portable form, by professional scribes (καλλιγράφοι) thoroughly accomplished in their art.”<sup>31</sup> Eusebius then wrote that these orders, “were followed by the immediate execution of the work itself, which we sent him in magnificent and elaborately bound volumes of threefold and fourfold forms.

Several scholars have suggested that the two oldest existing parchment manuscripts of the Bible, codex Vaticanus and codex Sinaiticus may have been among the manuscripts produced for Constantine. However, the type of text found in these manuscripts is unlike that used by Eusebius and there are at least two things that indicate that Egypt was the place of origin for Vaticanus. However, it can be said with some certainty that these two manuscripts are like those which Constantine ordered and received.<sup>32</sup>

It is easy to see how mistakes were made. Sometimes a scribe might momentarily lose attention, perhaps a noise, such as a cough, might interfere with hearing clearly what the lector had read. Also, when the lector read a word that could be spelled in different ways, the scribe would have to decide which word belonged in the passage and sometimes mistakes were made (English examples: “there” and “their”; “great” and “grate”; “red” and “read” [past tense of read]).

During the early centuries of Christianity, certain vowels and diphthongs of the Greek language lost their distinctive sounds and thus came to be pronounced alike, as they are today in modern Greek. Here are some examples:

- The omicron (Ο), which historically was pronounced like the English O, in the word, *log*, and the omega (Ω), which historically was pronounced like the English, O, in the word, *hope*, lost their distinctive pronunciation. This accounts for such variants as ἔχομεν<sup>33</sup> and ἔχομεν<sup>34</sup> in Romans 5:1, and the variants ὧδε<sup>35</sup> and ὄδε<sup>36</sup> in Luke 16:25

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<sup>31</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Book IV, Chapter 36

<sup>32</sup> Metzger, pages 7-8

<sup>33</sup> “may we have,” the subjunctive mood, indicating a hope, a wish, or something uncertain

<sup>34</sup> “we have,” present indicative, expressing certainty

<sup>35</sup> “Here, in this place”

<sup>36</sup> Referring to what precedes

- The diphthong, **αι**, historically pronounced like the English diphthong *ai*, in the word, *aisle*, and the vowel, **ε**, historically pronounced like the English letter *e*, in the word, *let*, both came to be pronounced with the short e sound (as in let).  
As a result, the second person plural ending, **-σθε**, sounded the same as the ending of the middle and passive infinitive, **-σθαι**. This resulted in variants, for example, in Luke 14:17, **ἔρχεσθαι**<sup>37</sup> and **ἔρχεσθε**<sup>38</sup>
- Sometimes a change in a vowel resulted in a totally different word. For example in Matthew 11:16, **ἑτέροις** (others), in some manuscripts has the variant, **ἑταίροις** (comrades).

These are but some examples of how such mistakes (technically called, *itacism*) occurred, which accounts for some rather strange mistakes found in some manuscripts.

In order to assure greater accuracy, documents produced in a scriptoria were checked over by a corrector (**διορθωτής** - *diorthotes*), who had received special training in detecting and rectifying mistakes made by scribes. His annotations are evident in some manuscripts, because they are in a different style of handwriting than the hand used to write the body of the manuscript; they also usually are of a different tint of ink.

Professional scribes in a scriptorium were hired to do a certain piece of work and would be paid by the number of lines that they wrote. When prose works were being copied, a line called a *stichos*, having sixteen (sometimes fifteen) syllables, often was used to determine the market price of a manuscript. In 301 AD, Emperor Diocletian set the wages of scribes at 25 denarii for 100 lines of first-quality writing, and 20 denarii for the same number of lines done by second quality work. The cost of completing a complete Bible, such as codex Sinaiticus would have been about 30,000 denarii.<sup>39</sup>

During the Byzantine period, (c330 – 1453 AD), monks replaced the professional scribes in the production of manuscripts. Because they were not in a profit-making business, they were not under the pressure to produce many manuscripts in a given period of time. Although the scriptorium with its dictation/copying practice did exist in some monasteries, most often a manuscript (Scripture or other literary works) was produced by a single monk, either for his own benefit or for the benefit of the monastery. Such a copyist, being a devout follower of Christ, sought to produce an accurate copy of the exemplar that he had before him. Even so, human frailty did result in some errors.

One factor was the fatigue experienced by those in this endeavor. The sustained, focused attention was one thing that contributed to fatigue. The other was the cramped position assumed by those doing this work. Until the early Middle Ages, it was customary for scribes either to

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<sup>37</sup> Present infinitive, a simple statement, meaning, *to come, to go*

<sup>38</sup> Second person plural, present, imperative (i.e. a command), meaning, *all of you go*.

<sup>39</sup> In the previous century, a Roman legionary was paid 750 denarii per year, plus his maintenance – Metzger 15, footnote 2

stand or to sit on a stool or a bench, or on the ground, holding the scroll or codex on their knees. It was customary for a monk to spend six hours each day, month after month, in this activity.

Monks frequently wrote a note (called a colophon) on a manuscript, commenting on the labor that they had just completed. A typical note found in many non-biblical manuscripts, states,

“He who does not know how to write supposes it to be no labor; but though only three fingers write, the whole body labors.”<sup>40</sup>

A traditional formula, appearing at close of many manuscripts, states,

“Writing bows one’s back, thrusts his rib into one’s stomach, and fosters a general debility of the body.”

An Armenian manuscript of the Gospels, contains a colophon complaining of the heavy snowstorm raging outside and the cold in the room where he was working. He notes that it was so cold that his ink froze and his fingers became so numb that the pen fell from his fingers.

A number of manuscripts end with the colophon, “The end of the book; thanks be to God!”<sup>41</sup>

Even so, many scribes/monks wrote of the rewards of doing their work. One such scribe wrote,

“For every word of the Lord written by the scribe is a wound inflicted on Satan. And so, though seated in one spot, the scribe traverses diverse lands through the dissemination of what he has written...Man multiplies heavenly words, and in a certain metaphorical sense, if I may dare so to speak, three fingers are made to express the utterances of the Holy Trinity. O sight glorious to those who contemplate it carefully! The fast-travelling reed-pen writes down the holy words and thus avenges the malice of the Wicked One, who caused a reed to be used to smite the head of the Lord during his Passion.”<sup>42</sup>

Given the laborious task, the high degree of achievement of the scribes is noteworthy. In most manuscripts, the size of the letters, their shape and consistency are uniform throughout the document.

Monasteries established certain rules for the scriptoria. Here are some from a monastery in Constantinople, established by the abbot of the Studite monastery in 800 AD:<sup>43</sup>

- A diet of bread and water was the penalty for a scribe who became so interested in the subject-matter of what he was copying that he neglected his task of copying.
- A penalty of 130 penances<sup>44</sup> was required of any monk who did not keep his parchment leaves neat and clean.
- If anyone should take, without permission, another’s ruled and folded sheets of parchment, he was penalized with 50 penances.

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<sup>40</sup> Metzger page 17

<sup>41</sup> Metzger page 18

<sup>42</sup> *Cassiodori Senatoris Institutiones*, as quoted in Metzger, page 18

<sup>43</sup> Metzger, page 19

<sup>44</sup> A penance is something required of a sinner – usually a set of prayers – to receive forgiveness for a sin.

- Should a scribe make more glue than he could use at one time and it should harden, he was to do 50 penances.
- If a monk broke his pen in a fit of temper (probably after making a mistake on an otherwise good manuscript), he had to do 30 penances.

A scribe had to prepare his papyrus or parchment before he could write upon it.

- When a scribe wrote on papyrus, he used the horizontal fibres as guide lines for his script.
- When a scribe wrote on parchment, he first took a blunt instrument and scored horizontal lines on the parchment, then scored vertical lines that marked the margins of each column of writing. Many scribes also used pinpricks on parchment to use as a guide in scoring the horizontal lines. Different schools of scribes used various procedures in making the rulings and so it is possible for modern scholars to identify the place of origin of a parchment document by the ruling pattern. There is even a science of pinpricks!<sup>45</sup>

Rather than writing above the lines as we do, ancient scribes wrote with the letters hanging below the lines – technically known as “pendant.”<sup>46</sup>

Contemporary writing above the line: α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ

Pendent writing below the line:

α β γ δ ε ζ η θ ι κ λ μ

Usually, no spaces were left between words and sentences. This type of writing is called, *scriptio continua*.<sup>47</sup> Usually, this posed no problem, but there are instances in which a sentence is somewhat ambiguous, depending on where the division in words occurs. This is easily illustrated in English by, GODISNOWHERE. Two opposite meanings are possible: “God is now here,” or, “God is nowhere.”

Here are a couple of examples from the New Testament:

- Mark 10:40 Most textual editors, based on the context, have Jesus saying, *but it is for those for whom it has been prepared*, ἀλλ’ οἷς ἡτοίμασται (*all hois hetoimastai*).<sup>48</sup> The Greek also can be divided in this manner, ἄλλοις ἡτοίμασται (*allois hetoimastai*), which means, *it has been prepared for others*.
- Romans 7:14 The first word in this verse, οἶδαμεν, *we know*, and this the manner in which most textual editors understand the word<sup>49</sup>; οἶδαμεν also can be divided into two words, οἶδα μέν, *on the other hand, I know*.

<sup>45</sup> Metzger, page 8, footnote 1

<sup>46</sup> Metzger, page 12

<sup>47</sup> Word division, and rudimentary punctuation is found in some school and liturgical texts in papyri from the Third Century BC. Metzger, page 13, footnote 1

<sup>48</sup> "But to sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared."

<sup>49</sup> For we know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.



*Scriptio continua* did not pose the problem in Greek that one might imagine, because, with very few exceptions, Greek words can end only in a vowel (or a diphthong) or in one of three consonants, ν, ρ, ζ. Also, it was the custom for a reader to read aloud, even when reading to himself. In so doing, the words would be read syllable by syllable and thus, one would become accustomed to reading *scriptio continua*.

The older manuscripts did not have chapter divisions. The oldest existing example of chapter divisions, known as κεφάλια (*kephalia*), meaning, “headings,” is in the margins of codex Vaticanus, produced sometime in the middle of the Fourth Century.

Many later manuscripts contain a τίτλος (*titlos*), which is a summary of the contents of a chapter – this was placed in the margin where the chapter began.

In the oldest manuscripts, the titles are very simple, ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΘΘΑΙΟΝ (according to Matthew) ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ (unto Romans).

In the passage of time, subscriptions came to be appended to the end of a book, especially the epistles, indicating the place that the book was thought to be written and the name of the person who was the *amanuensis*.<sup>50</sup> Clearly, Paul used an amanuensis to write some of his epistles and these are indicated in the document, often making a distinction between what an amanuensis wrote and Paul wrote with his own hand.<sup>51</sup> However, later scribes added their own subscriptions and these are included in the King James Version.<sup>52</sup>

Later, notes to aid the reader were written on the manuscripts, as well as elaborate drawings. These additions (chapters, elaborate titles, subscriptions, etc.) all assist in dating a manuscript.

### **Authorship – Who Wrote The Autographs?**

No one questioned the authorship of the Pentateuch (i.e., that Moses was the author), until the “Age of Reason,” also known as “the Enlightenment.” This movement, which dominated Europe in the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century and the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, was a movement in which all traditions were challenged; human reason was king, and supernaturalism was rejected because it conflicted with reason and experience. Religious tradition, especially that associated with Roman Catholicism, was rejected. It is not surprising that this assumption resulted in an attack on the authorship of Scripture.

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<sup>50</sup> An amanuensis was a person who wrote while another dictated. It is clear that some of Paul’s writings were the work of an amanuensis and these displayed different styles of Greek.

<sup>51</sup> See Romans 14:22; I Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18; II Thessalonians 3:17; Philemon 19

<sup>52</sup> These are appended to the end of all of Paul’s epistles (with the exception of those to Timothy and Titus) and at the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Rationalists declared the Bible to be the record of the evolution of the subjective religious consciousness of the human race. From the mid-1800's onward, evolution was at the heart of the movement to discredit the divine authorship and accuracy of Scripture. The Pentateuch was the first portion of Scripture writ to be dissected in this manner. The roots of this view of Scripture are found in the writings that were produced in Europe during the political upheavals that were taking place and various philosophers' efforts to present societal concepts that fit the mood of the age. That man is the measure of all things, and the need for some authority to control human nature, dominated much of this thinking.

- Even before Darwin's, *Origin of the Species*, had been penned, the English political philosopher, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), and the Dutch Philosopher, Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), attacked the authorship of Genesis. The writings of these philosophers were very influential, reflecting the elevation of the common man; both of them denied the possibility of miracles and anything that was not corporeal. Hobbes and Spinoza compiled lists of what they saw as contradictions, inconsistencies, and anachronisms in the Pentateuch – arguing that Moses could not have been the author of the five books of the Torah.
- In 1753, the French rationalist doctor and amateur astronomer, Jean Astruc (1684-1766), in an effort to defend orthodoxy against the attacks of Hobbs and Spinoza, presented a theory that divided Genesis into two parts. He assumed that Moses had written Genesis as at least two documents, because he noted that the name, *Elohim*, was used for God in some portions and *Jehovah*, was used for God in other portions. So, Moses wrote more than one account, and in each one gave details that he did not give in the other account. As Astruc developed his theory, he finally concluded that Moses had written Genesis as four documents and that a later unknown person had combined these into a single work. Although Astruc was attempting to defend orthodoxy, along scientific lines, his concept of different documents being behind the Book of Genesis, became the basis for the radical Documentary Hypothesis of the next century.
- In the mid-1800's, Old Testament scholarship was led by brilliant German scholars, many of whom came to reject the supernatural origin of Scripture and many denied that Moses had anything to do with the composition of the Pentateuch. In 1853, Hermann Hupfeld made such a declaration. He argued that two different authors wrote these documents and they were assimilated by a later “redactor,” who added Moses' name to them, in order to give them credibility (this is a very simplified statement of Hupfeld's hypothesis).
- The most influential effort to discredit the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch was the subsequent work of two German professors, Karl Heinrich Graf and Julius Wellhausen. These liberal professors produced the Graf-Wellhausen theory concerning the origin of the Pentateuch. According to this theory (the Documentary Hypothesis), the sections of the Pentateuch that use the name, *Jehovah*, constitute the earliest document (known as “J”). Another part, in which the name, *Elohim*, is used is the second oldest (known as “E”). A third document was composed by someone known as the *Deuteronomist* (known as “D”). Finally, someone who promoted the priestly aspects of the religion, put it all together and added the ceremonial and priestly material (known as “P”). This theory is known as the Graf-Wellhausen theory or the JEDP theory (originally, the theory was

PEJD, then EJDP). This theory came to be accepted by anti-supernatural rationalists and liberal scholars in many leading seminaries. It was introduced in Great Britain by a Presbyterian minister, William Robertson Smith.<sup>53</sup> The respected Old Testament scholar, S. R. Driver presented this hypothesis in his *Introduction*. Benjamin Wisner Bacon of Yale promoted this hypothesis in America.<sup>54</sup> It continues to be the prevailing view in many seminaries and is reflected in some commentaries on the Old Testament.

As stated earlier, no one had challenged the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch (except for the last chapter of Deuteronomy, which described Moses' death), until the rationalist assumptions of the Enlightenment. Because the denial of the Mosaic authorship is based upon a materialistic assumption (i.e. that miracles cannot take place and that everything must be explained by a materialistic scientific assumption), we will accept the traditional and historical view that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch (the *Torah*).

Another important Old Testament book that was challenged by rationalists was Isaiah. Isaiah is filled with predictive prophecies and Chapters 40 – 66 speak of matters that occurred almost 100 years after his death. Thus, according to the rationalists, Isaiah could not have written these verses. They must have been written after they occurred and were put into the Book of Isaiah as if they were written earlier – as predictive prophecy. At first, they divided Isaiah into two sections, each written by a different person, then into three, and then into four. The discovery of the great Isaiah scroll in the Dead Sea scrolls, undid their reasonings – the scroll contains Isaiah intact.<sup>55</sup> We will discuss the Dead Sea scrolls in fuller detail later in our study.

The other books of the Old Testament have undergone similar scrutiny, although not as vigorously. Again, from the time of the ancients, the authorship and integrity of these portions of Scripture was not challenged. Only when rationalists rejected the possibility of any supernatural event, especially predictive prophecy, were such challenges put forth. Thus, the challenges are based on an assumption, rather than any hard evidence.

In a similar fashion, rational scholars began looking at the New Testament. Scholars such as Hermann S. Reimarus (1694-1778) who taught in Hamburg; Ferdinand C. Baur (1792-1860) and one of the most influential, David F. Strauss (1808-74), who wrote *The Life of Jesus*, combined all of the views in vogue.<sup>56</sup> One of the most popular contentions among the humanist/rationalists is that the essence of the Gospel is the ethical teaching of Jesus and that Paul changed this simple religion into a redemptive religion.

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<sup>53</sup> *The Old Testament and the Jewish Church* 1891

<sup>54</sup> *The Genesis of Genesis* (1893), *The Triple Tradition of the Exodus* (1894)

<sup>55</sup> The Great Isaiah Scroll, has been carbon-14 dated at least four times, resulting in dates ranging from 335-324 BC and 202-107 BC. There have been numerous paleographic and scribal studies of the scroll. Most of these place the date of the scroll 150 to 100 BC. Since the scroll was copied from a much earlier scroll, this makes the claim of rationalists, that the Book of Isaiah was compiled by someone from documents written hundreds of years after the life of Isaiah, a rather unreasonable – perhaps desperate, claim.

<sup>56</sup> Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through the Centuries* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan Pub. House) 1981, pgs 412-413

Many began to assert that none of the New Testament was written by the authors to whom they are attributed. Instead, these documents were produced a hundred or so years later than the supposed authors lived, and their names were attached to them to give them credibility. Many went so far as to say that there never was a historical person named, Jesus, but that the apostles and others had created this myth.

So much evidence concerning the historical recognition of Jesus (especially records of non-believers) was discovered in the past century, that the idea that Jesus was but a myth had to be abandoned. In the last 150 years, the increasing discovery of early manuscripts and early Christian writings has forced one theory after another to be abandoned. Today, it becomes increasingly difficult to argue that the books of the New Testament were written by unknown authors in the Second Century.<sup>57</sup> Even so, humanist scholars still argue for the human origin of the documents. The result of this humanist thinking has been the “two-source theory.”

According to the two-source theory, the preaching of Peter was the first source for what became the Four Gospels. According to this theory, someone (possibly Mark) jotted down fragments of Peter’s sermons and someone collected these and they became, “Ur-Mark” (*ur* is the German word for “early,” “original,” “the real thing”). Finally, as others added accretions to this early document, the Gospel of Mark evolved into the document that we have today.

Another line of descent (the second source) consisted of assorted eyewitnesses who bore testimony to the things that they knew concerning the words and deeds of Jesus. The radical scholars call this source, “Q.” The designation, “Q,” is short for the German, *quelle*, which means, “source.” Q also is referred to as, *logia* (words or sayings), because the supposition is that Q contains the words of Jesus, as opposed to His deeds (the deeds were tall tales that were added later). So, when Matthew wrote his Gospel, he not only copied Mark but he also incorporated material in Q. When Luke wrote his Gospel, he copied Mark and Matthew, and also material in the Pauline epistles. All of these supposedly contributed to the composition of John’s Gospel, which, according to this theory, reflects a strong influence of Alexandrian philosophy.

Time and space do not allow us to delve into all of the arguments surrounding these speculations, but suffice it to say, as already noted, this flies in the face of the testimony of the early Church.

To answer that question concerning the order in which the Gospel accounts were composed, we turn to the writing of Irenaeus (135-200 AD). Irenaeus was mentored by Polycarp who had been instructed by companions of the apostles and was an acquaintance of the Apostle John. Concerning the authorship of the Gospels, Irenaeus wrote,

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<sup>57</sup> One of the discoveries that shook the liberal world was C. H. Roberts’ 1920 discovery of a fragment of the Gospel of John. Roberts, a Fellow of St. John’s College, Oxford, was working through a collection of fragments that had been gathered from a rubbish heap in Egypt, when the fragment was discovered. He sent it to the Rylands Library, in Manchester, England. From that time onward, it has been known as “the Rylands Fragment.” The fragment has been dated to the first half of the Second Century. Since it was found in Egypt, and John composed the Gospel in Ephesus, that would mean that his Gospel was widely distributed by the first half of the Second Century, leading us to conclude that it was written in the final years of the First Century.

“Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who had also leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”<sup>58</sup>

Here then, according to one who knew apostolic men and who wrote within a few years after the death of John, the order given is Matthew first, followed by Mark, followed by Luke, and then John.

Another testimony comes from Eusebius, who wrote in the Fourth Century. When Eusebius commented on the authorship of the Gospel of Mark, he quoted Papias, who was a contemporary of John the Apostle,

“...concerning Mark, who wrote the gospel in the following words: ‘And John the Presbyter also said this, Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with accuracy, but not, however in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give [an orderly] history of our Lord’s discourses: wherefore, Mark has not erred in anything, by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not pass by anything that he heard or to state anything falsely in the accounts.’”<sup>59</sup>

This was Papias’ report of what John the Apostle told him about the origin of the Gospel of Mark. Thus, according to Papias, the Gospel of Mark was composed long before the close of the First Century. There is no mention of a source that liberal scholars have labeled, *Ur Mark*, which later became the Gospel of Mark. Peter spoke, and Mark wrote, and the result was the Gospel of Mark.

As already noted, one of the strange contentions of the advocates of the two-source theory is the statement that Matthew referenced Mark. This seems to be absurd, since Matthew was an eyewitness of the life and teachings of Jesus, whereas Mark was not. Matthew would not have needed to refer to Mark nor to anyone else for this information. Moreover, Matthew was among the eleven to whom Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would bring to mind Our Lord’s words and deeds, giving understanding of what they had heard and revealing further truth to them. Matthew did not need human sources.<sup>60</sup>

Luke, of course, clearly stated that he interviewed and sought sources for his Gospel.

*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having*

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<sup>58</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 1

<sup>59</sup> Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book Three, Chapter 39 (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House) 1994, page 127

<sup>60</sup> John 14:25-26; 16:13-14

*investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.*<sup>61</sup>

Luke did not see the Lord for himself, but first learned of Him through the preaching of Paul. Luke “investigated everything carefully.” He probably consulted the genealogies that were held in the Temple and interviewed people who had seen and heard Jesus. No doubt, he interviewed Mary, and is the only Gospel writer to give the details of the nativity and the events leading up to it. As a physician, accustomed to paying attention to detail, he wanted to get everything right.<sup>62</sup> He investigated for himself, rather than relying on the efforts of others.

According to Luke, many “have undertaken to compile an account...” This is significant in that the early church recognized only the Four Gospels that we have today as authentic, Holy Spirit-given Scripture. None of the other attempts Luke mentions as being, “undertaken,” were given authority in the Church. Furthermore, neither Luke, nor any of the other three Gospels, is elevated above nor lowered beneath the others in authority. All four were considered to be authentic and of Holy Spirit origin.

Of special significance, concerning the early Church’s view of Luke, is Paul’s quoting of Luke’s Gospel as, “Scripture.”

*For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages." (I Timothy 5:18).*

Note that the first half of this verse is a quote of Deuteronomy 25:34 *You shall not muzzle the ox while he is threshing.* The latter portion of the verse, *The laborer is worthy of his wages,* is not an Old Testament quote, but a quote from Luke 10:7. Luke wrote,

*"And stay in that house, eating and drinking what they give you; for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.*

*The laborer is worthy of his wages* may be inferred from some Old Testament passages, but there is no passage that contains the quote as recorded by Paul. It is significant that Matthew 10:10 contains the same account as that described by Luke, but in Matthew’s version, Jesus says, *the laborer is worthy of his food* (Greek - *trophe* [τροφή] “food”). Luke, on the other hand, used the Greek term for wages (Greek –*misthos*, [μισθός] “wages paid for work”).

Since Paul quoted Luke, word for word, using the term, *wages* (*misthos* [μισθός]), the only reasonable explanation is that in I Timothy 5:18 Paul described Luke’s Gospel as, “Scripture.”

Another significant early church document is that of Justin Martyr. Justin, describing the Sunday meeting of the local church states,

*For the apostles in the memoirs composed by them, which are called Gospels, thus handed down what was commanded them: that Jesus, taking bread and having given*

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<sup>61</sup> Luke 1:1-4

<sup>62</sup> Example: in Luke 6:6, it is recorded that there was a man, “whose right hand was withered.” Matthew and Mark, reporting the incident, do not indicate which hand, but just that the man had a withered hand.

*thanks, said, "Do this for my memorial, this is my body"; and likewise taking the cup and giving thanks he said, "This is my blood"; and gave it to them alone.<sup>63</sup>*

*And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites [us] to the imitation of these noble things.<sup>64</sup>*

The "memoirs of the apostles" were the Gospels. The "prophets" was a standing designation among Christians for the entire Old Testament.

Indeed, the radical anti-supernatural scholarship that arose during the Enlightenment, continues to be found wanting when weighed against all evidence – evidence that grows every year with new manuscript discoveries.

We will discuss these matters more fully as we progress through our study.

### **The Transmission of the Old Testament Text**

The principles followed in the restoration of the Old Testament text and the principles applied to the restoration of the New Testament text essentially are the same. We first will explore the restoration and transmission of the Old Testament text.

Some of the documents, fragments, and quotations that provide data for the New Testament, can be dated to just a few decades after the death of the authors. The text data for the Old Testament is not as comprehensive as is that for the New Testament and there is a large gap of centuries between the time of the ancient scrolls and our earliest Hebrew manuscripts. The recovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a sensational story (which we will discuss later) that has had an important role in the evaluation of the Old Testament text. Here are the most important extant Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts:<sup>65</sup>

- The Aleppo Codex holds first rank among the Hebrew manuscripts. It derives its name from the city in Syria where it had been kept. The Aleppo Codex is a beautifully written codex of the entire Old Testament. It was finished sometime in the Tenth Century (prior to 1000 AD).

Sadly, large sections of this codex were destroyed in Arab riots against the Jews. The tragedy occurred on December 2, 1947, four days after the United Nations had decided to partition Palestine into two states. Arab mobs, looting, burning, and killing, destroyed all of the synagogues in Aleppo, including the 1500 year-old Mustaribah Synagogue. Later, found in the ashes of the synagogue, was the prized and much-studied, Aleppo Codex. A quarter of the document had been burned – almost all of the Pentateuch and all of a number of other books were destroyed. The remains were smuggled out of Syria to

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<sup>63</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, Section 66

<sup>64</sup> Justin Martyr, Section 67

<sup>65</sup> Much of this section is an adaptation of Lightfoot, pages 129ff

Jerusalem, where Hebrew University has used it as the base of a new critical edition of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>66</sup>

- The Leningrad Codex, considered by many to be of equal rank with the Aleppo Codex, is the oldest extant complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. The Leningrad Codex was written in Cairo, around the year 1010 AD. It also is a beautiful manuscript with ornately produced pages. It is in the National Library of St. Petersburg, The Ben Asher family was an outstanding family of scribes who lived at Tiberias in Palestine. Both the Leningrad Codex and the Aleppo Codex are representatives of manuscripts produced by this family of scribes. These two codices are regarded as a model of a form of text called, “the Massoretic Text,” which we will explore more fully in a later section. The Leningrad Codex underlies most editions of the modern Hebrew Bible.
- The Cairo Codex was produced by Moses Ben Asher in 895 AD. This manuscript contains the Former and Later Prophets.<sup>67</sup> This manuscript became the possession of a Jewish sect in Jerusalem known as Karaites.<sup>68</sup> During the Crusades, it was carried off by Crusaders, but it later was returned to the Karaites. Today it remains in the possession of the Karatie Community in Cairo.
- The Leningrad Codex of the Prophets was produced in 916 AD. It includes Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets.
- The British Library Codex of the Pentateuch contains most of the Pentateuch. This codex is an undated manuscript. It first was considered to be from the Ninth Century, but scholars now date it a century later.

There are many more Hebrew manuscripts, but these are the most important ones. Recent critical Hebrew texts rely, almost exclusively, on these five manuscripts.

The reason why copies of the Hebrew Bible are late is not a puzzle. To the Jews, any manuscript that had been copied carefully, and checked for any deviation from an authentic exemplar, was as accurate as any other copy. In some instances, a newer copy would be preferred to an older one, because an older one would be subject to deterioration, wear, and tear.

The Jewish scribes looked on their copies of the Scriptures with deep reverent respect. Thus, when a text became damaged or defective, it was given a reverent ceremonial burial. Their motive was to prevent the improper use of the parchment or papyrus on which the sacred name of God had been inscribed (as contrasted with the palimpsest that sometimes was used in Christian documents).

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<sup>66</sup> A photographed edition of the Leningrad Codex now is available for study.

<sup>67</sup> The Former and Later Prophets are a subgroup in the Hebrew Old Testament, existing between the Pentateuch and the Writings. The Former Prophets are Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings. The Later Prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets.

<sup>68</sup> The Karaites are a Jewish sect that accepts only the written text of the Old Testament and rejects the Rabbinic oral traditions and teachings in the Midrash or the Talmud.



Before being buried, faulty manuscripts were hidden in *genizah* (Aramaic, *genaz*, to hide). A *genizah* was a storeroom for manuscripts that were unusable. The practice of replacing older manuscripts with newer ones and the burial of those that were discarded, has deprived us of early Hebrew manuscripts that we might, otherwise, have in our possession.

From earliest times, the Jewish scribes dedicated themselves to the accurate transmission of the biblical text. As was true in the production of New Testament manuscripts, there were schools of Jewish scribes (probably professionals). These were men who were trained in the art of writing, were specialists in the Law, and who were supreme guardians of the text. The role of scribe passed from generation to generation.<sup>69</sup>

There are many examples that can be cited that illustrate the passion of the scribes for minute details of the text. If, for some reason, an exemplar had a letter too large or too small, the one copying the exemplar would reproduce these characteristics in his copy. Should a scribe encounter in the exemplar an extra letter in a word, he would copy the word as it was in the exemplar, but put a dot above the letter or word that he questioned – he would not change the word, because the text itself was considered to be unalterable.

These and similar practices reflect the historically-long traditions of the scribes. Scribes came to be known as *Masorettes*. The Hebrew word, *massorah* (also spelled *masorah*, depending on varying opinions as to the origin of the word), is the Hebrew term for, *tradition*, i.e., guarding the text. The Masorettes go back to about 500 AD, and they were successors to earlier scribes. The most important Masorettes are those of Tiberias and the family of Ben Asher are especially important.

The work of the Masorettes was spread over a period of four or five centuries. One of the things for which they are best known is their introduction of vowels and accents for the Hebrew text. Originally, the Hebrew text consisted exclusively of consonants. This was no problem as long as Hebrew was spoken, but when it no longer was spoken, there was a danger that proper pronunciation of the language would be lost. So, the Masorettes inserted “vowel points” above and below the lines of the text. Because the text was considered to be sacred, no vowels were inserted between the consonants.

Hebrew word for Judah without vowels: ηδωηψ

Hebrew word for Judah, with vowels: יהודה?

The Masorettes not only were concerned with proper pronunciation, but also with methods whereby no scribal slips, additions, or omissions could occur. They sought to achieve this by precise means of counting.

- They numbered the verses, words, and letters of each book.
- They counted the number of times each letter was used in each book.

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<sup>69</sup> *The families of scribes who lived at Jabez were the Tirathites, the Shimeathites and the Sucathites. Those are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab.* (1 Chronicles 2:55)

- They noted the verses that contained all of the letters of the alphabet or a certain number of them.
- They calculated the middle letter, the middle word, and the middle verse of the Pentateuch, the middle verse of the Psalms, the middle verse of the entire Hebrew Bible, etc.
- In fact, they counted almost everything that could be counted.

When a scribe finished making a copy of a book, he counted these elements in his document to make certain that the count agreed with the exemplar from which he was copying.

The Masoretes were textual critics and copyists of the highest rank. They examined and appraised carefully all the textual materials available to them and, on the basis of their abundance evidence, handed down the form of the text which had been received many centuries before their own lifetime. Their labors were so productive and their contributions so abundant that the present Hebrew text often is referred to as “the Massoretic Text.”

#### Talmudic Regulations

The Masoretes were not the first scribes to seek perfection in the reproduction and transcription of the Old Testament text. Talmudic regulations concerning the copying and production of Scripture manuscripts were very strict. Here is the background concerning the Synagogue and its role in Scripture production.

After the Battle of Carchemish in 605 BC, Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, besieged and conquered Jerusalem. He left King Jehoiakim on the throne, but made him a vassal king, imposing an annual tribute upon the Jews. Jehoiakim paid the tribute until the fourth year, resulting in Nebuchadnezzar's once again laying siege to the city, three years later. During this conflict, Jehoiakim was killed. Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son, King Jeconiah (also known as Jehoiachin). Jeconiah, his royal court, and many prominent Jews (including the prophet Ezekiel) were taken to Babylon. Jehoiachin's uncle, Zedekiah, was placed on the throne of Jerusalem.

Zedekiah and some of his officials began to plot to rebel against Babylon. Their plan was to align themselves with the Egyptian Pharaoh Hophra, and throw off the yoke of Babylon. In obedience to the instructions of God, the prophet Jeremiah warned Zedekiah that he should not resist the Babylonians. In spite of these warnings, Zedekiah revolted against Babylon and entered into an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra. Nebuchadnezzar returned, defeated the Egyptians, and again besieged Jerusalem, resulting in the city's destruction in 587 BC. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city wall and the Temple, together with the houses of the most important citizens. Zedekiah and his sons were captured, the sons were executed in front of Zedekiah, who was then blinded, and taken to Babylon with many others (Jeremiah 52:10-11). Judah became a Babylonian province, called Yehud, putting an end to the independent Kingdom of Judah.

According to the book of Ezra, the Persian Cyrus the Great ended the exile in 538 BC, which was one year after he captured Babylon. The exile ended when Cyrus sent Zerubbabel the Prince (so-called because he was a descendant of the royal line of David) and Joshua the Priest (a descendant of the former High Priests of the Temple) to return to Jerusalem for the purpose of rebuilding the Second Temple. The building of the Temple occupied the years of 521–516 BC.

A later group of Jews traveled to Jerusalem with Ezra the Scribe, where they joined in the reconstruction of the city.

According to Jeremiah, the exile lasted seventy years (Jer. 25:11f; Jer. 29:10). Because, as noted above, there were several deportations of Jews into Babylon, and because the return to Jerusalem took place in stages, the beginning and ending dates of the seventy years can vary.

It was during their exile in Babylon that the Jews created the synagogue (Greek, *σὺν ἀγαγεῖν* *sun agagein*, “to lead with, or together”). Because they no longer had the Temple, and the altars associated with it, they no longer were able to practice their religion as it had been established by Jehovah through the writings of Moses. Therefore, in order to preserve their faith and their identity, they created the synagogue as a means of teaching and preserving their faith.

The synagogue, initially, was a gathering of Jewish families to rehearse the Law of Moses and to attend to other teachings. They began assembling on the Sabbath for this purpose. Never before had the Sabbath been a day to assemble for worship – it had been a day of rest, but in exile, with the establishment of the Synagogue, it became the custom to gather on the Sabbath for instruction and prayer. With the development of the synagogue, the Jews became a “people of the Book.”

In describing the work of Ezra the Scribe, many write that Ezra discovered a copy of the Torah after he returned to Jerusalem and began teaching the people from this recently discovered document. That really cannot be the case, since Ezra was described as one who studied the Law and knew it well, prior to his returning to Jerusalem.<sup>70</sup> Also, when Jeshua, Zerubbabel, and the others began to rebuild the city, they built *the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the Law of Moses, the man of God.*<sup>71</sup> If they did not have the Torah, how could they have known how to build the altar and the nature of offerings, *as it is written in the Law of Moses, the man of God?*

The argument that Ezra discovered a copy of the Torah and read it for the first time is based on the description of the scene in Nehemiah 8.

*And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which Jehovah had given to Israel. Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law. (Nehemiah 8:1-3)*

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<sup>70</sup> Ezra 7:6, 11, 12, 21

<sup>71</sup> Ezra 3:2

*Then on the second day the heads of fathers' households of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law.<sup>14</sup> They found written in the law how Jehovah had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month. (Nehemiah 8:13-14)*

There is nothing in this account, nor in earlier accounts, of Ezra's discovering the Torah, after he came to Jerusalem. Quite the contrary, he was a scholar of the Torah before he left Babylon.

After the development of the synagogue, Jewish civil and religious law was established as the Talmud. The Talmud began as oral law. Through the centuries, Jewish oral law had developed to govern how certain aspects of the Torah were to be applied in specific, sometimes, contemporary situations. When the Jews became divided, geographically, rabbis became concerned that the oral history and oral law would be lost. So, the decision was made to write the oral law – this was called the *Mishna*. Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi finished writing the Mishna in ca. 190 AD. In time, it became difficult to understand the Mishna because it was written in shorthand fashion and in places it was quite cryptic. The Mishna had been written on the assumption that the person reading it was already well-acquainted with the subject matter.<sup>72</sup>

A significant portion of the Jewish population was living in Babylon and for them the Mishna was especially difficult. To overcome this difficulty, the Babylonian rabbis put together the *Talmud Bavli* (the Babylonian Talmud). Even before this process had begun in Babylon, rabbis in Israel had produced the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (the Jerusalem Talmud).<sup>73</sup> These Talmuds preserved and clarified the oral law, as it had been codified in the Mishna.

Although there are two Talmuds, they are not really separate. The Rabbis of Babylon had access to the Jerusalem Talmud while they were working on their text. If there is dispute between the two Talmuds, the Babylonian Talmud is followed because it is more complete and easier to understand.

The Talmud was written in the middle of the Fourth Century, and in it are rigid regulations concerning the preparation of copies of the Pentateuch to be used in the synagogue. Here is a portion of those regulations:

- A synagogue roll must be written on the skins of clean animals, prepared for the particular use of the synagogue by a Jew.
- These must be fastened together with strings taken from clean animals.
- Every skin must contain a certain number of columns, equal throughout the entire codex.

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<sup>72</sup> For a discussion of the Mishna and the Talmud, see, [www.simpletoremember.com/articles/a/talmud-history/](http://www.simpletoremember.com/articles/a/talmud-history/)

<sup>73</sup> the Jerusalem Talmud was not written in Jerusalem; it was written in Tiberias, the last place where the Sanhedrin sat, but was called the Jerusalem Talmud in deference to the Sanhedrin's rightful home.

- The length of each column must not extend over less than forty-eight, or more than sixty lines; and the breadth must consist of thirty letters.
- The whole copy must first be lined; and if three words be written in it without a line, it is worthless.
- The ink should be black, neither red, green, nor any other color and be prepared according to a definite recipe.
- An *authentic* copy must be the exemplar, from which the transcriber ought not in the least to deviate.
- No word or letter, not even a *yod*, must be written from memory, the scribe not having looked at the codex before him.
- Between every consonant, the space of a hair or thread must intervene;
- between every word, the breadth of a narrow consonant;
- between every new *parashah*, or section, the breadth of nine consonants; between every book, three lines.
- The fifth book of Moses must terminate exactly with a line; but the rest need not do so.
- Besides this, the copyist must sit in full Jewish dress, wash his whole body,
- not begin to write the name of God with a pen newly dipped in ink (i.e., must wipe the pen and re-dip it before writing the name of Jehovah), and should a king address him while writing that name, he must take no notice of him.
- The rolls in which these regulations are not observed are condemned to be buried in the ground or burned; or they are banished to the schools, to be used as reading books.<sup>74</sup>

### **The Dead Sea Scrolls**

As the story goes, a shepherd of the Ta'amireh tribe left his flock of sheep and goats to search for a stray. Amid the crumbling limestone cliffs that line the northwestern rim of the Dead Sea, around the site of Qumran, he found a cave in the crevice of a steep rocky hillside. Intrigued, he cast a stone into the dark interior, only to be startled by the sound of breaking pots. This sound echoed around the world. For he had stumbled on the greatest find of the century, the Dead Sea Scrolls. Upon entering the cave, the young Bedouin found a collection of large clay jars. Most of the jars were empty, and without lids. A few had lids and when the Bedouin lifted the lids, he found that they contained scrolls, some wrapped in linen and blackened with age.

Uncertain about the value of what they had found, but considering the possibility that they might have some worth, the Bedouin shepherds took the scrolls to Kando, a Bethlehem antiquities dealer. Intrigued by the findings, Kando sent the Bedouin back to the caves in search of more

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<sup>74</sup> Lightfoot, pages 133-34, citing Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, rev. A. W. Adams (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1958)78-79. Also, [www.scottmanning.com/content/process-of-copying-the-old-testament-by-jewish-scribes/](http://www.scottmanning.com/content/process-of-copying-the-old-testament-by-jewish-scribes/)

treasures. To his delight, they returned with a total of seven scrolls. The Bedouins sold four of the seven scrolls to Kando and three to a second antiquities dealer named, Salahi.

Kando resold the four scrolls to Archbishop Samuel, head of the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of St. Mark in Jerusalem.

When Hebrew University Professor Eliezer Lipa Sukenik caught wind of the Scrolls' discovery through an Armenian antiquities dealer, he set out to investigate the significance of the finds. Braving Arab-Jewish tensions, he travelled to meet the Armenian dealer at the British divided military zone of the Jerusalem border. A chicken-wire fence at the border separated the two men. In this clandestine meeting, the dealer held up a fragment of leather for the professor to examine. As Sukenik peered through the wire, he recognized the ancient writing.

Eager to see more, Sukenik travelled with the dealer to Bethlehem to meet Salahi, who continued to possess the three scrolls that he had purchased from the Bedouins. When he opened the Scrolls, Sukenik, was amazed to see Hebrew manuscripts, one thousand years older than any existing biblical text. In his diary, Sukenik recollected:

“ My hands shook as I started to unwrap one of them. I read a few sentences. It was written in beautiful biblical Hebrew. The language was like that of the Psalms, but the text was unknown to me. I looked and looked, and I suddenly had the feeling that I was privileged by destiny to gaze upon a Hebrew Scroll which had not been read for more than 2,000 years. ”<sup>75</sup>

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Here is the chronological progression of the handling of the first seven scrolls:

**1948:** John C. Trever, then director of Jerusalem's American Schools of Oriental Research photographed three of the documents that Archbishop Samuel had purchased from Kando and deposited in St. Mark's Monastery (a complete manuscript of the book of Isaiah, a sectarian work called the Community Rule, and a commentary on the book of Habakkuk).<sup>76</sup>

Sukenik acquires and publishes selections of three Scrolls: The War Scroll, the Thanksgiving Scroll (Hodayot), and a second copy of Isaiah.

**1949:** Regional turmoil leads Syrian Archbishop Samuel to smuggle his precious four Scrolls out of the country, relocating them to a Syrian Church in New Jersey.

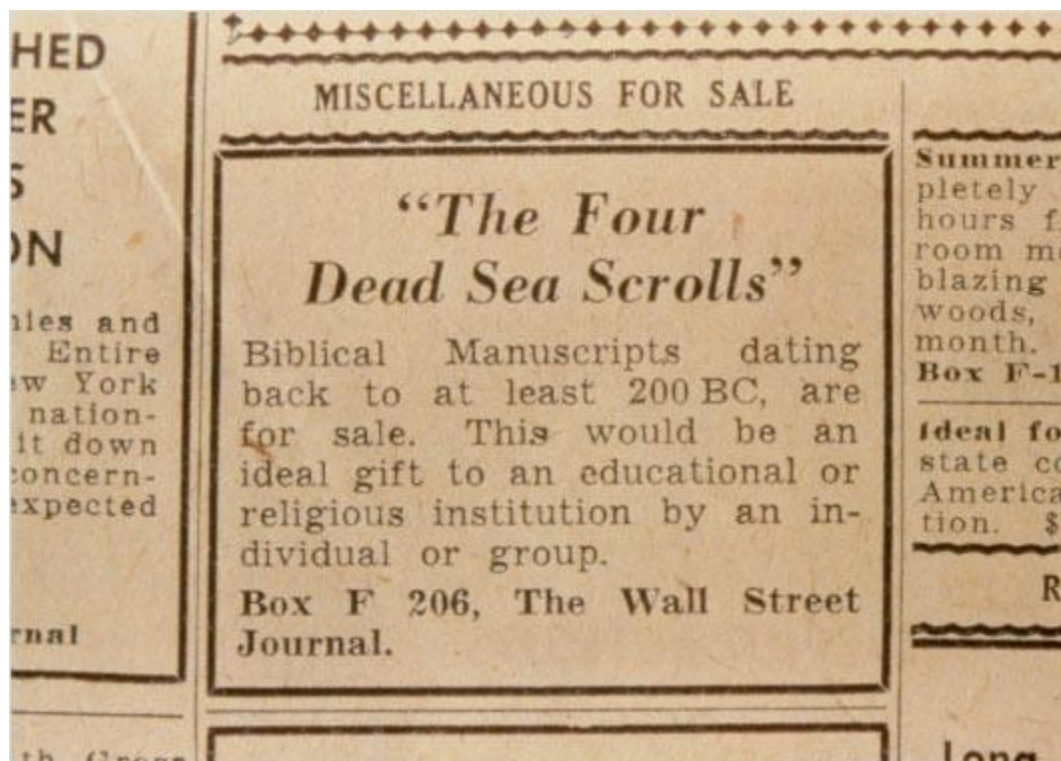
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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/learn-about-the-scrolls/discovery-and-publication>

<sup>76</sup> Because of its condition, Samuel was not able to open the fourth scroll. It later was opened and it turned out to be an Aramaic work re-writing portions of the book of Genesis and was named Genesis Apocryphon.

**1954:** Samuel places the same four Scrolls up for sale in a Wall Street Journal advertisement. Yigael Yadin, son of Professor Sukenik, purchases the four Scrolls through an American middleman, on behalf of the State of Israel.

Here is the advertisement in the Wall Street Journal, that Samuel posted in an effort to sell his scrolls.<sup>77</sup>



**1955:** Yadin joins the four Scrolls with the three already located at the Hebrew University

**1965:** The "Shrine of the Book" is built to house these seven Scrolls.

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When word spread that these seven Scrolls contained biblical texts and other ancient religious writings, it opened the way for a series of similar finds in ten other nearby caves over the next nine years. This vast manuscript treasury, known as the "Dead Sea Scrolls", includes a small number of near-complete Scrolls and tens of thousands of Scroll fragments, representing over 900 different texts written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Excavation over the years has extended outside the Qumran area, south along the western shore of the Dead Sea, from the caves of Wadi Murabba'at and Nahal Hever to Masada. Additional

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<sup>77</sup> Source: <http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il/learn-about-the-scrolls/discovery-and-publication>

scroll fragments have been discovered at numerous sites (For a map of the area and the location of sites where scrolls and fragments have been found, see ADDENDUM B).<sup>78</sup>

News of the discovery sent archaeologists, as well as Bedouin treasure hunters, racing to excavate the area where the first Scrolls were found. Overall, they discovered thousands of scroll fragments within 10 additional caves—in total the remains of over 900 manuscripts.

The majority of the richest treasures of the caves were discovered by the Bedouins. In Cave 4, thousands of fragments from about 500 different scrolls were found. De Vaux and Harding negotiated with the Bedouins to purchase the Scrolls they had found. The team quickly began their work at the Rockefeller Museum, piecing together the fragments of over 900 manuscripts.

For the first 40 years after their discovery, the study of the thousands of text fragments was monopolized by fewer than a dozen international scholars, all great experts in their respective fields. Because the team of scholars was so small in number, the publication of the texts was slow in coming, causing some to suspect that there was some sort of conspiracy to hide the contents of the scrolls. Hershel Shanks, editor of the *Biblical Archaeology Review*, although discounting the conspiracy theory, pushed hard to get the committee to publish the scrolls.<sup>79</sup>

In the early 1990s, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) took major steps to advance the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrew University Professor Emanuel Tov was nominated as chief editor and the publication was divided among about 100 international scholars. By 2001, the majority of the official editions had been published and were located in academic libraries.

In 1938, the Palestine Archaeological Museum, also known as the Rockefeller Museum (Rockefeller had provided most of the funding for the museum) was opened. It became the official repository for many of the Holy Land's greatest finds. This is where the IAA first began studying the scrolls. The museum initially was managed by an international trusteeship. When Arab nations became increasingly hostile to Israel, the museum was occupied, briefly, by Jordanian forces in 1966. Following the Six-Day War of June 1967, the museum became the property of Israel. From that time onward, it has been run by the Israel Museum.

Prior to the Six-Day War, there already had been concern for the preservation of the scrolls. In response to this concern, the family of a Hungarian-Jewish philanthropist, David Samuel Gottesman, funded the building of what became the Shrine of the Book. The construction of this building began in 1965. The Shrine of the Book (a part of the Israel Museum) now houses the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Aleppo Codex, and other important historical Jewish documents and materials. In this setting the IAA has established a conservation lab dedicated solely to the conservation and preservation of the Scrolls. The museum and the shrine are located on the eastern side of Jerusalem.

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<sup>78</sup> Fragments still are being discovered. See <http://www.deadseascrolls.org/www/Site/index.php>

<sup>79</sup> Harold Scanlin, *The Dead Sea Scrolls & Modern Translations of the Old Testament* (Wheaton, IL, Tyndalle House Publishers) 1993, pages 10-11



### The Rockefeller Museum



### Two Views of the Shrine of the Book



In addition to these sites, where the original scrolls and fragments are stored, the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center (ABMC) in Claremont, California, is an official depository for photographs of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The ABMC has published the *Dead Sea Scrolls Inventory Project: Lists of Documents, Photographs, and Museum Plates*.

Portions of every book of the Old Testament are found in the scrolls – with the exception of the Book of Esther. Most are fragmentary, but some are lengthy. For example, among the earlier finds were the two books of Samuel (in a tattered copy) and two complete chapters of the book

of Habakkuk. In addition to biblical texts, there are a number of nonbiblical scrolls related to the Qumran commune and a portion of at least one apocryphal book.<sup>80</sup>

The most complete scroll is what has been labelled, *The Great Isaiah Scroll* (catalogued as 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>).<sup>81</sup> It is one of the seven scrolls first discovered by the Bedouin shepherds in 1947, and then sold to Kando. The scroll is written in Hebrew and, except for a few small damaged portions, it contains the entire Book of Isaiah from beginning to end. It is the oldest complete copy of the Book of Isaiah known, being approximately 1100 years older than the Leningrad Codex.<sup>82</sup>

The scroll is written on 17 sheets of parchment. It is particularly large, being about 24 feet long and 11 inches high. There are 54 columns of text.<sup>83</sup>

The significance of the find was recognized by Merrill F. Unger when he wrote,

"This complete document of Isaiah quite understandably created a sensation since it was the first major Biblical manuscript of great antiquity ever to be recovered. Interest in it was especially keen since it antedates by more than a thousand years the oldest Hebrew texts preserved in the Massoretic tradition."<sup>84</sup>

The supreme value of these Qumran documents lies in the ability of biblical scholars to compare them with the Massoretic Hebrew texts of the tenth century A.D. If, upon examination, there were little or no textual changes in those Massoretic texts where comparisons were possible, an assumption could then be made that the Massoretic Scribes had probably been just as faithful in their copying of the other biblical texts which could not be compared with the Qumran material.

What did the comparison between the Qumran manuscript of Isaiah and the Massoretic text reveal? They were found to be amazingly close in accuracy to each other. The 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> copy of Isaiah contains minor differences from the Massoretic text, but most of the differences are simply grammatical (for example, spelling certain words with an extra letter that does not alter the pronunciation). Evaluating this evidence, R. Laird Harris accurately states,

"A comparison of Isaiah 53 shows that only 17 letters differ from the Massoretic text. Ten of these are mere differences in spelling (like our *honor* and the English *honour*) and produce no change in the meaning at all. Four more are very minor differences, such as the presence of a conjunction (and) which are stylistic rather than substantive. The other three letters are the Hebrew word for *light*.<sup>85</sup> This word was added to the text

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<sup>80</sup> Syriac 51:13-30

<sup>81</sup> Cave #1, Qumran, Isaiah, scroll <sup>a</sup>; other Isaiah scrolls found in cave #1 have subscript letters in sequence, i.e., 1QIsa<sup>b</sup>, 1QIsa<sup>c</sup>, etc. This is the system used to catalogue all of the Qumran scrolls – first the number of the cave, followed by an abbreviation of the title of the book, then a superscript letter indicating which scroll is being referenced.

<sup>82</sup> See page 32 in these notes

<sup>83</sup> For an informative photograph of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> see ADDENDUM C

<sup>84</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *Famous Archaeological Discoveries* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1957), 72.

<sup>85</sup> The NIV, NAB, NEB/REB, AND NRSV, accept the addition of the word, אִוָּר, believing that the weight of the 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> are convincing (the Septuagint also contains this word). Others

by someone after *they shall see* in verse 11. Out of 166 words in this chapter, only this one word is in question, and it does not at all change the meaning of the passage. We are told by biblical scholars that this is typical of the whole manuscript of Isaiah."<sup>86</sup>

Another example cited by Lightfoot is the sixth chapter of Isaiah. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has thirty-seven variant readings from the Massoretic Text. Yet, most of them are merely spelling differences. Only three are large enough to be reflected in English translations and not one is of any significance:<sup>87</sup>

1. *they were calling* instead of *one called to anther* (verse 3)
2. *holy, holy,* instead of, *holy, holy, holy,* (verse 3)
3. *sins,* instead of, *sin* (verse 7)

The discovery of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has sustained confidence in the text produced by the Massorettes – confidence both in the exemplars from which the Massorettes copied their manuscripts and the careful accuracy of their work.

Not only 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> but the vast majority of the manuscripts found near the Dead Sea are closely akin, almost identical, or identical, to the Massoretic Text.

Dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls is of great importance to those who are involved in Biblical criticism. As noted earlier, both carbon 14 testing and paleography are important means of determining the age of a document. Of course, neither of these is an exact science. Using these methods, as well as archaeological data surrounding the area of the finds, all of the documents were written between 250 BC and 70 AD.<sup>88</sup> Because they are copies of earlier scrolls, they are important evidence of the text of much older documents.<sup>89</sup>

Pieces of the Isaiah Scroll have been carbon-14 dated at least four times, giving calibrated date ranges between 335-324 BC and 202-107 BC.<sup>90</sup> Numerous paleographic and scribal dating studies indicate that the Isaiah Scroll was created 150-100 BC.<sup>91</sup> Thus, it can be said that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> was produced at least a century before the Christian era.

In 1993, when Bible translators were first beginning to take into account the data provided by the Dead Sea Scrolls, Scanlin wrote, “Those who anticipated some revolutionary revelations which

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disagree, arguing that the word, *light*, plays a significant role in the Qumran community and it is not unreasonable to assume that they added the word (see Scanlin, page 132)

<sup>86</sup> R. Laird Harris, *Can I Trust My Bible?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), 124.

<sup>87</sup> Lightfoot, page 139

<sup>88</sup> Scanlin, pages 12-15, 47- 48

<sup>89</sup> One of the manuscripts is an early copy of Exodus. It is written in Proto-Hebrew (also known as Paleo-Hebrew – see page 14 in these notes) – see Lightfoot, page 136 and Scanlin, page 48

<sup>90</sup> The methods of carbon 14 dating have evolved since the process was first put forth by Willard Libby in the late 1940’s. Libby’s Beta Counting method was modified with the use of Proportional Counters, then Liquid Scintillation Counting. A process known as Accelerator Mass Spectrometry (AMS) was developed in the 1970’s, but Beta Counting seemed to produce more accurate results than AMS, until 2014, when the process was improved. Today, most laboratories use AMS in Carbon 14 testing .

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.allaboutarchaeology.org/dead-sea-scrolls-2.htm>

would require dramatic changes in the Old Testament will be disappointed.”<sup>92</sup> Indeed, his statement has proven to be true.

Two outstanding Old Testament text scholars summarize the conclusion:

“...the authenticity of the Massoretic text stands higher than at any time in the history of modern textual criticism, a standpoint which is based on a better assessment of the history of the Jewish transmission.”<sup>93</sup>

It should therefore be stated explicitly that, when we survey the Hebrew Bible as a whole, the incidents of copyists’ errors is statistically few indeed. Even allowing the intrusion of occasional errors in the received Hebrew text, it is remarkable how faithfully it was transmitted.”<sup>94</sup>

### **Ancient Versions of the Old Testament**

Although the Hebrew manuscripts always will be the most important materials in establishing the text, the versions (translations) of the ancient text are independent witnesses to the text.

1. Some of the versions were completed several centuries before the time of Christ and thus, greatly pre-date the kind of text used by the Massorettes.
2. The versions, which used with discretion, can clarify the Massoretic Text when it appears to be defective in some manner.
3. The versions often are parallel to the Massoretic Text, thus giving it increased credibility.<sup>95</sup>

The most important of these are the Septuagint, the Aramaic Targums, the Syriac, and the Latin. Also somewhat relevant is the Samaritan Pentateuch.

#### Samaritan Pentateuch

The Samaritan Pentateuch is not a translation, but is a form of the Hebrew text, itself. The Samaritans separated themselves from the Jews, at around 400 BC, and built their place of worship on Mount Gerizim, near Shechem. At the same time, they adopted their own form of the Hebrew Scriptures and considered the five books of Moses to be the only authoritative Scripture.

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<sup>92</sup> Scanlin, page 13

<sup>93</sup> Beddyn J. Roberts, “The Old Testament: Manuscripts, Text and Versions,” in *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, 26, as quoted in Lightfoot, page 139

<sup>94</sup> J. Weingreen, *Introduction to the Critical Study of the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 96 as quoted in Lightfoot, page 139

<sup>95</sup> Lightfoot, page 141

The Samaritan Pentateuch has six thousand variants from the Massoretic Text, but most of these have to do with spelling and grammatical differences. Some of the other differences are the result of the beliefs of the Samaritans – they seem to have made some changes in the text. For example, after the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, the Samaritan Pentateuch inserts a long passage commanding the Israelites to build an altar on Mount Gerizim. In Deuteronomy 27:4, instead of Mount Ebal, the Samaritan Pentateuch reads, Mount Gerazim.

For the most part, the Samaritan Pentateuch supports the Hebrew Pentateuch. There are some places where it does differ and is similar to some variants in the Septuagint (which we will examine in a later section).

### Aramaic Targums

After the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity, Aramaic became their spoken language. This was the prevailing language of the Jews in the time of Christ. Scripture, however, was written in Hebrew. In order for the people to understand the reading of Scripture in public worship, it was necessary for the Scripture to be paraphrased in Aramaic. These oral translations were known as *Targums*.

In Nehemiah 8, we read of a gathering of the people to hear the reading of the Law of Moses. Verses 5-7 informs us that Ezra read from the Law and the Levites explained it to the people. Nehemiah 8:8 states,

*They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.*

In the synagogues, the Targums always were oral, but the Hebrew text always was read from a scroll. This was a strict rule and thus was made a clear distinction between the authoritative text and the oral paraphrase. Over the centuries, a number of Targums developed, always passed on orally.

By the beginning of the Christian era, Targums were committed to writing. By the Fifth Century, two official Targums existed, *Targum Onkelos*, related to the Pentateuch, and *Targum Jonathan*, which paraphrased the prophets. *Targum Onkelos* is considered to be the greater authority. Both of these are quite literal in their attempts to provide a paraphrased translation (similar to the efforts of those who produced the English, NLT).

One feature of the Targums is their paraphrase in reference to God. For example, in Genesis 3:8, instead of *the sound of Jehovah God walking in the garden*, Targum Onkelos reads, *the sound of the word of Jehovah God walking in the garden*. In Exodus 3:1, in reference to Mount Sinai, instead of the Hebrew, *the mountain of God*, is paraphrased as *the mountain upon which the glory was revealed*. In Isaiah 6:1, instead of, *I saw Jehovah*, the paraphrase reads, *I saw the glory of Jehovah*.

Several Targums have been found at Qumran, which consistently testify to the Massoretic type of text.

## Syriac Peshitta

The written Targums were in a dialect called, “Western Aramaic,” which was the language spoken by the Jews in the time of Christ. Other translations were made in the “Eastern Aramaic” language, which is known as Syriac. There are several Syriac versions of the New Testament but only one Old Testament Syriac version has survived. It is known as the *Peshitta*, which means, *simple*.

The Peshitta Version of the Old Testament was produced during the middle of the First Century AD, somewhat synonymous with the birth of the Church. No one knows the identity of those who produced this translation – whether they were Christians or Jews. Perhaps both were involved, independently. It is very close to the Massoretic Text, although there are some places where it seems to have been influenced by the Septuagint, which was the form of the Old Testament that most people read in the time of Christ.

## The Septuagint

One of the most important Bible translations ever made was the Septuagint – the translation of the Old Testament into Greek. This is the version that generally was read during the time of Christ and it is the version that usually is quoted in the sermons that we find the apostles preaching in our New Testament text. The story behind this text probably is a mixture of fact and legend.

The letter of Aristeas, an Alexandrian Jew, wrote to his brother, Philocrates and told him what took place in the court of Ptolemy II (285-247 BC). According to the letter, Ptolemy asked his librarian to arrange to have the Jewish Law translated and added to his world famous library. There was a very large Jewish population Alexandria at the time.

A letter was sent to the Jewish High Priest, Eleazar, in Jerusalem, asking for his help. Aristeas was one of the men chosen to carry the message to Eleazar. Seventy-two elders, six from each tribe, were selected as translators and they were sent to Egypt with a beautiful copy of the Law. Aristeas lists the names of these translators. For some reason, the original number of seventy-two has been rounded down to seventy – i.e. the Septuagint.

When they arrived at Alexandria, Ptolemy presented them with a banquet of seven days, and during this time he questioned each man to determine his level of wisdom. When he was satisfied that each man was equipped for the task, he provided wonderful accommodations on the island of Pharos. This was the location of one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world – the Pharos Lighthouse. Under the shadow of the lighthouse, the translators complete their work in seventy-two days, and their result was read to the Jews of Alexandria – who approved their work as an accurate translation of the Hebrew into Greek.

There are historical problems with Aristeas’ letter, but the core of the story seems to be true. Here is what most consider to be plausible and probably, factual.

The origin of the Septuagint was in Alexandria, Egypt, where there was a very large Jewish population and where a translation from Hebrew to Greek would be needed. It also was the location of the most famous library in the world, and Ptolemy II was a patron of literature and he

wanted the library to contain every important piece of literature. Demetrius, the librarian may have been the one to suggest the translation project to Ptolemy I, but it probably was not completed until the early reign of Ptolemy II.<sup>96</sup>

Several factors lend a degree of credence to Aristeas' letter. The date of the translation of the Pentateuch/Septuagint, according to Aristeas, would have been in the first half of the Third Century. The names of the translators that he lists are names that were known at that time. Also, in the First Century AD, Philo wrote that a festival still was being held on Pharos to honor the place "in which the light of that version first shone out."<sup>97</sup>

The record refers only to the translation of the Pentateuch. There is no record of when or by whom the rest of the Old Testament was translated into Greek. We assume that as Greek became the international language, and for many Jews Greek became the literary language, that individuals or groups translated the various books in succeeding centuries. One thing that is certain is that by the time of the birth of Christ, the entire Old Testament was available in Greek.

The Septuagint presents many problems. For example: (1) was there only one early Greek version or were there several; (2) were there various editions of the Septuagint? Knowing that the entire Septuagint was not completed at the same time, does not allow us to speak of an original Septuagint text.

The Septuagint translation of the Hebrew is neither a literal translation, nor a paraphrase. It is similar to a dynamic equivalency version – the same style as the English NIV. There are places where the Hebrew element shines through but it also is a good example of the Koine Greek of that period. The Pentateuch especially demonstrates great care in how it was rendered. Since Greek was widely spoken and the dominant literary language during the centuries leading up to the time of Christ, it would be natural to assume that a number of translations were made during this period. The Septuagint never did seem to be a unified and carefully guarded text.

In some places, there is a clear difference between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint. For example:

1. The Septuagint of Exodus 35-40 has substantial rearrangements of the text.
2. Different manuscripts of the Septuagint preserve two forms of the Greek text in Judges
3. Samuel/Kings at some points presents different forms of the Hebrew and Greek texts
4. In Jeremiah, the Septuagint is one-eighth shorter than the Hebrew text and places the oracles against the nations (Chapters 46-51 in the Hebrew Bible) after 25:13.

Most of the differences between the Septuagint and the Massoretic Hebrew text are quite minor. Two of the more difficult problems relate to I & II Samuel and Jeremiah. Even so, there are

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<sup>96</sup> Lightfoot (page 217) includes the following comment, citing Nina Collins: "Nina Collins suggests a coregency of two years for Ptolemies I and II and that the translation was made after the death of Ptolemy I. Collins [writes] "281 BCE: The Year of the Translation of the Pentateuch into Greek under Ptolemy II" in *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings*. Ed. George J. Brooks and Barnabas Lindars (Atlanta, Scholars, 1992), 412-14, 444-48. Collins goes on to say that though problems remain, "the account of Aristeas concerning the translation of the Law is essentially true." (476)

<sup>97</sup> Philo - *Life of Moses*, II, 41, as cited in Lightfoot

some things to keep in mind. At least four of the Dead Sea Scrolls contain portions of Jeremiah. These date from the Third Century BC to the First Century BC. All together, they preserve forty-nine sections of the text from thirty chapters. The vast majority of these sections agree with, or are closely akin to, the Massoretic Text. Only three of the forty-nine sections resemble the Septuagint. Honesty requires us to consider the possibility that there were different forms of the Hebrew text of Jeremiah.

The same can be said for I & II Samuel. The Dead Sea Scrolls include four fragmentary manuscripts of Samuel, and two of them are more closely related to the Septuagint than to the Hebrew. How to explain all of this remains somewhat of a mystery, but it must be remembered that almost all of the differences are minor and that for the most part, the Septuagint supports the Massoretic Text.

Apart from textual matters, the Septuagint has had great influence on our Bible. For example, the names of the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), have found their way into our Bibles from the Septuagint (via the Vulgate). The dividing the Old Testament books into sections and the order in which they appear in our Bibles (Law, History, Poetry, and Prophets), and the subdividing the books of I & II Samuel and I & II Kings, first appeared in the Septuagint.

This arrangement is different from that in the Hebrew Bible:

1. Law: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
2. Prophets:
  - a. Former Prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings
  - b. Latter Prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve<sup>98</sup>
3. Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles.

#### The Vulgate

The story of the work of Jerome will be told in more completeness in a later section in our study, when we begin to explore more fully the transmission of the text of the New Testament. For the present, we will recount the story of Jerome and how he came into the role of translator and how his work in the Old Testament is relevant.

Esebius Hieronymous, known as Jerome, was born about the year 345 at Strido(n) in Dalmatia (an area northwest of modern Greece). When he was about twelve, his well-to- parents sent him to Rome, where he studied advanced Latin grammar, Greek, and Latin classics. Later, he concentrated on rhetoric and prepared for a career as a lawyer or some sort of civil servant. In essence, he had the best education available to anyone at that time.

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<sup>98</sup> The books that in our era are known as the “Minor Prophets,” in the Hebrew Bible are known as The Book of the Twelve



Jerome had been only a nominal Christian. When he left Rome and moved to Antioch, he committed himself to the life of an ascetic, but he could not give up his love of classical (pagan) literature.

While at Antioch, he contracted an illness that produced a very severe fever. He was close to dying. In a later letter, he related what happened.<sup>99</sup> In a dream he found himself before the judgment seat of God and was asked to describe himself. He replied that he was a Christian. The Judge replied, “You lie. You are a Ciceronian, not a Christian.” The dream was a shattering experience and as a result, he devoted the rest of his life to studying, not the classics, but Scripture.

He left Antioch and moved to the sun-drenched deserts to live as a hermit, among other hermits, in Syria. For four or five years, he gave himself to studies related to Scripture. One of the contacts he had among the hermits was a Jew who had converted to Christianity. From this man, he began to learn Hebrew.

At the time, there were many Latin versions of Scripture – most independently done and without any consensus as to the validity of the translation. Bishop Damasus of Rome decided that there was a need to draw together these translations into one official version. This was sometime in the year, 382-383. By this time, Jerome had returned to Rome and was serving as Damasus’ secretary and translator. Damasus decided that no one was more qualified for the task of revising the Old Latin and producing a unified text than was Jerome.

This assignment was not one undertaken without a degree of anxiety. In 384 he finished his revision of the Four Gospels and in the preface to his work, dedicating the product to Damasus, he wrote,

“You urge me to revise the Old Latin version... the labor is one of love, but at the same time both perilous and presumptuous. Is there a man, learned or unlearned, who will not, when he takes the volume in his hands, and perceives that what he reads does not suit his settled tastes, break out immediately into violent language and call me a forger and a profane person for having had the audacity to add anything to the ancient books, or to make an changes or corrections therein.”<sup>100</sup>

The Old Latin versions date to around 150 AD and were translations of the Septuagint, not the Hebrew text. After his stint as secretary to Damasus, Jerome moved to Bethlehem and continued his work by beginning to translate the Old Testament books. Initially, the translations were based on the Septuagint, but as he increased in his facility in Hebrew, he became convinced that only the Hebrew could be the ultimate authority for Old Testament Scriptures. He undertook a fresh translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. He spent about fifteen years in translating the Old Testament (309 – 405) from Hebrew into Latin. First, he translated Samuel and Kings. Next came Psalms, then the Prophets and Job, followed by Ezra and Chronicles and finally, the remaining books of the Old Testament.

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<sup>99</sup> Jerome, Letter 22, 30

<sup>100</sup> Jerome, *Preface to the Four Gospels*, as quoted in Lightfoot, page 71. For the full text, see [http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/jerome\\_preface\\_to\\_four\\_gospels.htm](http://www.earlychurchtexts.com/public/jerome_preface_to_four_gospels.htm)

His work brought him a lot of criticism from some Christian communities. He no longer was under the covering of Damasus. In his prefaces, he often mentions his critics. In his preface to Job, he assures his “barking critics” that he did not intend to belittle the Septuagint, but to bring out from the Hebrew that which was obscure in the Septuagint.<sup>101</sup>

As a result of his careful work, we have a good idea of the Hebrew texts from which he translated. A comparison of Jerome’s Vulgate with the Massoretic Text, demonstrates that the texts that he used were almost identical to that of the Massorettes.

## NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS

As we turn our attention to the transmission of the New Testament, three sources will receive our attention: manuscripts, papyri, and quotations from the Early Church Fathers.

### Text Types

First, we must discuss what has come to be labelled, *Text Types*. Over time, various streams of text transmission developed. Wescott and Hort, in their development of their landmark edition of *The New Testament in Greek* (first issued 1881), based on their investigations of the various witnesses to the text of the New Testament, delineated by the geographical area, four streams of textual families. In each of these streams, there flowed manuscripts with similar patterns of variants. The current labels applied to the four major text types (also known as *families*) are:<sup>102</sup>

- Alexandrian (Wescott & Hort labelled these, “Neutral Text”)
- Caesarian
- Western
- Byzantine (Wescott & Hort labelled these, “Syrian”)

Recently, rather than following this traditional categorization of manuscripts, scholarly consensus is moving toward what is known as Coherence-Based-Genealogical Method (CGBM). CGBM has been championed by Gerd Mink of the Intsitut fur neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF) in Munster, Germany. Even so, the four categories of text types proposed by Wescott and Hort still are the dominant means of identifying textual families. When studying a particular manuscript, or other ancient Scriptural document, the student will find the document identified as belonging to one of the four types – or at least resembling one of the text types.

### Cataloguing and Identifying Sources

As so much material became available, it became cumbersome to reference the item to which a scholar might be referring in his research. To resolve this problem, a system of cataloguing and identifying the materials was developed. There have been some adjustments along the way.

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<sup>101</sup> Lightfoot, page 145

<sup>102</sup> for a map, showing the geographical identity of these text types, see ADDENDUM D

The current system was developed shortly after 1890 by Caspar Rene' Gregory.<sup>103</sup> Gregory adapted and modified the system first proposed a century earlier by Johann Jacob, Weittstein in Amsterdam. Originally, uncials were designated by a capital letter in the Latin or Greek alphabet – with the exception of Codex Sinaiticus, which is designated by the Hebrew  $\alpha$ . When so many uncials were discovered that both Latin and Greek alphabets were insufficient, the later discoveries were designated by an Arabic numeral preceded by a zero (046, 047, etc.). Miniscule manuscripts are referred to by an Arabic numeral (28, 33, etc.). Papyri are referred to by an Old English  $\mu$ , followed by a subscript Arabic numeral ( $\mu^1$ ,  $\mu^2$ , etc.). Ostraca sometimes are referenced by a Gothic letter. Versions are referenced by an abbreviation of the language of the version, with attendant abbreviations referencing the document (it<sup>a</sup> Italian, i.e. Latin). For the list of manuscripts and versions used in the critical apparatus of the United Bible Societies 1968 Greek New Testament, see ADDENDUM E.

### Codex Sinaiticus

The oldest complete copy of the Greek New Testament is the Uncial, Codex Sinaiticus. It is an example of the Alexandrian Text Type. The codex could not have been written before 325 AD, because it contains the Eusebian Canons<sup>104</sup> – which were composed by Eusebius around 325 AD. It is generally agreed that it could not have been written later than 360. Thus, it is dated 330-360 AD. The story of its discovery, as well as the story of the discovery of some of the papyri is as serendipitous as was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Lobegott Friedrich Constantin von Tischendorf was born in 1815, the son of a physician in the little town of Lengenfeld in Saxony. From his earliest years, he was a very devout young man as well as being a top-ranking student in all of his classes. He had a special interest in the classical authors and he became proficient in Greek and Latin, the languages of the classics. After beginning theological studies at the University of Leipzig, he learned Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Coptic. For a year, he taught at a private school, under the oversight of the man who would become his father-in-law.

At that time, he already was immersed in research for his critical edition of the New Testament – he published eight versions of this work, during his lifetime. When he began his work on the text of the New Testament, he was surprised to learn that, for the most part, very little philological work had been done on the few existing ancient Biblical documents, known to exist at that time. Almost all of the attention had been given to later manuscripts. He especially was critical of the methods of Erasmus who had published a Greek New Testament (discussed later in these notes), based on the Byzantine text, some of which Tischendorf considered to be flawed. Out of these concerns, he began a lifetime pursuit of ancient scriptural texts. In the ensuing

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<sup>103</sup>Gregory was a native Philadelphian, who, after receiving his theological training at Princeton, went to Germany where he became Professor of New Testament at Leipzig in 1889.

<sup>104</sup> The Eusebian Canons consist of numbers attached to sections of the Four Gospels that indicate parallel passages in each Gospel. This device enabled the student to read all accounts of an incident, as recorded by the different Gospels. The idea first was proposed by Ammonius of Alexandria, but it was Eusebius who devised the method that survived.

years, he proved himself to be a paleographic genius – equally adept at finding valuable documents, as well as deciphering them and dating them.

Driven by this goal, with the help of his elder brother and the skeptical Saxonian government, he scraped together enough money to begin his search. He first went to Paris in 1840, where he knew two of the most ancient documents were stored (Codex Ephraemi and Codex Claromontanus). Codex Ephraemi, being a palimpsest (see page 12 of these notes) had discouraged the best paleographers – none had been able to get past the newer script to read the underlying original. None of the optical aids available today for use in this task were in existence at that time. Even so, Tischendorf set himself to this task. He was blessed with excellent eyesight and he had a superb knowledge of ancient uncials. He held the parchment against the light, and for two years worked on deciphering and validating the underlying text. As a result, he immediately became famous as one of the emerging giants in the field of paleography. A scholar who later met Tischendorf for the first time, thought that there must be two von Tischendorfs, because a person so young could not have achieved what the famous von Tischendorf had achieved.

While in Paris, he also worked on Codex Claromontanus (an uncial manuscript of the New Testament epistles). From Paris, he traveled to many other countries, where valuable New Testament were stored in various libraries.

Then, fast-forward to 1844, when he began an extensive journey through the Near East in search of Biblical manuscripts. While visiting the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai,<sup>105</sup> he happened to see some leaves of a parchment in a waste-basket. The contents of the waste-basket were being used to light the monastery oven. Tischendorf pulled out some of the parchment sheets and upon examination realized that they were part of a copy of the Septuagint, written in early Greek uncial script. He retrieved forty-three leaves from the basket. A nearby monk casually commented that two basket-loads of similar leaves already had been burned. Later, noting his curiosity, the monks showed Tischendorf other portions of the same codex (containing all of Isaiah and the historical Jewish documents, I & II Maccabees). He told the monks that such things were too valuable to be used to stoke the fires of their oven. They allowed him to keep the forty-three leaves that he had retrieved from the waste-basket, but they would not allow him to take any others. The forty-three leaves contained portions of I Chronicles, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, and Esther.

When he returned to Europe, he deposited these in the Leipzig University library, where they remain today. In 1846, he published the contents of these leaves, and named them, Codex Frederico-Augustanus (in honor of the king of Saxony, Frederick-Augusts, his sovereign and patron).

Hoping to find other portions of the same manuscript, Tischendorf returned to the monastery of St. Catherine in 1853. His excitement over the discovery of the manuscripts on his first visit had

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<sup>105</sup> The monastery was constructed in 585 AD, by Emperor Justinian I. It supposedly was erected at the site of the burning bush, encountered by Moses – a bush currently growing there is supposedly that bush. The monastery is controlled by the Autocephalous Church of Sinai - a part of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

made the monks cautious and they were hesitant to tell him anything about any remaining portions of the manuscript. He returned home, empty handed.

Through some clever political maneuvering (the tale is rather lengthy, and we do not see the need to repeat it here) Tischendorf was able to gain the patronage of the Russian Czar, Alexander II, for a third trip to St. Catherine in 1859. The Czar was the titular head of the Russian Orthodox Church and greatly respected by the monks at St. Catherine. Upon his arrival, since he came as a representative of the Czar, Tischendorf was treated with great deference and respect. The Russian flag was flown in his honor. For three days, he made a thorough investigation of the libraries at the monastery and found little of interest. Deciding that there was nothing left for him to do, on the fourth day, as he was preparing to leave, he gave the steward of the monastery a copy of the Septuagint which he recently had published in Leipzig. The steward then commented to him that he also had a copy of the Septuagint and produced from a closet in his cell, a manuscript wrapped in red cloth. Concealing his feelings, Tischendorf casually asked permission to look at the manuscript that evening. It was somewhat of a cat and mouse game. Permission was given and he retired to his room with the manuscript. He stayed up all night and later wrote in his diary (as a scholar he wrote in Latin), *quippe dormire nefas Ividebar* (“it really seemed a sacrilege to sleep”).

Once again, we forego the telling of the intricate “ecclesiastical diplomacy” and political maneuvering involved, but the end result was Tischendorf’s persuading the ecclesiastical authorities at the monastery and those who were important in the Orthodox Church (some of this was tied to gaining favor with the Czar in the election of a new abbot), to present the document to the Czar so that he would favor the appointment of the abbot desired by the monastery.

In that culture, the presentation of a gift required some sort of a return gift. In response to the gift of the manuscript, which was given the name, Codex Sinaiticus, the Czar presented to the monastery a silver shrine for St. Catherine, a gift of 7,000 rubles for the library at the monastery, 2000 rubles for the Sinaitic monks at the monastery at Cairo, and conferred several Russian decorations (equivalent to honorary degrees) on the authorities of the monastery.

The definitive publication of the codex was accomplished when Oxford University Press issued a facsimile from photographs taken by professor and Mrs. Kirsopp Lake of Harvard (the New Testament in 1911, the Old Testament in 1922).

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, the Communist regime had no interest in the Bible and the Russian government was desperate for money. The Russians negotiated a deal with the Trustees of the British Museum in which they sold the codex for 100,000 British pounds (at that time, slightly more than \$500,000.00) The British government guaranteed one-half of the sum, and the other half paid by subscriptions from British and American individuals and congregations. In 1933, just before Christmas Day, the manuscript was carried, under guard, into the British Museum, where it rests today.

Later, other pages from the manuscript were discovered. In the early Twentieth Century, Vladimir N. Breneshevich (1874-1938) discovered parts of three more leaves of the codex that had been used for the binding of other manuscripts in the monastery library. He visited the

monastery on three occasions (1907, 1908, 1911), but in his account, he does not indicate on which of these visits he made the discovery, nor does he identify the book for which the codex leaves had been used for binding. He donated these leaves to the library at St. Petersburg, where they remain today.

In May, 1975, the monks were doing restoration work on the monastery buildings and beneath the St. George Chapel they discovered a room that had long been forgotten. In this room they found many manuscript fragments. They invited Kurt Aland and his team from the Institute for New Testament Textual Research to analyze, examine, and photograph these fragments of the New Testament. Among their finds were twelve complete leaves that had been missing from the Codex Sinaiticus. In addition to this find, sixty-seven Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have been found.

Some days before September 1, 2009, University of the Arts London PhD student, Nikolas Sarris, discovered in the library of St. Catherine's Monastery, the text of the Book of Joshua.

As a result of these various discoveries of leaves from Codex Sinaiticus, it can be said that the present extant portions of the codex contain large portions of the Septuagint Old Testament, a complete New Testament, as well as the Apocrypha, the Epistle of Barnabas, and portions of the Shepherd of Hermas.<sup>106</sup>

The progressive and separate discoveries have led to portions of the codex's being stored in three places: the original find is in the British Museum, but the other portions are held in St. Petersburg, and in the St. Catherine's Monastery.

#### Codex Vaticanus

Codex Vaticanus receives its name from its place of conservation - the Vatican Library - where it has been kept since at least the 15<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>107</sup> The codex is listed among the contents of the library when the library was first catalogued in 1475. Most of the New Testament portion of Codex Vaticanus is classed as an Alexandrian Text Type, but in the Pauline epistles there is a distinctly Western element.<sup>108</sup> The Old Testament reflects several streams. It has been dated as early Fourth Century (300 – 325 AD). For some unknown reason, during a large part of the Nineteenth Century, Vatican Library authorities put continual obstacles in front of scholars wanted to examine the document. Finally in 1889-90, a complete photographic facsimile of the manuscript was edited and produced by Giuseppe Cozza-Lupe, thus making the codex available to interested scholars. Another facsimile edition of the New Testament portion of the codex was issued in Milan in 1904. In 1965, at the order of Pope Paul VI, the New Testament portion of the

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<sup>106</sup> Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, translated Erroll F. Rhodes. (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.) 1995, page 107

<sup>107</sup> Except for when Napoleon carried off the manuscript as a prize of victory. It remained in Paris until 1815, when the many treasures that Napoleon had taken from important libraries were returned to their original owners (Lightfoot, page 37)

<sup>108</sup> Bruce Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press) 1991, page 74

codex was photographed and copies were presented to the members and observers of the Vatican Council II.

Codex Vaticanus originally contained both the Old and New Testaments, as well as the books of the Apocrypha, with the exception of I & II Maccabees. Today, there are three “lacunae”<sup>109</sup> in this codex: the first forty-six chapters of Genesis are missing; a section of about thirty Psalms is lost; and the pages from Hebrews 10:14 onward to the end of the New Testament are gone.

The original writing is in small delicate uncials, perfectly simple and unadorned. Unfortunately, the beauty has been spoiled by someone who later sought to make corrections in the manuscript.

When Wescott and Hort issued their *New Testament in the Original Greek* (1881), Codex Vaticanus was extensively used in their publication. Concerning the value of this manuscript, Lightfoot writes,

“It is distressing that this manuscript is not entirely complete, yet in spite of its gaps it is considered to be the most exact copy of the New Testament known. It is believed to be the earliest of the great uncials and the many extensive studies, which have proved its text to be of the purest quality, confirm this judgment.”<sup>110</sup>

Most present day editions of the Greek New Testament rely heavily on Codex Vaticanus.

#### The Alexandrian Manuscript

The Alexandrian Manuscript is next in rank among the large vellum uncials. It was given this name because it was known to have been in Alexandria for several centuries. It probably was brought from Alexandria to Constantinople by Cyril Lucar, who became the Patriarch of Constantinople in 1621. Cyril became a close friend and ally of Sir Thomas Roe, the British Ambassador at Constantinople. For some political reason, Cyril felt that he needed to give the manuscript as a gift to Roe, to be presented to James I, the English monarch. James died before the presentation of the gift could be officially completed. Therefore, on January 1, 1627, it was presented as a New Year’s gift to the new king, Charles I. It became a part of the Royal Library. Fortunately, during the disastrous fire of 1731, the librarian, Dr. Richard Bently, was seen in his nightgown and great wig carrying out the manuscript under his arm. In 1757, King George donated the contents of the Royal Library to the newly formed British Museum, where the codex remains today.

The Alexandrian Codex contains both the Old and New Testaments – almost totally complete. At the close of the New Testament are appended I Clement (presumably, a letter written by Clement of Rome about 95 AD) and a portion of II Clement (a sermon composed in the mid-Second Century). Of all of the manuscripts that have come down to us, this is the only one that has the text of I Clement (which is classed as one of the “Apostolic Fathers”).

This manuscript has noticeable features that distinguish it from Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The form of the writing is heavier; certain letters are finished off with added touches (serifs);

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<sup>109</sup> Lacunae are spaces where something has been omitted or for some other reason is missing.

<sup>110</sup> Lightfoot, page 38

enlarged letters are used to mark paragraphs; and red ink is used for the opening lines of each book. These and other features enable scholars to date its origin as being sometime in the Fifth Century (prior to 500 AD).

When the Alexandrian Codex was presented to the king, it caused as much excitement at that time as the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls caused three centuries later. It was the first of the three great uncials to come to light and its textual differences from some of the Greek texts already known was one element in ushering in a new era of textual investigation.<sup>111</sup>

#### Codex Ephraem

We discussed this codex earlier when describing palimpsests (see page 12). Technically known as Ephraemi rescriptus, Codex Ephraem, is a Fifth Century uncial. We have described how Tischendorf attained his first international fame by being able to discern the underlying Fifth Century text. The Biblical text is not complete – much is missing from the Old Testament, but in the New Testament there are pages from every New Testament book except II Thessalonians and II John.

#### Codex Bezae

This codex receives its name from Theodore Beza (an associate of Luther) who, after possessing it for more than twenty years presented it in 1581 to the library in Cambridge University, where it resides today. It contains, with some gaps, the four gospels, Acts, and, in Latin, a fragment of III John.

Codex Bezae is the earliest known example of a bi-lingual manuscript. On facing pages are Greek and Latin – the Greek being on the left page and Latin on the right. The Gospels are in the order seen in the Western Text: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark.

This codex departs again and again from the established text. It, like many other Western Texts, is characterized by a fondness for paraphrase, textual expansions, and some striking omissions. Yet, for the most part, Codex Bezae preserves the Gospels and Acts as they occur in Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Its conformity to the text of these two great uncials far outnumbers places where there is a divergence.

#### Other Uncials

At this time, about 3000 uncials are now listed and catalogued. One of the more prominent is the Codex Claromontanus, so designated because it came from Clermont France. It is a Sixth Century manuscript containing Paul's letters (including Hebrews). It also was once owned by Theodore Beza. It is written in Greek and Latin and its text type is Western.

Codex Laudianus receives its name from Archbishop Laud who presented it to the library at Oxford in 1636. It is dated at the end of the Sixth Century. Written in both Greek and Latin, it contains the Book of Acts, with some sections missing at the end. This is the earliest manuscript that contains the Ethiopian's confession in 8:37.

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<sup>111</sup> Lightfoot, page 4



Codex Regius is an Eighth Century codex of the Gospels. It resides in the National Library in Paris. It is an Alexandrian Text Type. It is much agreement with Vaticanus. At the end of Mark, it includes the traditional ending (Mark 16:9-20), and also a shorter ending.

The Freer Washington Manuscripts were obtained in 1906 by Charles L. Freer of Detroit.. One manuscript is a collection of Paul's letters from I Corinthians through Hebrews, with Hebrews being placed after II Thessalonians. This is an Alexandrian Text Type, dating to the Fifth Century. The other Freer manuscript is a copy of the Four Gospels, dating to the Fourth or Fifth Century. Because it has a mixed Text Type, it probably was copied from portions of several manuscripts. Both of these manuscripts are located in the Smithsonian Institute, Washington, D.C.

### Miniscules

The vast majority of manuscripts in existence are miniscules. They date from the Ninth Century onward. At this time there are about 3000 miniscules, and the list is growing. They, along with some of the later uncials, are of the Byzantine Text Type. The Byzantine Text is associated with the Byzantine world of the Middle Ages. It is the type of text found in the majority of later manuscripts and thus, it is the basis for what came to be known as the "Majority Text," which is the basis for the King James Version of the Bible (this will be discussed more fully later in our study).

### Lectionaries

Lectionaries are manuscripts of documents that were prepared for use in public worship. These contain selected passages of Scripture. Most are of the Gospels, but some contain passages from Acts and the Epistles. Some lectionaries are uncials and some are miniscules. Because they were intended for public worship, it seems that they were copied more carefully than some other manuscripts. More than 2200 lectionaries have been catalogued. Some of these have added sections, such as adding the words, *for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever* – to the close of the model prayer (Matthew 6:13).<sup>112</sup>

### Papyri

In addition to these manuscripts, thousands of papyri have been discovered, some of them predating any of the above listed manuscripts. Many of the papyri have been found in Egypt, which is not surprising, since the dry Egyptian climate is less threatening to such material. Of special value to students of the early Christian documents is the manner in which the papyri have increased knowledge of the Greek language in which the New Testament was written. Also, non-Biblical documents display details of life that validate the lifestyle displayed in the New Testament.

An understanding of the vocabulary of the New Testament has been greatly enhanced by the papyri. Some Greek terms in the New Testament were unknown in classical Greek literature and

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<sup>112</sup> Roman Catholic Bibles omit this phrase, because it was not in the texts that Jerome used to produce the Vulgate – the official basis for all Roman Catholic Bibles. The prayer ends, *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, amen.*

some guesswork, depending on the context, was required in rendering these terms. Almost all of these uncertain words have been found among the papyri, shedding light on their correct meaning. Some are quite revealing. For example, in Hebrews 11:1, the term, ὑποστάσις (*hupostasis*) was of uncertain meaning. So, the KJV rendered this verse as, *Now faith is the substance (ὑποστάσις) of things hoped for*. In papyri, legal documents were discovered in which this was the word used for a title deed.<sup>113</sup> What a strong assertion is made in Hebrews 11:1 when an accurate understanding of this word is gained through the papyri (*faith is the title deed of things hoped for*).

One of the most important ancient Scriptural finds is a papyri containing a few lines from the Gospel of John. Although this fragment had been acquired in Egypt by Bernard P. Grenfel around 1920, it remained unnoticed among hundreds of similar pieces of papyri until 1934. In that year, C. H. Roberts, Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford, was sorting through unpublished papyri belonging to the John Rylands Library at Manchester. He recognized the verses from John's Gospel on this small scrap and immediately published a booklet, setting forth a description of the fragment, its text, and a discussion of its significance.<sup>114</sup>

This papyri is labeled,  $\text{p}^{52}$  - it is popularly known as "the John Rylands fragment." It is only 2 ½ by 3 ½ inches and contains verses 31-33 and 37-38 from Chapter 18, of the Gospel. It is the oldest copy of any portion of the New Testament known today. It has been dated as having been written in the first half of the Second Century (i.e. prior to 150 AD).

Although the number of verses is so slight, in a way it is as significant as would have been the discovery of a full codex. Metzger writes,

"Just as Robinson Crusoe, seeing but a single footprint in the sand, concluded that another human being, with two feet, was present on the island with him, so  $\text{p}^{52}$  proves the existence and use of the Fourth Gospel during the first half of the second century in a provincial town along the Nile, far removed from its traditional place of composition (Ephesus in Asia Minor). Had this little fragment been known during the middle of the past century, that school of New Testament criticism which was inspired by the brilliant Tubingen professor, Ferdinand Baur, could not have argued that the Fourth Gospel was not composed until about the year 160."<sup>115</sup>

Needless to say, as reflected in Metzger's comments, this fragment demonstrates that within less than fifty years after its composition, the Gospel of John was being distributed to regions far beyond the place of its origin – from Ephesus in Asia Minor, all way across two oceans and deep into the continent of Africa.

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<sup>113</sup> Eldred Douglas Head, *New Testament Life and Literature as Reflected in The Papyri* (Nashville, Broadman Press) 1952, page 50

<sup>114</sup> C. H. Roberts, *An Unpublished Fragment of the Forth Gospel in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester) 1935

<sup>115</sup> Metzger page 39

Another quite early document is  $\text{p}^{66}$ . This one of the acquisitions of the Genevan bibliophile and humanist, M. Martin Bodmer, who is the founder of the Bodmer Library of World Literature in Cologne, a suburb of Geneva. The papyrus measures 6 x 5 ½ inches and originally contained six quires, of which 104 pages remain. The pages that remain contain portions of the Gospel of John. It has some terms that are not found in other documents. For example, in John 13:5, which recounts the incident in which Jesus washed the disciples' feet,  $\text{p}^{66}$  states that Jesus took a "foot basin" (ποδονιπτῆρα), whereas other documents containing this passage state that Jesus took a "basin" (νιπτῆρα).

$\text{p}^{66}$  usually is dated as having been written around 200 AD, but some date it as early as the middle or even, the first half, of the Second Century.<sup>116</sup>

Other very numerous significant Greek New Testament papyri, dating from the Second and Third Centuries are in the Beatty Museum, in a suburb of Dublin, and the Bodmer Library of World Literature at Cologne (one of these papyri is  $\text{p}^{72}$  - dated Third Century - which is the earliest extant copy of the Epistle of Jude and the two Epistles of Peter, as well as a miscellaneous assortment of other documents).

#### Early Church Fathers<sup>117</sup>

From time to time, it has been stated that if we lost the entire New Testament, that it could be reconstructed by gathering together the New Testament quotes in the writings of the Early Church Fathers. That may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it certainly is not far from the truth. A ten-volume set, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*,<sup>118</sup> contains an English rendition of most of the writings of the Church Fathers before the Council of Nicaea and the issuance of the Nicene Creed. An index of Scriptural quotations in the writings of these fathers has been compiled. The index is fifty-six pages in length with four columns each page (see ADDENDUM F for sample pages).

One benefit of patristic quotations is that they aid in localizing and dating the text type found in various Greek manuscripts. For example, Cyprian was the Bishop of Carthage in North Africa at about 250 AD. When Cyprian quotes the New Testament in any of his letters, his quotations almost always agree with the form of text found in the Old Latin manuscript labelled,  $\text{it}^k$ , which dates to the Fourth or Fifth Century. Scholars have concluded that since the text type is the same, that  $\text{it}^k$  is a descendant of a copy that was current in North Africa at around 250 AD.

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<sup>116</sup> Herbert Hunger, the director of the papyrological collections in the National Library a Vienna – as cited by Metzger, page 40 fn

<sup>117</sup> This is an edited version of pages 86-92 in Metzger, *Text of the New Testament*.

<sup>118</sup> This ten-volume set is an English translation of the majority of Early Christian writings. It was first compiled by Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson and published 1867-1873. In 1885, the Christian Literature Company of Buffalo, NY, began to reissue the volumes in a reorganized form. In 1897, with revisions done by Episcopal Bishop, A. Cleveland Coxe, T&T Clark Publishers began publishing the set.

However, before such a determination can be made, the textual critic must make certain that the text of the Early Church Father is exactly what he wrote. As is true of Biblical texts, mistakes have been made in copying the treatises of the Fathers.

After the true text of the Patristic author has been determined, the next question to be faced is, “Did the author intended to quote the passage verbatim, or was he paraphrasing, or was he writing from memory, rather than copying from a text?” That he was reading from a text is probable if the quotation is long, but shorter quotations may have been (perhaps, probably were) from memory.

Another factor is that if a Patristic author quotes the same passage more than once, there often are small differences in his multiple quotes. Origen is notorious in this regard – he rarely quotes a passage in exactly the same words. One thing is clear, Origen used several amanuenses and in his dictation would refer merely to a few catchwords in Scripture as an illustration of his argument – then the amanuensis would hunt for the passage in a Biblical manuscript and insert the words at the appropriate place in Origen’s treatise. In longer passages, differences could occur, depending on which manuscript the amanuensis consulted.

In spite of these difficulties, the evidence found in the Patristic writings is very important in tracing the transmission of the text. Here is a list of several of the more important Church Fathers whose writings contain numerous quotations from the New Testament and the date of the person’s death:

Ambrose of Milan, d. 397  
 Ambrosiaster of Rome, second half of the Fourth Century  
 Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, d. 373  
 Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, d. 430  
 Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, d. 407  
 Clement of Alexandria, d. 212  
 Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, d. 258  
 Cyril of Alexandria, d. 444  
 Didymus of Alexandria, d. c.398  
 Ephraem the Syrian, d. 373  
 Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, d. 403  
 Euseius, Bishop of Caesarea, d. 339 or 340  
 Gregory of Nazianzus in Cappadocia, d. 389 or 390  
 Gregory of Nyssa in Cappadocia, d. 394  
 Hillary of Poitiers, d. 367  
 Hippolytus of Rome, d. 235  
 Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, d. c. 202  
 Isadore of Pelusium, d. c. 435  
 Jerome [=Hieronymus] d. 419 or 420  
 Justin Martyr, d. c. 165  
 Lucifer of Calaris (Cagliari), d. 370 or 371  
 Marcion, active at Rome, c. 150-160  
 Origen of Alexandria and Caesarea, d. 253 or 254  
 Pelagus, Fourth-Fifth Century

Primasius, Bishop of Hadrumentum, d. soon after 552  
 Pseudo-Hieronymus, Fifth-Sixth Century  
 Rufinus of Aquileia, d. 410  
 Tatian, active c.170  
 Tertullian of Carthage, d. after 220  
 Theodore of Mopsuestia in Cilicia, d. 428

One of the most controversial of these writers was Tatian, a Syrian from Mesopotamia. His chief claim to fame was his *Diatessaron*, a harmony of the Four Gospels. He combined distinctive phrases found in only one of the Gospels with those preserved in another, arranging several sections of the Gospels into a single narrative. He omitted very few sections (such as the genealogies of Jesus in Matthew and Luke). He managed to preserve almost all of the contents of the four Gospels into one document. This came to be known as the *Diatessaron* (derived from the Greek, *διὰ τεσσάρων*, meaning, *through the four*).

The *Diatessaron* became quite popular. Later in life, Tatian became heretical in his later years and so, Theodoret, who became Bishop of Cyrrhus on the Euphrates in upper Syria in 423, destroyed all of the copies that he could find among the members of his church. He feared that they might be corrupted by using anything produced by Tatian. Theodoret replaced the *Diatessaron* among his people with copies of the Four Gospels as separate works.

As a result of Theodoret's zeal, and doubtless others like him, no complete copy of the *Diatessaron* exists today. In 1933, a small fragment of parchment containing a portion of the *Diatessaron* was found by archaeologists excavating Dura-Europos on the lower Euphrates. Dura Europa fell to the Persians in 256-257, therefore the fragment must predate that event. Scholars and their restorationists have been able to restore much of the document. It is clear from this sample, that Tatian composed his document with great diligence. Portions of the *Diatessaron* are quoted in some of the Church Fathers in their homilies and other treatises. It seems evident that other efforts to harmonize the Gospels are to be ascribed to Tatian's influence.

### **PRINCIPLES OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

With all of these sources now available to us, the task of determining what the author wrote in the autograph is the work of those engaged in the discipline of textual criticism. Before beginning a survey of the topic of textual criticism, it is important to realize that only an extremely small number of variances in the texts are of any theological or soteriological significance. Most variances are such small matters that they are hardly worth noticing, but those who are given to the task of textual criticism seek to evaluate even what the exact spelling of a word might have been in the autograph. Because of the careful nature of their work, we can have confidence in the versions of the Bible that we possess today – recognizing these differences.

The Greek New Testament on which our contemporary versions of the Bible are based are technically called, an *eclectic* text. The term, *eclectic*, means “drawn from a variety of sources.”

The text on which the 1611 King James Version is not based on an eclectic text, but it relies on the Byzantine family of manuscripts that were available to Erasmus and then to those who produced the King James Version. Although the Early Church Fathers occasionally speculated on copyists errors, or the original reading of manuscripts,<sup>119</sup> it was impossible for them to codify their discussions in the manner that scholars in later centuries have been enabled to do.

After the printing press was introduced into Europe in 1454, it became possible to compare manuscripts with some sort of an unchanging standard. At about the same time, Europe experienced a rebirth of interest in classical learning. In the centuries prior to this of learning, only a relatively few scholars were conversant with either Classical Greek or Koine Greek, and even fewer Christians were conversant with Hebrew. The revival of interest in the original languages of Scripture became increasingly important with the arrival of the Protestant Reformation, where the focus on the meaning of the inspired text required the ability to argue points of doctrine based on the original languages. This growing interest in the Gospel, and the invention of the printing press, combined with a growing interest in Greek, prompted a Roman Catholic humanist scholar, Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, to research available texts and publish the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516. Erasmus relied on only seven manuscripts and most of these were of poor quality.

He had only one manuscript that contained the Book of Revelation, a manuscript from the Twelfth Century. This manuscript lacked the last leaf, which contained the final six verses of the Apocalypse. In order to solve the problem, he translated into Greek these verses from the Latin Vulgate. Needless to say, none of Erasmus' Greek in these verses agrees with any of the Greek manuscripts available today ---but they still are perpetuated in printings of the so-called, *Textus Receptus*. Even in other parts of the New Testament Erasmus introduced into his Greek New Testament sections that he had translated out of the Latin Vulgate.

In generations following Erasmus, scholars began to build upon the work of Erasmus, producing a "standard" printed version of the Greek New Testament based on various manuscripts available to them. Because most of these were texts from the Byzantine text tradition, this was assumed to be the standard and came to be known as the *textus receptus* (i.e., received text). This is the title given in the preface to the Greek New Testament published by the Elzevir brothers in 1633.

By the mid-Nineteenth Century, with an increasing number of early manuscripts becoming available, the Byzantine text began to lose its status. Even so, there were and still are advocates of this textual family, the text that was used for the King James Version. The discipline of textual criticism can be traced to the early work of Brian Walton (1600-1661), Johann Bengel (1687-1752), Karl Lachmann (1793-1851), Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874), B. F. Wescott (1825-1901), F. J. A. Hort (1828-1892), and in recent years a plethora of adept scholars.

Entire volumes have been written on the principles and processes of textual criticism. The summary given by Kostenberger, Merkle, and Plummer,<sup>120</sup> will suffice for our purposes.

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<sup>119</sup> See Metzgar, pages 150 ff

<sup>120</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* (Nashville, B & H Academic) 2016, pages 24-35

The criteria for determining the text of the autograph is divided into two categories: external and internal criteria.

- External criteria are concerned with age, quantity, geographical origin, of the manuscripts being studied.
- Internal criteria consider how a disputed variant does or does not fit the context of the document – both the context of the author’s argument and his style.

#### External Criteria

1. Favor *the older manuscripts*. All things being equal (which rarely is the case), an older manuscript, being closer to the date of the autograph, is to be preferred. Through paleography, Carbon-14 dating, archaeology, and other methods, scholars assign composition dates to manuscripts. External evidence also takes into account early versions and quotations from church fathers.
2. Favor *the readings that are supported by the majority of manuscripts*. This criteria has been challenged by the quip, “Manuscripts must be weighed, not counted.” For example, if there are fifty Byzantine medieval texts that all rely on the same tenth-century exemplar, then the entire group is to be viewed in the light of their common ancestor – as one witness, rather than fifty independent witnesses. Even so, the number of manuscripts supporting a particular reading is to be taken into account.
3. Favor *the reading that is best attested across various families of manuscripts*. A disputed reading that is represented by a broad swath of families (text types) is to be preferred.<sup>121</sup>

#### Internal Criteria

1. Favor *the reading that fits the literary content*. Although this generally holds true, there are times that the authors of the New Testament said very unexpected things, so this criterion should be kept in mind, but not rigidly applied.
2. Favor *the reading that best corresponds with the writings of the same New Testament author*. Authors have general stylistic patterns and theological styles, as well as consistent theological themes. However, as already noted, New Testament authors are not always predictable – and they used an amanuensis. Different contexts, purposes, and the audience being addressed also would have an impact on the stylistic variations
3. Favor *the reading that best explains the origin of the other variants*. Similar to a detective story, sometimes it is possible to reconstruct a series of mistakes and/or attempted fixes that all flow from a scribal alteration of a the original text.
4. Favor *the shorter reading*. Because texts often were lengthened – usually because some scribe felt the need to clarify – the shorter reading usually should be preferred.
5. Favor *the more difficult reading*. Because later additions to the text usually were attempts to “fix” a perceived problem, the shorter reading should be preferred. There is evidence in some manuscripts of scribes being prone to smooth out difficulties, rather than introduce them. Of course, neither this nor any of the other principles cannot be applied as a sole criteria.

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<sup>121</sup> There is an online resource that labels almost all ancient manuscripts according to their text families. [www.laparola.net/greco/manoscritti.php](http://www.laparola.net/greco/manoscritti.php)

## Intentional Changes

In earlier sections we have discussed how unintentional errors occurred. Yet, some changes in the manuscripts were intentional.

1. *Revising grammar and spelling.* In an attempt to standardize grammar and spelling, there were times when scribes corrected what they saw as spelling or grammatical errors in the text they were copying. For example:
  - In Koine Greek, the preposition, ἀπό (*apo*), correctly used, should precede a noun, pronoun, or definite article in the *genitive case*.
  - John, in Revelation 1:4, put the *nominative case* definite article after that preposition - (ἀπὸ ὁ) – which is poor Greek grammar.
  - At some point, when copying manuscripts, a scribe or scribes corrected John’s poor grammar by inserting the genitive definite article τοῦ between ἀπό and the masculine nominative definite article (ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ).<sup>122</sup> A comparison of older manuscripts with those of more recent age reveals this change.
2. *Harmonizing similar passages.* Some scribes displayed a tendency to harmonize parallel passages and to introduce “stylized” expressions. For example:
  - When the same incident is recorded in more than one Gospel, details from one might be inserted into the text of the other.
  - Greek professor Rob Plummer has illustrated this by noting that his students unintentionally insert, “Lord,” or “Christ” when translating a passage with the name, “Jesus.” They are not trying to introduce some sort of higher Christology, they simply are conforming their speech to the stylized reference to the Savior. Ancient scribes did the same thing – we assume sometimes thoughtlessly.
3. *Eliminating apparent discrepancies and difficulties.* In addition to correcting grammar, some scribes sometimes sought to fix what they perceived as a problem in the text. For example, according to Metzger and Ehrmann,<sup>123</sup> it seems that Origen perceived a geographical problem in John 1:28, and so he changed Βηθανία (*Bethania* – Bethany) to βηθαραβᾶ (*Betharaba*).
4. *Conflating the text.* Occasionally, when a scribe was aware of variant readings of a text, he would include both variants in his copy. For example:
  - Some early manuscripts of Acts 2:28, have as the text, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ (*the church of God*). In others, the text is, τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου (*the church of the Lord*).
  - Some later manuscripts conflate the readings, resulting in τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ κυρίου καὶ [τοῦ] θεοῦ (*the church of the Lord and God*).
5. *Adopting different liturgical traditions.* In a few isolated places, it seems that church liturgy (i.e. stylized prayers, etc.) influenced some textual additions and wording changes.

<sup>122</sup> Stephanus manuscript 1550 AD

<sup>123</sup> Metzger and Ehrmann, *The Text of the New Testament*, fourth edition (Oxford, Oxford University Press) 2005, page 264



The most obvious is in Matthew 6:13 (as noted earlier in footnote 112), *for Thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.* As noted above, this verse is not in the older manuscripts.

6. *Making theological or doctrinal changes.* There is evidence that in some manuscripts scribes made theological or doctrinal changes – omitting something that they considered as being theologically incorrect, or adding *something* to clarify the statement. An example is Matthew 24:36, in which some manuscripts omit, *But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone*, because the scribe felt that Our Lord could not have been ignorant of the day of His return.

NOTE: See ADDENDUM G for some excellent websites dealing with textual criticism.

## THE CANON

The term, *canon*, comes to us from the Greek, κανών (*canown*) which is related to the word for *reed* – κάρη or κάρνα (Hebrew, קנה, *caneh*, a reed or a rod).

The term primarily denotes a straight rod and from this there were derived many uses of the word, all uses indicating a test of straightness. Metaphorically, the term was used in several senses. For example, Aristotle described an exemplary person as “a canon and measure of the truth” (κανὼν καὶ μέτρον).<sup>124</sup> In Galatian 6:6, Paul wrote, *and those who will walk by this rule* (κανὼν), *peace and mercy....*

From 300 AD onward, the term, usually in the plural, was used in reference to the regulations or decrees that came from the councils and thus regulated the church.

Thus, with these and many other similar uses of the term by the church, it is not surprising that the term eventually was applied to the list of books regarded as authoritative by the Church. This development did not come to fruition until the second half of the Fourth Century, the first instance of such usage seems to have been in Athanasius’ *Decrees of the Synod of Nicea* (soon after 350 AD), in which he describes the *Shepherd of Hermas* as not belonging to the canon (μὴ ὄν ἐκ τοῦ κανόνος).<sup>125</sup>

In 363 AD, the Council of Laodicea declared that only the canonical books, as opposed to the noncanonical books, should be read in a church service. Then in 367 AD, Athanasius, in an Easter letter, identified which books are canonical (βιβλία κανονιζόμενα *biblia kanonizomena*) in opposition to those which were apocrypha (ἀπόκρυφα *apokryfa*).<sup>126</sup>

The bottom line concerning the question of the canon, is whether or not the origin of the document is the Holy Spirit, and is it a document that Our Lord intended for His people throughout the generations. This brings us to the question of inspiration.

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<sup>124</sup> Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachean*, III, 6

<sup>125</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* (Oxford, Oxford University Press) 1987, page 292

<sup>126</sup> Athanasius, *39<sup>th</sup> Festal Epistle*

## Inspiration

Paul, referring to the Old Testament that existed in his day, wrote,

*All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*<sup>127</sup>

Some versions render the introductory clause in this verse, *All Scripture is inspired by God*, whereas others render the clause as, *All Scripture is God breathed*. The Greek term under consideration is θεόπνευστος (*theopneustos*).<sup>128</sup> This is the only Scriptural occurrence of this word. Frankly, it is somewhat difficult to translate. It is a compound term, consisting of the word that refers to God, θεός (*theos*) and πνεύμα (*pneuma*) which is used to refer to a wind, or breath – the verb, πνέω (*pneo*), which refers to the blowing of the wind – often the blowing of a wind that has been caused by Yahweh (Isaiah 40:24 LXX). πνεύμα also is the word used for *spirit*.

Kittel states, “This word [θεόπνευστος] refers very generally to all wisdom as coming from God (Pseudo-Phocylides, 122), then more specifically to dreams given by God as distinct from natural dreams (Herophilus in Plutarch, Placita Philosophy V2)...”<sup>129</sup>

Thus, we must conclude that Paul is stating that in some manner, God is the source of the writings to which he refers. Neither Greek nor Latin have a special word for those writings that English versions have labeled, “Scripture.” There is but one Greek word for writings – γραφή (*graphie*), and only one Latin word for writings - *scriptura*. The influence of the Vulgate is seen in our use of the term, *Scripture*. Since this is the term used for writings in the Vulgate, and since scholars tended to write in Latin, even if they were from a nation that spoke English, the Vulgate term for writing was adopted as an English reference to sacred writings, i.e. *Scripture*.

In verse 16, Paul is expanding on the thought that he began in verse 15.

*and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*<sup>130</sup>

In this verse (verse 15) Paul adds the descriptive term, ἱερά, to define the writings - ἱερά γράμματα (*hiera grammata*). The Greek term, ἱερά refers to something sacred. Thus, since verse 16 is a follow up to verse 15, the writings referenced in verse 16 must be what we have come to label as *Scripture*.

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<sup>127</sup> II Timothy 3:16

<sup>128</sup> θεόπνευστος is an adjective and in this clause, it functions as an *attributive* adjective, attributing a quality to the γραφή.

<sup>129</sup> Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Volume VI, Edited by Gerhard Friedrich, translated by Geoffrey Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company) 1968, page 453

<sup>130</sup> II Timothy 3:15

Another element to consider is the insertion of the term, **καὶ**, separating the two clauses of verse 16. The insertion of the term, **καὶ** (*kai*), which can be rendered, *also – and – even*, indicates that the language preceding the **καὶ** is some sort of a definition of the writing. If we choose to render the term as *God breathed*, then, **πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος**, is rendered, *all writing breathed by God also is profitable....* This, therefore, justifies rendering the clause as, *all scripture is God-breathed* (or *inspired*). The verb, *is*, can be assumed in Greek, when it is not included in the text. Thus, the traditional renderings are legitimate.

Yet, what does it mean? Several views on inspiration have been put forth.

1. Mechanical Inspiration: The writers of scripture were robots who were instruments that the Holy Spirit used to do the writing – much as a typist might use a typewriter. The writers did not need to give any thought to what they wrote, nor even to understand it.
2. Dictational Inspiration: The Holy Spirit dictated and the writers of the New Testament listened and wrote that which was dictated to them. They had no personal choice of the language or terms.
3. Informational Inspiration: The Holy Spirit imparted to the writer what needed to be communicated in the writing. The writer wrote in his own vocabulary and literary style, but the Holy Spirit, to some degree, edited the language used.
4. Individual Inspiration: The individual, by the indwelling Spirit, knew what needed to be written. There was no need for special impartation in the writing. Thus, using God-given wisdom, using his own thinking and writing style, wrote what was without error.
5. Inspiration of the reader: The inspiration occurs in the reader. When such a person reads the Bible, it speaks to him in such a deep, spiritual manner, that he knows that it is the Word of God.

These and other theories of inspiration have been put forth, seeking to describe the **θεόπνευστος** process.

Any serious student of Greek literature can see the difference in literary style and verbiage displayed by different biblical authors. This is more evident in the Greek New Testament than in the Hebrew Old Testament. Thus, theory #1, above, doesn't fit the obvious evidence of a human element in the writings.

Traditionally, beginning with J. W. Burgon (see page 3 of these notes), those who have argued for the Received Text, often have held to the Dictational Inspiration theory. Again, the same objection to theory #1 can be applied to this view.

Theories #3 and #4 do have some weight, and in some sections of Scripture, it seems that theory #2 played a role.

Theories #2 and #3, for example, are compatible with the instructions given to John in the composition of the Revelation:

Revelation 1:11 saying, *"Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."*

Revelation 1:19 *"Therefore write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after these things."*

Revelation 2:1 *"To the angel of the church in Ephesus write: The One who holds the seven stars in His right hand, the One who walks among the seven golden lampstands, says this:*

Revelation 2:8 *"And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write: The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life, says this:*

Revelation 2:12 *"And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write: The One who has the sharp two-edged sword says this:*

Revelation 2:18 *"And to the angel of the church in Thyatira write: The Son of God, who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet are like burnished bronze, says this:*

Revelation 3:1 *"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: 'I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead.*

Revelation 3:7 *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says this:*

Revelation 3:14 *"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: The Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God, says this:*

Revelation 10:4 *When the seven peals of thunder had spoken, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Seal up the things which the seven peals of thunder have spoken and do not write them."*

Revelation 14:13 *And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "so that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."*

Revelation 19:9 *Then he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" And he said to me, "These are true words of God."*

Revelation 21:5 *And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."*

Theory #4 finds examples in Paul's statements concerning his writings and declarations:

I Corinthians 7:25 *Now concerning virgins I have no command of the Lord, but I give an opinion as one who by the mercy of the Lord is trustworthy.*

I Corinthians 7:40 *But in my opinion she is happier if she remains as she is; and I think that I also have the Spirit of God.*

I Corinthians 14:37 *If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment.*

Theory #5 is an expression of "existentialism." In this view, if a verse inspires the person, that verse is the Word of God – if it does not, then it isn't. Such a subjective view results in there being no plenary authority and it reflects the post-modernist thinking, "My truth is my truth and your truth is your truth."

Because any theory concerning the process of inspiration has legitimate challenges to it, it is my opinion that we cannot specifically describe how inspiration took place. It is possible that the process was different for different authors and different purposes of the writing – some prophetic, some didactic, some

wise counsel on how to handle some issue with which a church was dealing, etc. Yet, regardless of the process, God was the source.

### The Old Testament Canon

In the time of Christ, and for the earliest centuries of the church, the Jews counted the number of books in their Scriptures as twenty-two.<sup>131</sup> Many ancient writers indicate that this was because there were twenty-two letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Based on our current names of the Old Testament books, here is how the Jews designated their number as twenty-two:

1. Genesis	12. Ezra & Nehemiah
2. Exodus	13. Psalms
3. Leviticus	14. Proverbs
4. Numbers	15. Ecclesiastes
5. Deuteronomy	16. Song of Songs
6. Joshua	17. Job
7. Judges & Ruth	18. Twelve Minor Prophets
8. Esther	19. Isaiah
9. I & II Samuel	20. Jeremiah & Lamentations
10. I & II Kings	21. Ezekiel
11. I & II Chronicles	22. Daniel

The earliest and most explicit testimony of a Hebrew canonical list comes from Flavius Josephus (37AD – c. 100AD). In his treatise, *Against Apion* (Book 1, paragraph 8) Josephus described the canon used by Jews in the first century AD. This document was composed in 95 AD. Josephus divided the Jewish sacred scriptures into three parts, five books of the Torah, thirteen books of the prophets, and four books of hymns.

“For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, [as the Greeks have,] but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them five belong to Moses, which contain his laws and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned after Xerxes, the prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life.

It is true, our history hath been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but hath not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there hath not been an exact succession of prophets since that time; and how firmly we have given credit to these books of our own nation is evident by what we do; for during so many ages as have already passed, no one has been so bold as either to add anything to them, to take anything from them, or to make any change in them; but it is become

<sup>131</sup> Contemporary Judaism, divides the same books differently, so that the number is 24.

natural to all Jews immediately, and from their very birth, to esteem these books to contain Divine doctrines, and to persist in them, and, if occasion be willingly to die for them.”<sup>132</sup>

Note that Josephus states that there have not been any authoritative writings since the reign of Artaxerxes, which would have coincided with the same time that Malachi wrote his prophetic book – the last book of the Old Testament. Josephus states that after the time of Malachi, no additional material had been added to the canon, but beneficial non-canonical writings had been composed. Furthermore, these books were so revered that Jews would be willing to die for them.

Josephus’ testimony is important in the light of the contents of the Septuagint. The Septuagint contained the standard thirty-nine books of the Old Testament (as we divide them in contemporary Bibles), but it also included the apocryphal books of Judith, Tobit, Baruch, Sirach (also known as Ecclesiasticus), the Wisdom of Solomon, I & II Maccabees, the two books of Esdras, additions to the Book of Esther, additions to the Book of Daniel, and the Prayer of Manasseh.

It seems that the apocryphal books were included in the Septuagint for historical and religious purposes, but they were not then and are not now recognized by Orthodox Jews as canonical. When Jerome created the Vulgate, he did not consider them to belong in the inspired canon. In his introduction to his translation of the *Books of the Kings* (c. 391),<sup>133</sup> Jerome commented on the Old Testament canon. He first listed the canonical books – what we now have in our Old Testament. He then commented on books that were non-canonical. Here is an excerpt from that portion of his introduction:

“This preface to the Scriptures may serve as a helmeted [i.e. defensive] introduction to all the books which we turn from Hebrew into Latin, so that we may be assured that what is outside of them must be placed aside among the Apocryphal writings. Wisdom, therefore, which generally bears the name of Solomon, and the book of Jesus the Son of Sirach, and Judith, and Tobias, and the Shepherd [of Hermes?] are not in the canon. The first book of Maccabees is found in Hebrew, but the second is Greek, as can be proved from the very style.”

Even though this was the judgment of Jerome, the creator of the Vulgate, which is the benchmark version of Roman Catholicism, the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox churches include the Apocrypha in their Bible (except for the books of Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh). At the request of two bishops, Jerome did later translate Tobit and Judith from Hebrew into Latin. Some have argued that in his later years, Jerome did come to view some of the apocrypha as Scripture, but this is speculative.

Interestingly, Augustine, writing in 397 AD, *On Christian Doctrine* (Book II, Chapter 8), describes the canon as being the same as exists in present day Roman Catholic Bibles.

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<sup>132</sup> *Josephus Complete Works*, translated by William Whiston, AM (Grand Rapids, Kregel Publications) 1981, page 609

<sup>133</sup> Officially known as *Prologus Galeatus*, "Helmeted Preface,".

The Synod of Laodicea was a regional synod of approximately thirty bishops and other church leaders from Asia Minor. It met 363-364 in Laodicea, Phrygia Pacatiana. This synod produced several “canons” (i.e. rules for church services, etc.) The fifty-ninth canon forbade the reading of any uncanonical books in the church. The sixtieth canon listed the twenty-two books of the Hebrew Bible, plus the *Book of Baruch* and the *Epistle of Jeremy* (Epistle of Jeremiah)<sup>134</sup> as canonical.<sup>135</sup>

Throughout the centuries, different councils and different Roman Catholic prelates have given lists of canonical and non-canonical Scriptures, but most of them conform, to some degree, the contemporary Roman Catholic Bible. Because the Roman Catholic Scriptures were being challenged at the time, the Council of Trent, on April 8, 1546, made the present Roman Catholic Bible Canon an article of faith.

Roman Catholicism uses these books to support certain Roman Catholic doctrines, such as, purgatory and prayers for the dead and the efficacy of good works in attaining salvation. The Protestant Reformers considered these teachings to be at odds with the rest of Scripture and therefore argued that the apocryphal books could not be canonical. Here are three examples:

*II Maccabees 12:43-45 And making a gathering, he sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead,) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness, had great grace laid up for them.*

*Ecclesiasticus 7:33 (also known as Sirach) A gift hath grace in the sight of all the living, and restrain not grace from the dead.*

*Tobit 12:9 For alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting.*<sup>136</sup>

In addition to statements in the Apocrypha that contradict the doctrines presented in the rest of Scripture, Protestant scholars also point out that a very convincing reason for rejecting the canonicity of the Apocrypha is the fact that these books never were considered to be a part of the canonical Jewish Scriptures.

Another point, frequently made by Protestant scholars is that none of the New Testament writers quoted even a single line from the Apocryphal books.

The thirty-nine books in the Protestant Old Testament are accepted by all branches of Christianity and orthodox Judaism. The apocrypha are not. The burden of proof for the inclusion of the Apocrypha is on the shoulders of Roman Catholicism and the Eastern Orthodox. Thus far, the evidence is against them.

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<sup>134</sup> In Roman Catholic Bibles, this epistle is the final chapter (chapter 6) in the Book of Baruch

<sup>135</sup> Council of Laodicea (<http://www.bible-researcher.com/laodicea.html>)

<sup>136</sup> These quotes are from The Douay-Rheims American Edition (1899)

## The New Testament Canon

The issue of the New Testament Canon is somewhat different from that of the Old Testament Canon. Authority and canon are not the same thing. The question has to be asked, “Is the canon a collection of authoritative books, or it is an authoritative collection of books?”

When Paul wrote a letter to a church, it had authority as soon as it left the apostle’s pen. It’s authority was not based on whether or not it was in a church-sanctioned list of authoritative documents. So, those who created the New Testament Canon sought to determine which of the various documents circulating in the First and Second Centuries were θεόπνευστος documents and thus had that authority. Even though there were councils and church leaders who sought to create an authoritative collection, their decisions were based on their conclusion that the books in the collection were authoritative.

Quite naturally, we would expect the apostles themselves, or those who were associated with them, or those who were associated with those who had been associated with the apostles to be the ones who would have the most influence on this decision. Fortunately, such sources are available to us.

The first means of communicating the words and deeds of Jesus was by oral testimony of those who had witnessed His life (the apostles and others) and those who were taught by the primary witnesses. It was two or three decades after His ascension before His words were circulated in written form.

An example of such oral tradition is seen in the words of Paul to the Ephesian elders.

*"In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"*<sup>137</sup>

This quote, *it is more blessed to give than to receive*, is not found in any of the Gospel accounts of Jesus’ sayings. It is an example of the sayings of Jesus being transmitted in oral tradition.

Eusebius, writing in the mid-Fourth Century, quotes this statement of Papias (Papias lived 70-163 AD),<sup>138</sup> who in his preface, describes his manner of gathering information.

“I shall not hesitate also to put into ordered form for you, along with the interpretations, everything I learned carefully in the past from the elders and noted down carefully, for the truth of which I vouch. For unlike most people I took no pleasure in those who told many different stories, but only in those who taught the truth. Nor did I take pleasure in those who reported their memory of someone else’s commandments, but only in those who reported their memory of the commandments given by the Lord to the faith and proceeding from the Truth itself. And if by chance anyone who had been in attendance

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<sup>137</sup> Acts 20:35

<sup>138</sup> Irenaeus described Papias as “an ancient man who was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp,” Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 5.33 (<http://ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npf201.iii.viii.xxxix.html>)3-4.



on the elders arrived, I made enquiries about the words of the elders—what Andrew or Peter had said, or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew or any other of the Lord’s disciples, and whatever Aristion and John the Elder, the Lord’s disciples, were saying. For I did not think that information from the books would profit me as much as information from a living and surviving voice.<sup>139</sup>

Note that Papias says that he prefers hearing someone speak about something, rather than reading about it. However, he does indicate that he is writing down what he had received as oral tradition. He knew John, Polycarp (John’s disciple), and others, from whom he heard the oral tradition, which he was beginning to put into writing.

In the prologue to his Life of Christ, Luke states that within a very few years after the ascension of Christ that several various individuals were writing about Jesus and His sayings.

*Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)*

Which of these writings that many had undertaken to compose were to become Scripture and which ones were not became an important issue to the early Church. What we now have as the Four Gospels very early became the recognized authoritative documents recording the events, the deeds, and the words of Christ.

Many of the earliest Church leaders quoted from the writings that we now label, “Scripture.”

#### Clement of Rome

Clement of Rome is an example. The Church at Rome had become concerned about a turbulent situation in the church at Corinth. Evidently, some younger members of the church were being insubordinate to the elders, even ousting some of them. In 95 AD, Clement, one of the prominent leaders in the Roman Church, wrote to the Corinthian Church, seeking to address the problem. In his letter, Clement quoted the synoptic Gospels, Romans, I Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Hebrews, and also quotes that are similar to John, Acts, James, and I Peter. He quoted the words of Jesus as being of equal authority to that of the Old Testament prophets.

Here are a couple of quotes from Clement:

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<sup>139</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, Chapter 39, lines 3-4, translated by Richard Buckham. (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iii.viii.xxix.html>)

“Especially remember the words of the Lord Jesus which he spoke when teaching gentleness and long-suffering. For he spoke thus: ‘Be merciful, that you may obtain mercy; forgive, that you may be forgiven; as you do [to others], so shall it be done to you’ as you give, so shall it be given to you; as you judge, so shall you be judged; as you show kindness, so shall kindness be shown to you; with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you.”<sup>140</sup>

For anyone familiar with the New Testament, these quotes are recognized as coming from Matthew 5:7; 6:14-15; 7:1-2; Luke 6:31, 36-38

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus; for he said, ‘Woe to that man. It would be better for him if he had not been born, rather than that he should offend (σκανδαλίσαι *skandalisai*) one of my elect. It would be better for him that a millstone were hung on him, and he be cast into the sea, than that he should pervert (διαστρέψαι *diastrepsai*) one of my elect.’”<sup>141</sup>

These quotes bring to mind Matthew 18:6-7; Mark 9:42; and Luke 17:1-2. The difference between the text of our New Testament and the quotes from Clement are seen where he speaks of the *elect*, whereas, the synoptic quotes refer to *little ones*. Interestingly, only in Matthew is the statement recorded as having been made in reference to Children. In Mark and Luke the statement is made in the midst of a warning against false teachers. Thus, Clement could have understood the *little ones* to be applied, legitimately, to all believers in Christ.

In his letter he makes reference to Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians (I Corinthians 15:36ff) and in commenting on that text, he makes use of imagery found in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:3; Mark 4:3; Luke 8:5).

He makes very clear references to the letters of Paul, for example urging them to consult the epistle which the “blessed apostle Paul sent them.” Clement’s frequent reference to several of Paul’s epistles points to the possibility of a collection of Paul’s epistles already being circulated together as a corpus.

### Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius was a presbyter in Antioch who was arrested and martyred about 110 AD, during the reign of Emperor Trajan. He was taken from Antioch to Rome under armed guard. During his journey, his guards allowed him to meet with various church leaders and to write letters to churches. He wrote seven letters. Ignatius’ writing is very original in style, abrupt, and full of metaphors. Throughout his letters, he echoes Paul’s writings, most frequently from I Corinthians. He also includes phraseology from Romans, Ephesians, and Philippians. Some also detect echoes of Hebrews and I Peter in his letters.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *I Clement* 13:2

<sup>141</sup> *I Clement* 46:7-8

<sup>142</sup> Bruce M. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press) 2009 page 45

One thing that catches our attention in this list is that most of his quotes are from I Corinthians. I Corinthians is one of the most congregationally specific letters of the New Testament, dealing with issues that, in some ways, were unique to the Church at Corinth. The fact that Ignatius in Antioch would have been familiar with the epistle in 110 AD, demonstrates that the apostolic correspondence was distributed widely by the end of the First Century – within but a few decades after being composed. It also implies that in all of the churches, the apostolic writings were viewed as authoritative.

#### The Didache

The Didache (also known as *The Teaching of the Apostles*) is a manual of moral doctrine and church practice. It is divided into sixteen chapters.

- Chapters 1 – 6 describe the “Way of Life and the Way of Death.”
- Chapters 7 – 15 impart instructions for baptism, the lord’s supper, fasting, prayer, and how to treat prophets, elders, and deacons.
- Chapter 16 is a prophecy concerning the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ.

*The Didache’s* date of composition has been disputed. Some have dated it as early as middle of the First Century, others at 70 AD, and others, later. The present general consensus is that the document was completed c. 120.<sup>143</sup> Jonathan Draper, in a footnote, comments that “a new consensus is emerging for a date c. 100 AD.”<sup>144</sup> Whichever of these dates one accepts, it is clear that the document represents the thinking of the Church in its earliest years.

The document contains two clear quotations from the Old Testament (Malachi 1:11; Zechariah 14:5) and two from Matthew (Matthew 6:5ff; Matthew 7:6). In addition to these quotes, the document contains three separate references to Our Lord’s commandments found in Matthew 11:3; 15:3; 15:4. There also are principles put forth that are found in several other New Testament books, but they are not specifically cited.

#### The Apostolic Testimony Recorded by Papias and Irenaeus

Although we included these quotes earlier (page 29 in these notes), it is fitting that we repeat them here, somewhat edited for our present topic.

#### Papias

When Eusebius, writing in the early Fourth Century,<sup>145</sup> commented on the authorship of the Gospel of Mark, he quoted Papias, who was a contemporary of John the Apostle, and wrote his documents c. 95 AD.

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<sup>143</sup> See Metzger, *The Canon...* page 49-50

<sup>144</sup> Jonathan Draper, “The Jesus Tradition in the Didache” in *Gospel Perspectives*, Volume 5, *The Jesus Tradition Outside the Gospels* ed. David Wenham (Sheffield Eng. : JSOT 1985

<sup>145</sup> Eusebius died c. 340 AD

“...concerning Mark, who wrote the gospel in the following words: ‘And John the Presbyter also said this, Mark being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he recorded he wrote with accuracy, but not, however in the order in which it was spoken or done by our Lord, for he neither heard nor followed our Lord, but as before said, he was in company with Peter, who gave him such instruction as was necessary, but not to give [an orderly] history of our Lord’s discourses: wherefore, Mark has not erred in anything, by writing some things as he has recorded them; for he was carefully attentive to one thing, not pass by anything that he heard or to state anything falsely in the accounts.’”<sup>146</sup>

This was Papias’ report of what John the Apostle had told him about the origin of the Gospel of Mark. Thus, according to Papias, Peter spoke and Mark wrote, and the result was the Gospel of Mark. Of special interest is Papias’ statement concerning why the information is not in perfect order and why there are gaps in the account – which is a testimony to Mark’s honesty in taking down all that Peter preached and nothing else.

Other scattered evidence preserved by Eusebius, Jerome, Philip of Side, as well as some of the later Fathers, would indicate that Papias knew the Gospel of John, I Peter, I John, and the Apocalypse. At this time, we have no evidence in the available material that he knew of the Gospel of Luke or of any of Paul’s epistles.<sup>147</sup>

#### Irenaeus

Next the note the writing of Irenaeus (135-200 AD), writing in the generation after Papias. Irenaeus was mentored by Polycarp who had been instructed by companions of the apostles and was an acquaintance of the Apostle John. Concerning the authorship of the Gospels, Irenaeus wrote,

“Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome and laying the foundations of the church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by him. Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who had also leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.”<sup>148</sup>

Here then, according to one who knew apostolic men and who wrote within a few years after the death of John, the order given is Matthew first, followed by Mark, followed by Luke, and then John.

In the next section of these notes, we will cite quotations and allusions found in a number of writings from the earliest years of the Church, demonstrating that some exposure to the documents that we now label, “Scripture,” was quite widespread in the late First Century and the early Second Century.

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<sup>146</sup> Eusebius Pamphilus, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book Three, Chapter 39 (Grand Rapids, Baker Book House) 1994, page 127

<sup>147</sup><sup>147</sup> Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, page 55

<sup>148</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book III, Chapter 1

## Movements and Influences that Prompted the Development of the Canon

Even though citations from the earliest years of the Church indicate that there was a body of literature that the Church Fathers considered to be accurate and to have some degree of authority, there still was not a list of such authoritative literature until the Church was pushed to create such a list.

When certain religious and socio-political movements began to manifest in the early years of the Church, it became increasingly important to define doctrine, and especially, the authority for the doctrines espoused by the Church. We will take a surface look at some of these and the Church's response.

### Gnosticism

Gnosticism flourished for about four centuries, and did infect some segments of the early church. Some of its proponents claimed to have received special knowledge from angels. Gnosticism had various presentations, but generally, there was an underlying thesis. According to the Gnostics, everything began with a Divine Being, who often was designated as the Auto-Pater. He had thoughts – (Greek: νοῦς *nous*). As he had these thoughts, they produced spirit-beings. Nothing physical was created by his thoughts, only spirit. One of the spirit beings was named, σοφία (*Sophia*), which is the Greek term meaning, “broad and full intelligence.”<sup>149</sup>

*Sophia* also had *nous* that produced spirit-beings. These spirit-beings also had *nous*, and as a result more spirit-beings were produced and so after the passing of time there were many generations of such spirit-beings. One of the spirit-beings descended from *Sophia* was a *nous* who, for the first time, brought into being, physical things, including physical-beings. This *nous* became the antagonist of the Auto-Pater. These two polar opposites came to be known as the *Urge* (the Auto-Pater) and the *Demi-Urge*. Thus, good and evil came to be defined by its origin. All that is produced by the *Urge* (everything spiritual) is good. Everything produced by the *Demi-Urge* (everything physical) is evil. Since all humans have a physical existence, their physical nature is evil.

Gnosticism sought to present, by a very complicated process, the means whereby one could achieve victory over his physical self and enter the highest realm of the spirit. The reason that the term, *Gnostic*, became the label for this movement was because it supposedly possessed a secret, higher knowledge, initially given by angels (the Greek term, γνῶσις *gnosis*, is the term for “knowledge”).

Two exactly opposite expressions of this path to salvation developed among Gnostics. One was ascetic, in which the devotee deprived his body of nourishment, pleasure, and even practiced some form of self-flagellation. The intent was to destroy the flesh in order to free the spirit.

The opposite expression was displayed in those who practiced hedonism – seeking to destroy the body through dissolute lives. A view that contributed to this was that the body could do no good

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<sup>149</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, Ma - ss, Hendrickson Publishers) 2000, Page 581

and the spirit could do no evil, so, as far as “salvation” was concerned, it did not matter what one did with his/her body. The concept of sinful behaviour was foreign to these Gnostics.

There are several indications in the New Testament that Gnostic concepts early-on had begun to infect some churches. This was the case. For example, Paul addressed those who claimed to have a superior knowledge (Colossians 2:8, 18; Titus 1:16; II Timothy 3:7) and those who appropriated the term, *gnosis* (I Timothy 6:20). Moreover, both the Gospel of John and I John are polemics against Gnosticism. For example, I John 1:1 states,

*What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—*

Some Gnostics were arguing that since all flesh is evil, Jesus could not have come in the flesh. John refutes this from his experience – we heard Him, we saw Him, we touched him. The Greek term rendered, *touched*, is *ψηλαφάω* (*spelafao*), which means, *to handle, to fumble, to grope*. It is the term used for a blind man who fumbles and gropes something in order to identify it. Thus, John says that from his experience, he knows that Jesus came in the flesh.<sup>150</sup>

Then, in I John 4:2-3 he speaks strongly against the Gnostic teaching.

*By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;<sup>3</sup> and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.*

Therefore, as the heresy of Gnosticism began to infect some congregations, church leaders began to feel the need to develop a Canon – a certified list of authoritative writings that separated truth from error.

Other philosophies, somewhat related to Gnosticism, also arose that began to alter the orthodox view of Christ. A very influential teacher was Valentinus and his younger follower, Marcus and the Marcionite movement that grew under his leadership.

#### Marcion

A very major threat to orthodox Christianity came in the form of Marcion. Marcion was a very wealthy ship-owner who, by his large contributions to the church treasury had become a respected member of the Roman churches. At the end of July, 144 AD, he met with the leaders of the Roman congregations to expound his teachings in an effort to win others to his point of view. What he expounded to the elders of these churches shocked them. As a result, he was formally excommunicated and the churches returned to him the large contributions that he had given to the churches.

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<sup>150</sup> At one point, a noted Gnostic, Cerinthus, visited Ephesus. A traditional account describes a scene in which Cerinthus entered the public bath while John was there and John cried out, “Let us flee, lest the bath fall in while Cerinthus, the enemy of truth is here.”  
(<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/wace/biodict.html?term=Cerenthus,%20opponent%20of%20St.%20John>)

From that time onward, Marcion went his own way, energetically propagating his brand of Christianity. His doctrines quickly took root in major sections of the Roman Empire. By the end of the Second Century, Marcion's teaching had become a serious threat to the Church.

Marcion wrote only one work, called, ἀντιθέσις (*antithesis*), in which he set forth his ideas. Based on what we can learn from surviving documents, written mostly by those who were opposing his doctrines, Marcion rejected the God of the Old Testament, who was the Creator and God of the Jews. The Old Testament God was a God of Justice. However, according to Marcion, the Christian God is a Supreme God of Goodness and Christ is the messenger of this God. The Old and New Testaments cannot, in any way, be reconciled to one another. The Twelve Apostles misunderstood the teaching of Jesus, because they considered him to be the Messiah of the Old Testament. Only Paul really understood Jesus, and he displayed this in his Epistle to the Galatians. Marcion accepted as authority nine Epistles that Paul sent to seven churches, as well as the one to Philemon. For Marcion, these, and only these were the source of true doctrine. He did seem to have some trust in the Gospel of Luke, probably because Luke was a companion of Paul.

Even with this two-part canon (the *Evangelion* and the *Apostolikon*) he saw the need to do some pruning. So, he removed what he saw as Judaizing interpolations that had been smuggled into Luke and some of the Epistles. He omitted most of the first four chapters of Luke and removed from Paul's epistles anything that did not agree with what he thought Paul should have written.

#### Montanism

Another movement that pushed the Church to develop a canon was Montanism. Montanus was a contemporary of Marcion. He felt that the church was reverting to Judaism, worldliness, and formalism. He sought to call the church back to being a Spirit-led church. He was a forerunner of the Charismatic movement.

Sometime between 155 and 172 AD, Montanus emerged in Phrygia, demanding a higher standard for the Church and separation from the world. He was concerned about the growth of formalism in the Church and the dependence on human leadership, rather than the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He saw the rising prominence of a single bishop in the local church as an expression of this tendency. If he had gone no further than advocating pure living, holiness, and less formalism in the Church, Montanus would have done nothing but good. However, he went much further.

He believed that the Church was overly reliant on apostolic writings and advocated a Spirit-guided Church. Montanus contended that inspiration was immediate and continuous and that he was the Paraclete through whom the Holy Spirit spoke, even as the Holy Spirit had spoken through Paul and the other apostles. When he did refer to Scripture, it was with a fanatical misinterpretation. He had two female followers, Prisca and Maximilla, who being struck by the spirit of the movement, left their husbands and traveled with Montanus. He and his two prophetess associates went about prophesying in the name of the Holy Spirit. The Montanists prophesied in a state of ecstasy, as though their personalities were suspended while the Holy

Spirit spoke through them. Montanus quoted the Holy Spirit as saying, “Behold, man is like a lyre and I fly over it like the plectrum” (Today, we would call a plectrum a “guitar pick”).

Montanus and his two associates declared that any opposition to their new prophecy was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit.

Montanus developed an elaborate eschatology, prophesying the speedy Second Coming of Christ. Montanus and his two female associates settled down in the west-central Phrygian town of Pepuza and began to utter prophetic oracles. The pronouncements of Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla were written down and distributed. He taught that the Kingdom of Christ soon would be set up at Pepuza and that he, Montanus, would have a prominent place in that kingdom.<sup>151</sup> In order to be prepared and qualified for this coming kingdom, He and his followers practiced strict asceticism (much fasting, eating only dry foods, and no remarriage for widows or widowers, etc.). His doctrine of a new age of the Spirit suggested that the Christian period, centering on Jesus, had ended. He claimed the right to push Christ and the apostolic message into the background. In the name of the Holy Spirit, Montanus denied that God's decisive and normative revelation had occurred in Jesus Christ.

The movement spread rapidly, and soon was found both in North Africa and in Rome. The movement was strongest around Carthage and the eastern lands. Montanism was regarded as heresy in most churches. Because of the Montinists' emphasis on their end-times prophecies, some churches began to reject anything apocalyptic, including the Apocalypse of John.

Finally, after the movement had been existence for about two centuries, the Council at Constantinople in 381, declared that Montanists were pagans.

### Persecution

Another series of events that caused the Church to begin to make decisions about which writings were sacred and which ones were not, was persecution. In AD 303, an imperial edict was posted in Nicomedia ordering all copies of Christian Scriptures be surrendered and burned and all buildings used for Christian worship be demolished, and that no meetings for Christian worship were to be held. Punishment for disobedience was imprisonment, torture, and even death.<sup>152</sup>

When Christians were ordered to turn over their sacred writings to the authorities, they had to decide whether they could turn over a copy of the Gospel of John, or the writings of Clement, or the Gospel of Thomas, or some other piece of Christian literature without committing a sacrilege.

There are a number of surviving accounts of Roman official's showing up at Christians' homes and demanding their sacred writings. One is the account of the martyrdom of Agape, Irene, and Chione. At successive hearings, these Christian women were interrogated by the prefect Dulcitus of Thessalonica, who inquired, “Do you have in your possession any writings, parchments or books<sup>153</sup> of the impious Christians?” Chione replied, “We do not, Sir. Our present emperors have taken these from us.” On the next day, when Irene was once again brought before

<sup>151</sup> Montanus declared that Pepuza and its close-by neighbor, Tymion, were the New Jerusalem

<sup>152</sup> Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, page 107

<sup>153</sup> ὑπομνήματα ἢ διφθέραι ἢ βιβλία *hypomnemata he dipsqerai he bilia*



the court, the prefect asked, “Who was it that advised you to retain those parchments and writings<sup>154</sup> up to the present time?” Irene replied, “It was Almighty God, who bade us to love Him unto death. For this reason we did not dare to be traitors, but we chose to be burned alive or suffer anything else that might happen to us rather than betray them.”<sup>155</sup>

After sentencing the young woman to be placed naked in the public brothel, the prefect gave orders that the writings<sup>156</sup> in the chests and cabinets belonging to Irene were to be burned, publicly. The account concludes by describing how the three women were burned at the stake in March or April 304 AD.<sup>157</sup>

Many other influences that burst forth in the first three centuries of Christianity pushed the Church to create a list of sacred writings – those that were the product of θεόπνευστος. There is no need to recount all of these, at this point, but to acknowledge that the production of a canon became necessary because of a number of issues that arose in the Third and Fourth Centuries of the Church.

### **Evidence of an Embryonic Canon**

#### Tatian

We earlier noted Tatian’s *Diatessaron*, in the section on quotations from the Church Fathers (page 61 in these notes).

Since Tatian was born c.120 and died in April 173, it is clear that his *Diatessaron* was produced in the middle of the Second Century (generally understood to have been produced 150 – 170 AD). That he selected the Four Gospels that we have in our Bibles is strong testimony that all four Gospels were viewed as authoritative in the middle of the Second Century. It also is noteworthy that the other writings depicting the Life of Christ were rejected by Tatian – testimony to the status that the present four Gospels had such status in the Second Century Church.

#### Theophilus of Antioch

Theophilus of Antioch was a leading overseer in the Church in Antioch, in the years preceding and following 180 AD. He wrote several works that have not survived, but they are quoted in documents that do survive. Jerome, for example, mentions a commentary on the four Gospels that bears the name of Theophilus.<sup>158</sup> Three of his writings, composed in defense of the Christian Faith do survive. In *Ad Autolycum*, is the first time, as far as extant materials are concerned, that the term τριάς (*trias* – i.e.. Trinity) is used for the Godhead.

Theophilus had great respect for the Jewish Bible, calling them *The Holy Sacred Writings*. He considered the prophets to be “Spirit bearers of the Holy Spirit” who were inspired and made

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<sup>154</sup> Τὰς διφθέρας ταύτας καὶ τὰς γραφάς

<sup>155</sup> Προδοῦναι αὐτάς, ie, the writings

<sup>156</sup> Τὰ γραμματεῖα

<sup>157</sup> Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament*, page 108

<sup>158</sup> Metzger. *Op.cit* page 117

wise by God., as he called them. As one reads his writings, it becomes apparent that Theophilus considers at least three of the Gospels<sup>159</sup> to be inspired as were the prophets of the Old Testament. He also quotes from various epistles, calling them, the “Divine Word.”<sup>160</sup>

From the extant writings of Theophilus, and quotations of Theophilus from other writers, it becomes apparent that at before the close of the Second Century, the Gospels, Acts, a collection of the Pauline epistles, and probably the Apocalypse, were considered to be a part of the New Testament.

#### Serapion

The successor to Theophilus at Antioch was a man named, Serapion. He was asked about what material could be read in a church service. He wrote a letter to the church in Rhossus, a village in Cilicia, warning of the danger of “fringe” literature. He cautioned that there were apostolic writings that everyone recognized as having come from the apostles, but that from experience he had learned that there were writings to which some had attached names of the apostles. He cautions about the danger of giving any authority to such spurious documents.

Once again, in Serapion, we find an early Church Father who recognized the “canonicity” of the books that we have in our New Testament, before a canon had been created.

#### Origin

Origin, in the early Third Century (in 203 he was appointed head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, as successor to Clement), Origin was an amazingly prolific writer. After being arrested and cruelly tortured for his faith, he died in 253 or 254. He was an exceptional Biblical scholar. He is said to have commented on every book of the Bible – three times. He wrote short and long commentaries and preached in many regions. He groups the New Testament into two groups: The Gospels and the Apostles. He groups all of these under the name, “The New Testament.” He comments that the church must distinguish between the Gospels that are accepted without controversy by the entire Church and the gospels composed by heretics. The valid Gospels are the four that we have in our New Testaments. As heretical he lists the Gospel of Thomas,<sup>161</sup> the Gospel of Matthias, the Gospel of the Twelve Apostles, and the Gospel of the Egyptians.

Interestingly, when commenting on II Timothy, Origin wrote, “some have dared to reject this Epistle, but they were not able.”<sup>162</sup> In his commentary on John, he does express some doubt about the Epistles of James, II Peter, and II & III John. However, in his *Homilies on Joshua* (written about 240 AD) there is an enumeration of all of the books of the New Testament (with somewhat of an oratorical flourish). Unfortunately, the only extant copy of this homily is a Latin translation from Rufinus (345-410 AD).

“So too our Lord Jesus Christ... sent His apostles as priests carrying well-wrought trumpets. First Matthew sounded the priestly trumpet in his Gospel. Mark also, and Luke and John, each gave forth a strain on their priestly trumpets. Peter moreover

<sup>159</sup> He quotes Matthew, Luke, and John, but his extant writings do not contain quotes of Mark.

<sup>160</sup> Metzger, *Op. cit.* page 118

<sup>161</sup> For examples of quotations from the Gospel of Thomas, see ADDENDUM H

<sup>162</sup> Metzger, *Op. cit.*, page 138

sounds with the two trumpets of his Epistles; James also and Jude. Still the number is incomplete, and John gives forth the trumpet sound through his Epistles [and Apocalypse],<sup>163</sup> and Luke while describing the deeds of the apostles. Latest of all, moreover, that one came who said, “I think that God has set us forth as the apostles last of all (I Corinthians 4:9), and thundering on the fourteen trumpets of his Epistles he threw down, even to their very foundations, the walls of Jericho, that is to say, all the instruments of idolatry and the dogmas of the philosophers.”

In this description of the New Testament, Origin mentions the books that later were given “canonicity.”

Important testimony is found in the writings of Justin Martyr, which we quoted earlier (page 30 in these notes.) As we noted earlier, Justin describes the four Gospels as “Memoirs of the Apostles.” He further states that these memoirs are called, *Gospels*.<sup>164</sup> Eight times he calls them *Memoirs of the Apostles*; once, “Memoirs composed by the apostles of Christ and by those who followed them,” and then he quotes Luke.<sup>165</sup> In his writings, Justin demonstrates a knowledge of all four of the Gospels.

Hippolytus of Rome was a very influential church leader between 200 and 235 AD. He was the last of the great Christian authors to use the Greek language in his writings. A study of his writings makes clear that he accepted as Scripture the Four Gospels, the thirteen letters of Paul, Acts, I Peter, I & II John, and Revelation. Even though he quoted from Hebrews, he did not consider it to be Scripture. He displayed a knowledge of II Peter, but did not consider it to be Scripture and, because he alludes to James and Jude, he knew of them, but does not call them, Scripture.

We have cited Irenaeus of Lyons earlier (page 76 of these notes). In his day (he died c. 200 AD), the Church recognized only the four Gospels that we have in our Bibles. Arguing against the view that there could be more than four Gospels, Irenaeus wrote,

“It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are, since there are four directions in the world in which we are, and four principle winds... The four living creatures [of Revelation 4:9] symbolize the four Gospels... and there were four principal covenants made with humanity, through Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Christ.”

Further mention could be made of Melito of Sardis who wrote 161-180 AD; of Dionysius of Corinth, who wrote prior to 170 AD; the learned Athenian philosopher, Athenagoras who wrote a significant document to the Emperor in 177 AD; Aristides, who wrote a defense of Christianity between 138-147 AD; Pantaeus, director of a school in Alexandria, writing 180 – 192; Clement of Alexandria, successor to Pantaeus, writing in the decade prior to 200; as well as other lesser-known writers who cited the New Testament Scriptures as authoritative in opposition to other literature being circulated among the churches.

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<sup>163</sup> Some manuscripts of this document lack the term, *apocalypse*.

<sup>164</sup> Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 66:3

<sup>165</sup> Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 103:8

## The Development of Formal Canons

By the close of the Second Century, there began to emerge lists of books that had come to be regarded as authoritative Christian Scriptures. Some lists deal with only one section of the New Testament, as we noted in Origin's *Commentary on Matthew*, in which he enumerates our current four Gospels as being the "only indisputable Gospels," and in his commentary on John, he speaks of the several Epistles of Paul, Peter, and John. The earliest comprehensive list is known as the Muratorian Canon, followed a century later by a list of New Testament books prepared by Eusebius of Caesarea.

### The criteria for inclusion in the canon

The early Church fathers used three criteria for determining whether or not a writing qualified for inclusion in the canon.

1. The first criteria was whether or not the material in the document conformed to the "rule of faith" (Greek: ὁ κανὼν τῆς πίστεως *i.e.*, *the canon of the faith*; Latin: *regula fidei, i.e., the rule of faith*) This criteria referred to the basic doctrines that were considered normative for the Church. Thus, any document's claim to being authoritative were judged first by the nature of their content.
2. Another test was that of apostolicity. Was the author an apostle or one associated with the apostles? This question had to be answered positively in order for the writing to be considered qualified for the canon.
3. Another test for the authority of a book was whether or not the book had continuous acceptance by the Church at large. Any book considered for the canon had to be one that had enjoyed acceptance by many churches over a long period of time.

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON IN THE EASTERN CHURCH

The church of the East (also known as the Byzantine Church), of which the hub was Constantinople, originally was a Greek-speaking church. It developed along different lines than the church of the West, which had Rome as its hub and was Latin-speaking. Both groups influenced cultures other than those that spoke Greek and Latin, but the two strains have somewhat of an independent history. We first will look at the development of a New Testament canon in the Eastern Church.

### Eusebius of Caesarea

In our previous discussions, we often have referred to Eusebius. His *Ecclesiastical History* is the earliest extant church history document. It is quite extensive. Born about 260 AD, Eusebius became the bishop of Caesarea before 315 and died about 340. He was a great promoter of Constantine, the Roman Emperor who embraced Christianity.

Although Eusebius is not the best exegete, he had an impressive instinct for historical research. Eusebius had at his disposal the library at Caesarea, which had been developed by Origin and then enlarged by Pamphilus. When Pamphilus died in the Diocletian persecution, Eusebius became his successor. In addition to the library of Caesarea, he also had at his disposal the

library at Jerusalem and other such collections. He collected and organized material covering the history of the Church during the preceding three centuries., especially the Church in the East,

Several times during the first 25 years of the Fourth Century, he issued his *Ecclesiastical History* in sections, with revisions and additions. Fortunately, Eusebius gave great attention to the history of the Christian Bible. He quoted extensively from early Christian writings, the extracts from Scripture in these writings, and the comments that were made on various passages.

In the absence of any official Church-sanctioned list of New Testament writings, Eusebius resorted to counting the votes of the various early Christian writers. He placed the apostolic or pretended apostolic writings in three categories:<sup>166</sup>

- Those on whose authority and authenticity all of the consulted authors agreed
- Those which all of the authors rejected
- An intermediate class, in which the votes were divided

Those of the first class, the books that universally were accepted, he calls, ὁμολογούμενα (*homologoumena*). There are twenty-two that he put into this category:

- the Four Gospels
- the Acts of the Apostles
- fourteen Pauline Epistles (including Hebrews)<sup>167</sup>
- I Peter
- I John
- Revelation<sup>168</sup>

Those of the third class he labels, ἀντιλεγόμενα (*antilegomena*). These are writings that some accept as Scripture and some do not recognize as Scripture. Concerning this group, Eusebius wrote,

“of the disputed books, which are nevertheless familiar to the majority, there are extant:

- the Epistle of James, as it is called;
- and that of Jude;
- and 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.”<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, XXV:1-7

<sup>167</sup> In *Ecclesiastical History*, Book III, III:4, Eusebius declares that the Epistles of Paul are obvious and plain, “yet it is not right to ignore the fact that some have rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it is disputed by the Church at Rome, on the ground that it was not written by Paul.” Eusebius, however, rejects Rome’s assessment and in agreement with the Alexandrian Church that Paul wrote it, but originally wrote it in Hebrew and that it was translated, either by Luke or Clement of Rome (this assertion in Book III, 38:2-3)

<sup>168</sup> He includes Revelation, with this proviso: “in addition to these, should be put, if it really seems proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions in the proper time.” Despite this last sentence, he concludes the list with the statement, “These belong among the acknowledged books.”

<sup>169</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, *in. loc.*

Concerning apocryphal books, Eusebius wrote, “Among the spurious books must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the Shepherd (i.e., the *Shepherd of Hermas*), as it is called, and the Apocalypse of Peter; and in addition to these, the extant Epistle of Barnabas, and the Teachings of the Apostles (*The Didache*), as it is called.” He then mentions, once again, that some reject the Apocalypse of John.<sup>170</sup>

Eusebius cautions that some (whom he calls, heretics) have issued writings and have attached the names of apostles to them in order to try to give them credibility. In this group, he mentions as examples, the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, and of Matthias.

One last note concerning Eusebius and the canon – when discussing the making of ancient books, we noted that Constantine directed Eusebius to have fifty copies of the Christian’s sacred Scriptures to be made by excellent scribes (see page 21 of these notes). Eusebius does not give any indication of which books were included in the volumes produced for Constantine. Since Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus were written at about the same time, we would assume that the codices created for Constantine would be similar, if not identical. The contents of these documents are consistent with our current New Testament canon, with Sinaiticus containing in addition, the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*. Codex Vaticanus has several leaves missing, but what it does contain is consistent with our contemporary New Testament canon.

#### Cyril of Jerusalem

About 350 AD, Cyril became the bishop of the church in Jerusalem. The chief surviving material produced by Cyril is his *Catechetical Lectures*. These were instructions given to candidates before their baptism. They were delivered in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and were published from shorthand notes taken by a member of the congregation. In the lectures, Cyril listed the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testaments. He declared that there were only four Gospels and warned his hearers against others that were forged and hurtful.

Following the four Gospels, he lists Acts of the Apostles, the seven Catholic Epistles (James, I Peter, II Peter, I John, II John, III John, and Jude), and the fourteen Epistles of Paul (including Hebrews). He then stated, “But let all the rest be put aside in a secondary rank. And whatever books are not read in the churches, do not read these even by yourself.”<sup>171</sup>

Again, we note the absence of the Book of Revelation – such is the state of the canon as it was understood in Jerusalem at the middle of the Fourth Century.

#### Athanasius

Athanasius was the most celebrated theologian of the Fourth Century. He was present at the Council of Nicea (325 AD) as a deacon and assistant to his bishop, Alexander. He succeeded

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<sup>170</sup> We noted earlier that in a reaction to the Montanists, and their end-times prophecies, many churches and church leaders began to reject the Apocalypse of John, because of its seemingly end-times scenario. Evidence seems to indicate that in some areas it was first accepted, then rejected. The reaction to Montanists would explain this.

<sup>171</sup> Cyril, *Catechetical Lectures*, IV. 36

Alexander as bishop of Alexandria in 328. Athanasius took seriously the question of a biblical canon.

It was the custom for the bishop of Alexandria to write a letter each spring to the churches and monasteries of Egypt concerning the date of Easter and the date on which the members of the churches should begin their Lenten fast. All of the other dates of the liturgical year were based upon the dates given in the bishop's letter. In his Easter letter, written for 367 AD, he lists the books of the New Testament canon, which, except for the order of their presentation,<sup>172</sup> are identical to the canon in our contemporary New Testaments.

After presenting this list, he wrote, "These are the fountains of salvation, that they who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone the teaching of godliness is proclaimed. Let no one add to these; let nothing be taken away from them."<sup>173</sup>

Although Athanasius had clearly defined the New Testament canon for the churches in Egypt, not every influential church leader agreed with him. In the following years, variation was seen in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus (died 389), Amphilochius (died after 394), Epiphanius (died 403), John Chrysostom (died 407), and Theodoret (died 466). All but one of these (Epiphanius) did not include Revelation in their canon.

#### Attempts To Close The Canon In The East

In the East, the church split into many different expressions of the faith – often along ethnic lines. Each of these schisms had its own canon.

Among the Syrian Churches, six separate versions of the Scriptures were produced. The *Diatessaron* of Tatian (see page 61), rather than the four separate Gospels was used in some of the versions. The *Peshitta* version was formed at the beginning of the Fifth Century and for most Syrian churches, it became the standard. The *Peshitta Syriac* version does not include the four shorter catholic epistles (II Peter, II & III John, and Jude) nor does it include the Book of Revelation. For a large part of the Syrian Church, this constituted the closing of the canon.

Later, Monophysite Syrians revised the Peshitta, and their revision included all of the catholic epistles, as well as the Book of Revelation.

Today, the official lectionaries of the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Chaldean Syrian Church, present readings only from the canon of the original Peshitta – thus omitting the four shorter catholic epistles and the Book of Revelation.

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<sup>172</sup> Athanasius lists the New Testament books in this order: The Gospels, Acts, the seven Catholic Epistles, the Pauline Epistles (he inserted Hebrews between II Thessalonians and I Timothy), and concludes with the Apocalypse of John.

<sup>173</sup> Athanasius, *Easter Letter*, 367

Some of the Nestorian Syrian documents vary in the lists of canonical books, but the general pattern set by the Peshitta prevails.

Armenia claims the honor of being the first kingdom to accept Christianity as its official religion. At an early time, Tatian's *Diatessaron* was translated from Syriac into Armenian. The canon of the Peshitta prevails in the Armenian Scriptures, with some additions and adjustments, none of which relate to our present-day Protestant canon.

The Coptic Church of Egypt was the original recipient of Athanasius' Easter letter. A version of the letter was translated into Coptic, and it contains the list of the same 27 books of the New Testament as Athanasius' Greek text contains (i.e. the same as our present-day Protestant canon).

The Ethiopian Church, until 1959, was under the jurisdiction of the Coptic Church, so it is not surprising that its canon follows the Coptic canon. However, it does include three books that are not in the Protestant canon:

- Sinodos, a book of church order;
- Clement, is a book unique to this canon, in that it does not resemble any other writing;
- The Book of the Covenant, is a book on church order;
- Didascalia is another book of church order.

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Metzger gives a concluding word to the discussion of the development of the New Testament canon in the East. He takes a look at the Greek Bibles that have survived from the Byzantine period (the Eastern Church). Here is his interesting perspective.

“According to statistics collected by the Institute for New Testament Text-Research at Munster, as of 1980, the several parts of the New Testament were represented in Greek manuscripts as follows:<sup>174</sup>

	Number of Surviving Manuscripts
The Entire Greek New Testament	59
Manuscripts containing the Gospels, Acts, the Catholic Epistles, and the Pauline Epistles	149
Manuscripts and fragments of the Gospels	2120
Manuscripts and fragments of Acts and the Catholic Epistles	447
Manuscripts and fragments of the Pauline Epistles	571
Manuscripts and fragments of the Book of Revelation	228

From these figures it will be seen that the testimony of the copies of the Scriptures that have survived is more eloquent, in some ways, than the Fathers and more positive than the Councils on questions relative to the canon. It is obvious that the conception of the

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<sup>174</sup> Metzger wrote this in 1987, so these figures probably need to be updated.



canon of the New Testament was not essentially a dogmatic issue whereby all part of the text were regarded as equally necessary (the Gospels exist in 2,328 copies; the Book of Revelation in 287 copies [including those in MS containing the entire Greek New Testament]). The lower status of the Book of Revelation in the East is indicated also by the fact that it has never been included in the official lectionary of the Greek Church, whether Byzantine or modern. It is also significant, judging from the total number of surviving copies that only very small proportion of Christians could have ever owned, or even seen, a copy of the complete canon of the New Testament.”

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON IN THE WEST

Christianity was born in the East, but soon made its way to the West. In the Book of Acts the first person mentioned as a convert on European soil is Lydia, a business woman from Thyatira, in Asia Minor. She was in Philippi in Macedonia, merchandizing purple goods (Acts 16:14). From Philippi, Paul and his team traveled further south into the Balkan peninsula. In succession, the evangelists proclaimed the Gospel in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, and Cenchrea. Later, Paul traveled to Illyrcum (Romans 15:19).<sup>175</sup>

Unnamed individuals carried the Gospel to Rome.<sup>176</sup> By the time that Paul was taken to Rome as a prisoner to be tried before Caesar, a sizeable group of Christians lived in Rome. Acts 28:15 informs us that while Paul, under armed guard, was being taken to Rome to be tried before Caesar, a group of Roman Christians traveled south, about forty miles, to meet Paul at the Forum of Appius and at Three Taverns (two way-stations on the Appian Way). By the time that Nero became Emperor (he was Emperor 54-68 AD) the number of Christians in Rome had become a multitude.<sup>177</sup> By the Second Century, the Church in Rome had become firmly established and had planted churches further west in Gaul, as well as south, across the Mediterranean Sea in northern Africa.

We now turn to the writings that help us to trace how New Testament books were used and viewed in the West.

## ROME

First, we give additional attention to the Muratorian Canon and then give attention to two of the significant early Church leaders in Rome.

### The Muratorian Canon

The Muratorian Canon is named after its discoverer, the distinguished Italian historian and theological scholar, Ludovico Antonio Muratori. The codex that preserves the list is an eighth-century manuscript found in the ancient monastery of Bobbio and now is in the Ambrosian

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<sup>175</sup> Illyrcum was a Roman province that comprised present-day northern Croatia, northern Serbia, and western Hungary

<sup>176</sup> It is probable that Roman Jews carried the Gospel back to Rome after the Pentecostal event recorded in Acts 2. Acts 2:10 notes that visitors from Rome were present and witnessed the event.

<sup>177</sup> Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44, states that the Christians in Rome had become a *multitudo ingens* (a huge multitude) who had suffered persecution.

Library at Milan, Italy. Later, at Monte Cassino, small portions of the same text were discovered. The codex contains a collection of several theological treatises of three Church Fathers of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries (Eucherius, Ambrose, and Chrysostom). It concludes with five early Christian creeds. It seems to have been the common book of a monk who copied a miscellaneous assortment of texts from various sources.

The document indicates that the author was in Rome, while his brother, Pius, was the bishop of the Church of Rome. The dates of Pius episcopate have been reckoned as being between 140 – 157. This information leads us to conclude that it could not have been written later than the year 200 and probably earlier.

This, the earliest document that can be construed as a canon but it is not a canon in the truest sense, i.e. a bare list of titles. Rather, it is a kind of an introduction to the New Testament. The author discusses each book and appends historical information concerning it, as well as some theological reflections on the book being discussed.

The canon includes the four Gospels, Acts, Romans, I & II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and, Jude, I, II, & III John,<sup>178</sup> the Apocalypse of John.

Note that Hebrews, James, and I & II Peter are missing from this canon.

Interestingly, he mentions an Apocalypse of Peter, which he says “some of us are not willing that the latter should be read in church.”

The Shepherd of Hermas is mentioned as having been written very recently and therefore should not be read in divine service with the same authority as the prophets and apostles. However, it can be read privately, as one would read devotional literature.

The canon mentions several books that must be rejected altogether, the writings of Arsinous and Miltiades, those of Valentinus, Marcion, and the Montanists.

Twice the author refers to the universal Church, which is spread throughout the whole world, and emphasizes that even though Paul’s letters were written to specific churches, they are intended for the Church universal (he uses the term *catholica*, the Latin term for *universal*).

#### Justin Martyr

In our studies, we frequently have referred to Justin Martyr, one of the early apologists who stepped forward to defend Christianity. Justin was born around 100 A.D., in Shechem, in Samaria. Justin experimented with various philosophies, being converted to Christianity at around 130 A.D. A short time later, he traveled to Ephesus, where he became a Christian teacher. It was while he was in Ephesus that he first engaged in a dispute with a Jew named Trypho (c. 135). After a few years, he moved to Rome, where he established a Christian school.

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<sup>178</sup> Whether or not the canon refers to III John, depends on how one renders the Greek. It is somewhat ambiguous

Not long after Justin's arrival in Rome, the Cynic philosopher, Crescens, began to attack the teaching of Justin. Crescens' vehement opposition motivated Justin to compose a reasoned defense of the Christian faith. This ἀπολογία (*apologia*, i.e., Apology) was issued about 150 A.D., and Justin wrote in the form of a petition addressed to Emperor Antonius Pius. Because he later wrote another apology, this document has become known as Justin's *First Apology*. Later he published his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, a version of the arguments that he had put forth, in his dispute with Trypho, while in Ephesus. After Marcus Aurelius became Emperor (161 A.D.), he composed a shorter, *Second Apology*, addressed to the Roman Senate.

Justin was the most prolific Christian writer up to his time. Not only was he a prolific writer, but he also in his writing he was given to detail. In *Dialogue with Trypho*, a document of 142 chapters, he stressed the temporary nature of the Old Covenant, quoting the prophets to prove that Christian truth existed even before Christ.

We already have noted his describing the four Gospels as, *Memoirs of the Apostles* (pages 30-31 and 83). He declared that these memoirs were called, *Gospels*.<sup>179</sup> There is no question that to Justin, in the middle of the Second Century in Rome, the Four Gospels were authentic and that they were the only ones that were. Even though it may seem to be repetitious, it is appropriate to note again, that

- eight times, Justin describes the Gospels as, *Memoirs of the Apostles*,
- four times, *Memoirs*;
- once, *Memoirs composed by the apostles of Christ and by those who followed them* (in this case he cites Luke).<sup>180</sup>

We earlier have quoted Justin's description of a Sunday service and the reading of the Gospels as a regular part of that service (pages 30-31 these notes). It is important to note that he lists the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, before the prophets, probably indicating that he placed the *Memoirs* as not only equal to the prophets but probably above them.<sup>181</sup> Justin either quotes directly, or paraphrases, or presents concepts that are found all four of the Gospels.

Of special interest is the fact that the only other book of the New Testament to which Justin alludes is the Book of Revelation.<sup>182</sup>

“Moreover also among us a man named John, one of the apostles of Christ, prophesied in a revelation made to him that those who have believed on our Christ, will spend a

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<sup>179</sup> *First Apology*, 56:3

<sup>180</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, 108:8

<sup>181</sup> Metzger, *The Canon*, page 145

<sup>182</sup> As noted by Metzger, some scholars, such as B. F. Wescott, contend that although Justin does not quote from the Epistles of Paul, in his controversy with Marcion, he must have had knowledge of them, because that was the basis of the argument. Occasional Pauline forms of expression and teaching show that Paul's writings had molded both his face and his language. Metzger, *The Canon*, page 148 footnote

thousand years in Jerusalem; and that hereafter the general and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgement of all will likewise take place.”<sup>183</sup>

One reason that this citation is significant is, as noted earlier, the fact that the Eastern Churches, following the Montanus controversy, tended to avoid including Revelation in the canon.

### Hippolytus of Rome

We also have mentioned and quoted Hippolytus of Rome earlier (page 83). Prior to his death in 235 A.D., Hippolytus had composed a large number of writings on a number of subjects. He was a contemporary of Origen, in the East. He was born in 170 A.D., but little is known of his early life. According to Photius, he was a pupil of Irenaeus.<sup>184</sup> Hippolytus became a man of significant reputation in the Church at Rome. Origen wrote that on a visit to Rome (212 A.D.), he heard Hippolytus preach, “On the Praise of Our Lord and Saviour.”

Hippolytus came into conflict with the Bishop of Rome, Callistus (217-222 A.D.) on questions concerning ecclesiastical discipline. He and some followers separated from the Church at Rome, and an influential circle elected him Bishop of Rome. So, he came to be the first of what later would be described as an *antipope*. He later became reconciled to the existing church and died as a martyr in 235 AD.

Although Hippolytus did not make a list of New Testament books, there are some who argue that the Muratorian Canon is the work of Hippolytus translated into Latin. Be that as it may, he made an impassioned defense of the Book of Revelation and accepted as Scripture, the four Gospels, thirteen Epistles of Paul, Acts, I Peter, I John, and II John. He knew the Epistle to the Hebrews and quoted from it, but he did not regard it as Scripture.

Another noteworthy thing found in the writings of Hippolytus is the expression, *the apostles*, when referring to the Epistles. Others used the same terminology, which leads us to conclude that in the same manner that the four Gospels were distributed as a single collection, so the Epistles were distributed as a single collection.

Hippolytus is the first writer to demonstrate that he knew II Peter<sup>185</sup> – but he did not regard it as Scripture. He also must have known James and Jude, at least slightly. Once he alludes to the opening words of James, with the words, “As the saying of Jude in his first letter to the twelve tribes<sup>186</sup> ‘which are scattered in the world’ proves.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> *Dialogue with Trypho*, 81:4

<sup>184</sup> Photius *bibliotheca*, cod. 121. Photius was Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople (Eastern Orthodox Church) 858-867, then again, 877-886, and in the Eastern Orthodox Church is known as St. Photius the Great

<sup>185</sup> Predating Eusebius, Cyril, and Athanasius by a century - see page 86 of these notes

<sup>186</sup> He evidently considered James and Jude to have been authored by the same person, since the quote is from James.

<sup>187</sup> Metzger, *The Canon*, page 151 and footnote

## GAUL

The region known as Gaul, occupied what is present-day France, Luxemburg, Belgium, most of Switzerland, northern Italy, parts of the Netherlands, and parts of Germany. The Gauls were Celts.

Missionaries from Asia Minor (most from present-day Turkey), established a church at Lyons. From this church the Gospel spread to other parts of Gaul. Even though the church at Lyons used the Greek language in its services and writings, the people of Lyons spoke a Celtic dialect. Irenaeus, originally from Smyrna, in Asia Minor, was a major leader in the church at Lyons. He represented the Eastern Church tradition and was a living bond between Asia and Gaul.

In 177, the leaders of the Lyons church sent Irenaeus to Rome with a letter for the Bishop of Rome, Eleuterus. The church at Lyons was experiencing problems with the Montanist heresy and sought counsel from Rome. While Irenaeus was at Rome, the population of Lyons began to persecute Christians. At first, Christians were banned from the public baths and the market places. Later they were excluded from all public places. Then, during a time when the provincial governor was away, a mob broke loose, assaulting Christians, beating, and stoning them to death. When the governor returned, in response to the views of the population, he ordered a public trial of Christians.

Horrible tortures were applied to the Christians, in an effort to break each person's will and get each one to recant his/her Christian faith. Finally, the governor ordered the beheading of all Christians who were Roman citizens. The rest were to be exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre.

Sometime later, when the popular anger had subsided, the church sent a letter to the mother churches in Asia Minor, telling them what had happened. In the letter, there are phrases from Acts, Romans, Philippians, I & II Timothy, I Peter, Hebrews, the Gospel of John, and the Book of Revelation. Although this does not constitute any sort of canon, it is evidence of the role that the New Testament played in the life of these dedicated believers.

### Irenaeus of Lyons

We earlier printed important quotes from Irenaeus, in which he described the authorship of the four Gospels (pages 76 and 83). Irenaeus also spoke of the authority of the Pauline Epistles. In *Against Heresies*, Book 1, 3:6, he puts the writings of the evangelists and the apostles on the same level as the Old Testament law and the prophets. He did the same with the Acts of the Apostles in *Against Heresies*, Book 3 12:9. He also designated the Apocalypse of John as Scripture, which is noteworthy, since the East tended to disregard the Apocalypse as Scripture

### Tertullian

Tertullian was born in Carthage to pagan parents, soon after the middle of the Second Century. He received an excellent education in literature, law, and rhetoric. Although Latin was his language, he was quite familiar with Greek. He moved to Rome and gained a reputation for his

successful work in the courts. He was converted to Christianity in 195 A.D. and returned to Carthage where he vigorously propagated his newly adopted faith. His sharp legal mind was a great asset in his presentation. Around 205 A.D., he began to express deep concern over the laxity and political envy that he saw in the Roman Church. As a result, in response to the same concerns expressed by Montanus, he became a Montanist and was a prominent leader of the sect in North Africa.

He became a strong opponent of Marcion, and in his denunciation of Marcion, Tertullian defended the Acts of the Apostles, then, one by one, he defended each of the Pauline Epistles.<sup>188</sup> He also quoted Hebrews,<sup>189</sup> attributing it to Barnabas, “as one whom Paul stationed next to himself.” He also cited I John, I Peter, the Epistle of Jude, and the Apocalypse of John. In summary, Tertullian, in his writings, cited all of the New Testament except for II Peter, James, II John, and III John. This does not mean that he did not know of their existence, but they may not have contained material that he needed in his discourse. He clearly gave the same authority to the New Testament Scriptures as was given to the Old Testament.

#### Attempts to close the canon in the West

The Latin Church had a stronger feeling about the necessity of closing the canon than did the churches of the East. Some of the Eastern Churches gave different levels of spiritual authority to different books of the New Testament. The Latin Churches never allowed any such distinction. In the search for the highest authority, the Latin Churches, to quote Metzger, “showed a far more uncompromising Yea or Nay; a classification such as that of Origin, or still more that of Eusebius, was consequently unheard of.”<sup>190</sup>

As was true of some of the Eastern canons, the consequential order of the books varied. The four Gospels always began the list (but not always in the same order as presently presented in our contemporary Bibles, i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John).

#### Hilary of Poitiers

Hilary, often called “the Athanasius of the West,” formed a link between the East and the West. At the Council of Seleucia (359), his defense of orthodoxy against the challenge of Arius, caused him to become regarded as the most respected theologian of his age.

Although Hilary (died 368) does not provide a list of New Testament books (he does of the Old Testament), he catches our attention by assigning Hebrews to Paul, and is the earliest writer in the West to cite as Scripture, the Epistle of James.

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<sup>188</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Marcion* V:1, 2-21

<sup>189</sup> *Op. cit.* VI:4-8

<sup>190</sup> Metzger, *The Canon*, page 229

### Lucifer of Calaris

Lucifer (died 370 or 371) was an influential, hyper-orthodox and fiercely anti-Arian theologian. In his writing, he quoted from almost all of the books of the New Testament, including Hebrews. He quoted almost the entire Epistle of Jude, omitting only those passages that Jude borrowed from the *Assumption of Moses* and the citation from the *Book of Enoch*.<sup>191</sup>

### Philaster of Brescia

Philaster, Bishop of Brescia (died 397) composed a treatise of 156 chapters refuting Jewish and Christian heresies (*Liber de haeresibus*). In Chapter 88, he names as “Scriptures,” authenticated by the apostles and their followers, all of the books of the New Testament, without mentioning the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Apocalypse. However, he later wrote that Hebrews was composed by Paul and that the Apocalypse as apostolic. Thus, he acknowledged all of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as belonging in the canon.

### Tyrannius Rufinius

Rufinius was born about 345 A.D. in a North Italian town, Concordia. His parents were Christian, and, while he still was a youth, they sent him to Rome to complete his education. One of his friends in Rome was Jerome. Although he was a writer, his main occupation was translating Greek documents into Latin, at a time that knowledge of Greek was declining in the West.

Rufinius wrote an *Exposition of the Apostles’ Creed*, in which he lists the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. Except for the order in which he presents them, his New Testament canon is the same as that of Athanasius – our current twenty-seven books.

### Jerome

Earlier, we have given extensive review of Jerome’s life and his role in producing the Vulgate, specifically in determining the canon of the Old Testament (pages 48-50 in these notes). In 384, he delivered to Pope Damasus the Latin translation of the four Gospels. When he produced the New Testament, his New Testament contained the twenty-seven books now in our Bibles.

Jerome did comment on the disputed books, acknowledging the questions that some had about these portions of Scripture. In every instance, he defended them as belonging in the canon. He considers the *Epistle of Barnabas* to have been written by a companion of Paul’s and valuable for reading, but he classes it as being among the apocryphal writings. He similarly comments on *The Shepherd of Hermas*.

### Augustine

Born in Numidia in 354 A.D., Augustine’s father was a pagan, but his mother was a devout Christian. As a youth, Augustine led a very undisciplined and hedonistic life. We pass over the compelling story of his conversion, but note that he came under the influence of Bishop Ambrose of Milan and on Easter eve, 387, he received baptism. He returned to Africa as an ardent Christian and in 395, became one of the two main leaders of the church in Hippo.

Augustine's seminal treatise, *De doctrina christiana* (On Christian Learning) was produced as four books. In Book II, section 13, he gives a list of the New Testament books, which is identical to the present-day canon, except for the order in which they are listed.

#### Final Pronouncements

By this time, in the West the great debate concerning the canon was almost over. Yet, it remained for some authoritative pronouncement that it was over. In three provincial councils,<sup>192</sup> Augustine cast his weight on the New Testament canon as we currently have it.

The opening words of the statute on the canon are quite forthright:

“Besides the canonic Scriptures, nothing shall be read in church under the name of the divine Scriptures.” Then, there follows a list of the canonical Scriptures. The order is not the same as in our New Testaments, but the books cited are the same. The only difference in the statutes issued at the three councils is that in 393 and 397, the statute reads, “Thirteen Epistles of Paul and the Epistle to the Hebrews by the same,” whereas, the statute of 419 reads, “Fourteen Epistles of Paul.” So the books are the same, there is merely a difference in how they are described.

Even though the issue of the canon was settled, it took a few years for old copies of the Scriptures, containing slightly different books, to disappear.

In the Middle Ages, there was almost no discussion of the canon (the form of Jerome's Vulgate was accepted), but there was one book that crept into some Bibles. This was a document called, *The Epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans*. This epistle is included in all German Bibles produced prior to Luther's translation. In discussing this epistle, Bishop Lightfoot wrote, “for more than nine centuries this forged epistle hovered about the doors of the sacred Canon, without either finding admission or being peremptorily excluded.”<sup>193</sup>

The issue of this epistle was put to rest at the Council of Florence (1439-1443), when, for the first time, Rome issued a categorical statement on the canon. In this Papal bull, Pope Eugenius IV set forth the Old and New Testament canons. In this list, there is no mention of the Epistle to the Laodiceans, thus eliminating it from consideration in the canon.<sup>194</sup>

The influential humanist, Erasmus of Rotterdam (who produced the first Greek New Testament after the development of the printing press), questioned the authorship of some of the portions of the New Testament that earlier had been questioned, but he stated, “the opinion formulated by the Church has more value in my eyes than human reasons, whatever they may be.”<sup>195</sup>

In his German translation of the New Testament, Luther displays his criteria for deciding on the canonicity of the Books of the New Testament to be based on their content. Since he decided

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<sup>191</sup> Metzger, *op. cit.* page 233

<sup>192</sup> Hippo, 393; Carthage, 397; Carthage 419

<sup>193</sup> Metzger, *op. cit.* page 240

<sup>194</sup> *ibid*

<sup>195</sup> Quoted in Metzger, *The Canon*, page 241



that salvation is by “faith alone,” then anything that challenged this belief became suspect and even rejected. Thus, his basic criterion for evaluating canonicity is theological.

By this reasoning he rejected Hebrews because, in his view, it teaches, contrary to Paul, that there can be no repentance for sinners after baptism (Hebrews Chapters 6 and 10) and that James contradicts Paul by teaching justification by works (he called James, a “right strawy epistle”). He declared that Jude is dependent on II Peter and quotes apocryphal texts, therefore, it cannot be trusted. He considered Revelation to be full of visions that do not belong to the task of an apostolic writer and besides, this writer recommends his own book too highly (Revelation 22:18-21) and that it does not show Christ clearly.

Then, interestingly, he stated that he does not want to impose his view on anyone nor does he want to remove these books from the New Testament.<sup>196</sup>

Calvin and the Genevan Reformers issued New Testaments in which the books are presented in the traditional manner, even though from time to time questions concerning authorship were expressed by the Reformers.

As we noted earlier, all of the disrupting influences of the Reformation prompted Pope Paul III to convene a council at Trent to consider what, if any, reforms needed to be made in the Roman Catholic Church. Dispute over several aspects of the canon took place, until April 8, 1546, by a vote of 24 to 15, with 16 abstentions, the council issued a decree in which, for the first time, the contents of the Bible became an official article of faith, accompanied by an anathema. The statement read,

“The holy ecumenical and general Council of Trent, ... following the example of the orthodox Fathers receives and venerates all the books of the Old and New Testament... and also the traditions pertaining to faith and conduct... with an equal sense of devotion and reverence... If however, anyone does not receive these books in their entirety, with all their parts, as they are accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the ancient Latin Vulgate editions [i.e. Jerome’s with the later addition’s] as sacred and canonical, and knowingly and deliberately rejects the aforesaid traditions, let him be Anathema.”<sup>197</sup>

Subsequent statements of faith by Protestants consistently identify the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Examples are:

The French Confession of Faith (1559)

The Belgic Confession (1561)

The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England (1563)

The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647)

Interestingly, none of the Confessional statements issued by the several branches of the Lutheran churches include a specific list of the canonical books.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> For citations of these statements, see Metzger, *The Canon*, footnotes on page 243

<sup>197</sup> See <http://www.ewtn.com/library/COUNCILS/TRENT4.htm>

<sup>198</sup> See Metzger, *The Canon*, page 247 footnote, “This holds true for both the Old Testament and the New Testament canon; see A. C. Piepkorn in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 43 (1970), pages 449-453.”

## THE ENGLISH BIBLE PRIOR TO 1611

Christianity made its way into Britain no later than the Third Century. Britain was first exposed to Christianity by Roman traders who began arriving in Britain in the late First or early Second Century. There was no organized attempt to convert the Brits to Christianity, but it seems that these trader/artisans spread the story of Jesus, along with the stories of their pagan deities. Much of the history of early Christianity in Britain is clouded in legend or absolute silence.

### Caedmon's Paraphases

England's first Church historian was a man known as, the Venerable Bede (c. 673 – May, 735). Bede was a Roman Catholic monk at the monastery of St. Peter, at Jarrow in Northumbria. Bede was a prolific writer who produced studies on a variety of topics. He was a very devout man who spent his adult life in prayer, study, and writing. He is best known for his *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, which was completed in 731 A.D. The portion of this document that is of interest to our topic is his record of the first time that Scripture was expressed in an early form of English, i.e. Anglo-Saxon.<sup>199</sup> At that time, the Latin Vulgate was the only version of Scripture available to the churches. Most books of the Bible existed separately and were read as individual texts.

According to Bede, Caedmon was a lay brother who cared for the animals at the monastery Streonaeshalch (now known as Whitby Abbey). One evening, while the monks were feasting, singing, and playing a harp, Caedmon felt embarrassed because he did not know any songs. So, he left early to sleep with the animals. While asleep, he had a dream in which "someone" (*quidam*) approached him and asked him to sing *principium creaturarum*, "the beginning of created things." After first refusing to sing, Caedmon subsequently produced a short eulogistic poem praising God, the Creator of heaven and earth.

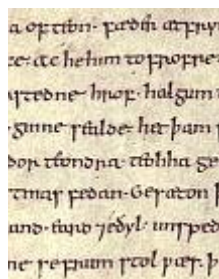
Upon awakening the next morning, Caedmon remembered everything he had sung and added additional lines to his poem. He told his foreman about his dream and the foreman immediately took him to see the abbess, and instructed Caedmon to tell her about his experience. After an extended interview the abbess and her counsellors were convinced that the vision was a gift from God, but they did need to test it. They commissioned him to write a poem based on "a passage of sacred history or doctrine." When Caedmon returned the next morning, he presented the requested poem. Being convinced that this simple layman had been chosen by God, the abbess ordered Caedmon to take monastic vows and become a monk. The abbess then ordered her monastic scholars to teach Caedmon sacred history, doctrine, and Scripture. So, during the day, Caedmon was instructed in Latin, and every night, he composed beautiful poetry, in which Scripture and doctrine were produced in Anglo-Saxon. Personally, Caedmon preferred to sing his poems, while he played his harp. The monks and scholars wrote down Caedmon's verses, of

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<sup>199</sup> Technically, English is classed as a Western Germanic language.

which many were paraphrases of Scripture. This is the earliest record of Scripture's being communicated and written in a form of English. Caedmon died at around 684 A.D.

One example of Caedmon's paraphrased hymns has survived and today it is simply known as, "Caedmon's Hymn."



Portion of  
**Caedmon's Hymn**  
in Anglo-Saxon

It was of course written in Anglo-Saxon, but here is a translation in today's English (it probably “flowed” a little better in its original language).

Now we should praise the Guardian of the Heavenly Kingdom —  
the Ruler's power and His understanding —  
the work of the Father of Glory.  
How He, eternal Lord, established the beginning of every wondrous thing.  
He first created Heaven as a roof for the children of mankind —  
the holy Creator.  
Then the Guardian of mankind, the eternal Lord,  
afterward adorned the earth.  
The Lord Almighty created the world for men.<sup>200</sup>

#### Aldhelm

Aldhelm (639 – May, 709) was appointed as abbot of the monastery at Malmesbury in 675. He was an outstanding scholar. While still a boy, he had excited his teachers with the ease in which he learned both Latin and Greek. By the time he was 40, he was surrounded by a group of scholars who had heard of his reputation for learning. As an adult, he was able to write and speak Greek, was fluent in Latin, and able to translate Hebrew. As far as is known, he was the first scholar intentionally to translate portions of Scripture from Latin into Anglo-Saxon. He translated the complete Book of Psalms and larger portions of other sections of Scripture.

#### Bede

Bede, whom we described earlier, was a bit younger than Aldhelm, but for all practical purposes we consider them to have been contemporaries. Like Aldhelm, Bede was among the first to undertake serious translation of Scripture into the English language of his day. Even on the day of his death (the vigil of the Ascension, May 26, 735) Bede was busy dictating a translation of

<sup>200</sup> <http://earlyenglishbibles.com/earlyversions/beginnings1.html>

the Gospel of St. John. As the day was drawing to a close, Wilbert, the young man who was taking the dictation, said to Bede, "There is still one sentence, dear master, which is not written down." Bede then translated the last sentence from the Gospel and the young man then said, "It is finished." Bede replied, "You have spoken truth, it is finished. Take my head in your hands for it much delights me to sit opposite any holy place where I used to pray, that so sitting I may call upon my Father." After the young man arranged Bede upon the floor so that he could sit up, Bede began singing, "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost..." and he peacefully breathed his last breath.<sup>201</sup> Unfortunately, to date, no part of Bede's translation has been found.

### King Alfred

The next person of significance who took seriously the translation of Scripture from Latin into Old English was Alfred, King of Wessex (A.D. 849-901). Alfred had a godly Christian mother from whom he gained a love of literature. After subjugating the Danes who had invaded his kingdom, Alfred devoted himself to fostering both learning and religion, including the translation of Scripture. Alfred himself, undertook a translation of the Scriptures. The studious Alfred already had done some translating of Latin into Old English. Describing his translation efforts, Alfred reported that sometimes he translated word for word and sometimes meaning to meaning.<sup>202</sup> It is uncertain as to how much of the Bible that Alfred himself translated from Latin into Old English, but tradition supports the fact that he translated the Ten Commandments and portions of Exodus 21-23, along with Acts 15:23-29, into English. He did this to provide an introduction to his Code of Saxon Laws. William of Malmesbury declares that Alfred was working on an English translation of the Psalms at the time of his death.

Alfred's wish was, "that all freeborn youth of the kingdom should employ themselves on nothing till they first read well the English Scriptures."<sup>203</sup>

### Aldred the Scribe

Sometime between 950 and 970, Aldred the Scribe added to the *Lindisfarne Gospels* a gloss in the Northumbrian dialect, as well as adding a forward to the book, describing who wrote it and who had produced the beautiful artwork that adorned the *Lindisfarne Gospels*.<sup>204</sup> The gloss consisted of the form of Anglo-Saxon spoken in Northumbria at the time. The Anglo-Saxon was written between the Latin lines, as a sort of a crib, to help those who were struggling with translating the Latin. Although the Anglo-Saxon gloss does not make sense, apart from the Latin it is translating, many consider this to be the first English version of the entire four Gospels. Here is Aldred's version of the Lord's Prayer,

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<sup>201</sup> While on his death bed, Bede also composed a five-line poem in the vernacular. It is the most-widely copied Old English poem.

<sup>202</sup> The second of these reflects the "dynamic equivalency" process that in modern times is seen in the NIV and the NLT

<sup>203</sup> <http://earlyenglishbibles.com/earlyversions/beginnings1.html>

<sup>204</sup> The *Lindisfarne Gospels* is a beautifully produced copy of the four Gospels (produced at the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> Century), written on expensive vellum and decorated with beautiful artwork throughout. It is bound in jewel encased leather.

*Suae ðonne iuih gie bidde fader urer ðu arð ðu bist in heofnum & in heofnas; sie gehalgad noma ðin; to-cymeð ric ðin. sie willo ðin suae is in heofne & in eorðo. hlaf userne oferwistlic sel us to dæg. & forgefus scylda usra suae uoe forgefon scyldgum usum. & ne inlæd usih in costunge ah gefrig usich from yfle<sup>205</sup>*

### The Interim

When the Normans won the Battle of Hastings in 1066, the future of the language of England was altered. Present-day English is the result of William the Conqueror's victory at Hastings. For about three centuries, Norman French became the language of educated people, while Latin continued to be the language of the Church. Old English no longer dominated England. Because so many adjustments were being made in the language, in the Church, and in societal structures translation of Scripture was not at the forefront of anyone's concern, during this period. In the Fourteenth Century, some parts of Scripture began to be produced in what now is called, "Middle English." The Vulgate still was the only version allowed in the mass, or any other church service.

A number of things happened that caused people to look for answers, concerning the issues of life and eternity. One was the schism of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1054, the Church of the West and the Church of the East split from one another. This did not have much, if any, impact on England, since the English Church was within the Western Church fold. However, the schism of 1378 – 1417, did cause much confusion. During these years, three different men claimed to be Pope, with each one backed by certain countries and powerful interests. The schism was driven by politics, rather than by theological concerns. With the Catholic Church torn asunder by this controversy, the role of the Church became confusing to many Roman Catholics – England being in that circle. The people began to ask, "Who and what can we trust?"

Another major factor was the horrible, *Black Death*, the Bubonic Plague, that caused the death of 30 – 40 percent of the population of all urban areas. The plague began in the mid-1300's. It resurfaced in 1360 and 1369, but was not completely eradicated until 1600. In 1348, the life expectancy in Europe was twenty-five. By 1376, life expectancy had dropped to seventeen years of age.<sup>206</sup> The Church was impacted because people prayed devoutly for deliverance, but deliverance did not come. People were driven to ponder eternity, but their pursuits were hindered because of lack of resources. The language of the Church still was Latin, which could be understood by the clergy, but most of the English could not read Latin.

### John Wycliffe

Into this horrible scene, came John Wycliffe (1320-1384). Wycliffe was an Oxford scholar who began to challenge some of the Roman Catholic doctrines, such as *transubstantiation* and the role of the Church in English politics. He has been labeled the "morning star of the Reformation" because of the religious convictions that he developed and propagated. His treatise, *De Potestate Papae* (Concerning the Authority of the Pope), argued that the Bible is the eternal "exemplar" of the Christian religion, and that it is the sole criterion of doctrine, to which no ecclesiastical authority might lawfully add. Thus, the authority of the Pope was not founded

<sup>205</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old\\_English\\_Bible\\_translations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English_Bible_translations)

<sup>206</sup> [http://truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/12\\_History-of-the-English-Bible/](http://truthnet.org/Bible-Origins/12_History-of-the-English-Bible/)

in Scripture. His students, who came to be known as, *The Lollards*, they carried his views throughout England. Wycliffe believed that the Bible was the Word of God addressed to every person and thus he felt the need to provide the Scriptures in a form that every reader could understand.

Wycliffe had powerful enemies who were able to bring him to a trial for heresy on May 21, 1382. Twenty-four thesis from his writings were condemned as heretical or erroneous. Wycliffe died of a stroke on December 31, 1384.

There is some doubt about Wycliffe's personally translating the Scriptures, but there should not be any qualms about referring to the Wycliffe Bible. He was the inspiration for the work, even if he is not the one who did it. Two complete versions were produced by his pupils and colleagues, John Purvey and Nicholas of Hereford. The first of these handwritten translations was produced in 1382. A second version was produced in 1388. These were translations from the Latin Vulgate and so they did include the apocrypha.

The Wycliffe Bible was condemned and publicly burned in 1415. Purvey and Nicholas were jailed and forced to recant their teachings. In 1428, Pope Martin V insisted that Wycliffe's body be exhumed, burned, and the ashes cast into the river.

Since all of this translation work was done before the development of the printing press, all of the copies of the Wycliffe Bible were handwritten. This being true, it is surprising that 180 copies of the whole or parts of the Wycliffe versions have survived, most of these having been produced before 1450.<sup>207</sup>

It also is significant that the Wycliffe Bible was the only English language Bible until the Sixteenth Century, when the printing press was developed and newer translations began to be published. The first printed edition of the complete Wycliffe Bible did not appear until 1850, when Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden issued a printed Wycliffe Bible with the earlier (1382) and the later (1388) versions printed side by side by Oxford Press.<sup>208</sup>

#### William Tyndale

We earlier have taken note of Erasmus' production of a printed Greek New Testament, which was completed in 1516.<sup>209</sup> In this season of new interest in the production of Scripture, came William Tyndale. Tyndale was born in 1492, the year that Columbus began his voyage to the new world. William Tyndale was educated at Oxford and Cambridge in both Greek and Hebrew. In 1523 he sought the help of the Bishop of London in producing such a version, but the Bishop vigorously rebuked the young scholar. In spite of the roadblocks thrown in his path, the desire to undertake the project would not leave Tyndale.

Having decided that it would be impossible to do what he desired in England, the following year he left England, never to return. He went to Hamburg. While in Germany, he often had to escape from place to place in order to escape those who wanted to interfere with his work. In spite of these interruptions, he completed his first translation of the New Testament in 1525 and

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<sup>207</sup> Bruce Metzger, *The Bible in Translation* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic) 2003, page 57

<sup>208</sup> Metzger, Op.cit page 58 fn

<sup>209</sup> Pages 51, 62, 96 of these notes

printing was begun at Cologne. The printing was interrupted by the authorities. It seems that three thousand copies were published after the work was begun at Worms, but only a fragment of Matthew (thirty-one leaves) of this project is extant.

Copies of the Tyndale Bible were smuggled into England in bales of hides and other, somewhat clandestine means. The English kings and bishops were so vigorous in their efforts to destroy the Tyndale Bible that only four copies of the original 1526 Cologne editions survive. Of the revised edition of 1534, only four copies have survived and these are very fragmentary.

Tyndale also worked on a translation of the Hebrew Old Testament but was unable to complete it before his death. He published the Pentateuch in 1530 and Jonah in 1531. There is evidence that he translated other portions, but did not live to publish them.

In his closing years, Tyndale lived in Antwerp. Antwerp was a free city but the territory surrounding Antwerp was under the control of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. Tyndale's enemies could not touch him in Antwerp, but should he venture into the emperor's domains, he could be imprisoned and tried for heresy. On May 21, 1535, through the treachery of a young Englishman, Henry Phillips, he was kidnapped, carried out of Antwerp, and imprisoned in the fortress of Vilvorde, six miles north of Brussels. After a year and a half in prison, he was tried and convicted on the charge of heresy. On October 6, 1536, he was put to death by strangling and his body burned. His last words were, "Lord open the King of England's eyes."

Tyndale's version is important for several reasons and one is the influence that it has had on all future English versions of the Bible. Its simplicity and directness mark it as a great achievement in literature. Its influence is seen in that it is estimated that 80 percent or more of the English Versions of the Bible, down through the Revised Version, are Tyndale's work.

#### Miles Coverdale

The first complete Bible to be printed in English was the work of Miles Coverdale. After he became a priest, Coverdale demonstrated a passion for scholarly pursuits, especially the field of biblical studies. Even though he was a priest, Coverdale came to have some Protestant views on theological matters. While abroad, he met Tyndale. In 1535, based on Tyndale's work on the Pentateuch and the New Testament, Coverdale published an English Bible, which he dedicated to the King and Queen of England, using much flattering phraseology in that dedication. Somewhat surprising is the fact that his Bible did not encounter any serious opposition.

Coverdale used the Vulgate order of books, rather than the Hebrew canon's order of books. For the first time, the Apocrypha were separated from the other Old Testament books – they were printed as an appendix to the Old Testament.<sup>210</sup>

Some of the phraseology of Coverdale's Bible were reproduced in some of the later English versions, i.e. the Great Bible of 1539 and the Bishops' Bible of 1568, and were included in the Book of Common Prayer until a revision of that document took place in the late Twentieth Century.

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<sup>210</sup> This practice was followed by all Protestant English versions of the Scriptures, when the Apocrypha are included.

### Matthew's Bible

Even though the title page of the 1537 English Bible states that the translator was Thomas Matthew, most consider this to be a pseudonym to conceal the name of the real translator. Usually, the work is attributed to John Rogers, a Cambridge graduate and close friend of Tyndale. Rogers had possession of some of Tyndale's unpublished translations of portions of the Old Testament. Matthew's Bible probably was published at Antwerp. The Apocrypha were placed in an appendix, following the plan of Coverdale. For the first time in English, Matthew's Bible contains a translation of the apocryphal Prayer of Manasseh.

Rogers was a man of Protestant convictions and while Edward VI was king (1547-1553) he was given great freedom. Immediately after the king's death, he preached at St. Paul's Cross Church a warning against popery. When Mary, a strong Roman Catholic, came to the throne, Rogers was imprisoned and burned alive in February, 1555. The French ambassador, witnessing the event, wrote that Rogers died with such composure that the event might have been a wedding.

### The Travener Bible

Tavener was a client and pensioner of Thomas Cromwell, who appointed him the clerk of the Privy Seal in 1536. He was a lawyer with a deep interest in Scripture. He had good knowledge of Greek and produced his own translation. Although his version quickly was overshadowed by another version, it does have the distinction of being the first English version of the Scriptures to be published in England.

### The Great Bible

This edition of the Scriptures was the largest, in size, of any Bible published to that point. Its pages measured 15 x 10 inches. This was the first officially authorized version of an English Bible. Its title page stated, "This is the Byble apoynted to the use of the churches."

The Great Bible was a project undertaken by Coverdale at the suggestion of Thomas Cromwell. Coverdale seemed constantly to be revising his work. Two versions appeared in 1540 and six further editions were published between July 1540 and December 1541.

Because of political changes in England, the Great Bible had a varied acceptance. At one time, all churches were ordered to have the Great Bible. At another time, it was ordered that all copies of the Great Bible be removed from the churches. Then, later, it was ordered replaced.

In 1543, the church put restrictions on reading the Bible and in 1546 a general burning of Bibles was launched. Only the Great Bible was spared, but only the upper classes were allowed to read it. When King Henry died, January 28, 1547, Protestants were at liberty, once again to resume translations of Scripture. This liberty, as noted earlier, continued through the six-year reign of Edward VI. During Edward's short reign, fourteen English versions of the Bible and thirty-five versions of the New Testament were printed. These were reprints of Tyndale, Matthew, and Taverner.

Some printers felt the freedom to revise, most did a poor job of the task, producing "hybrid" versions. One such printer/publisher was Edmund Becke, who, as Metzger states, concerning



Becke's 1551 edition, as "deplorable."<sup>211</sup> Becke also felt the freedom to insert explanations of some passages. An example is his note on I Peter 3:7, in which men are instructed to live with their lives "according to knowledge." Becke gives this explanation,

"that taketh her as a necessary helper, and not as a bond servant or bond slave. And if she be not obedient and healpful unto hym: endeavoreth to beate the feare of God into her heade, that thereby she maye be compelled to learne her dutye and do it."<sup>212</sup>

### The Geneva Bible

When the Roman Catholic, Mary, became Queen of England, the persecution of Protestants made translation and publication of Scriptures in England almost impossible. As a result, English Protestant scholars left England for Switzerland, settling in Geneva, which was the very heart of Reformed Protestantism. Here, they produced the Geneva New Testament. For the most part, the Greek New Testament produced by Robert Estiene (also known as Stephanus) was the Greek text used as its basis. None of the names of the translators of the New Testament are listed, but the main work of translating the New Testament is credited to William Whittingham, the brother-in-law of John Calvin. The Old Testament was translated (from Hebrew) by a group that included Anthony Gilby and Thomas Sampson, but the names of the rest of the translators are unknown.

The Geneva Bible had copious notes in the margins, explaining difficult points of the text. In Genesis 3:7, the Geneva Bible reads, "They sewed figge-tree leaves together and made themselves breeches." Thus, the Geneva Bible often is called the "Breeches Bible."

Royalty and clergy, especially Roman Catholics, were disturbed by some of the notes. For example, a note on Exodus 1:19, approving of the midwives' lying to Pharaoh, greatly agitated royalty – it was considered by them to be a reflection on "royal prerogatives." Roman Catholics objected to identifying the Pope as the "angel of the bottomless pit" in Revelation 9:11. One of the reasons that King James was motivated to embark on a translation of Scripture was his dislike of the politics found in the marginal notes of the Geneva Bible.

In spite of these objections, this Bible quickly became popular in England. It was the Bible that the Pilgrims had with them when they immigrated to America. It was small in size and consequently not as expensive to purchase. From 1560 to 1616 (56 years!), not a year passed without a new edition's being published. This was the Bible that Shakespeare, John Bunyan, Cromwell's army, and even King James used. Even after the publication of the King James Version in 1611, eight more versions of the Geneva Bible were published.

### The Bishops' Bible

The popularity of the Geneva Bible irked both church leaders and government entities. The Geneva Bible was the Bible of the people and the authorized, Great Bible, was not able to gain ground, its size being one obstacle it faced. In an effort to correct the situation, in 1564 Matthew

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<sup>211</sup> Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, page 64

<sup>212</sup> Metzger, op.cit page 64

Parker, archbishop of Canterbury launched an effort to supplant the Geneva Bible. Since all of the men who produced this version either already were bishops or later became bishops, this version came to be known as the Bishops' Bible.

The Great Bible was used as the basis of the work and the only significant changes made were those where a more correct rendering of the Hebrew or Greek required it. After four years of work the first edition was published in 1568. One interesting feature of this Bible is the placing of the initials of the translator at the end of the section(s) he revised. The idea was to make each contributor to be responsible for his doings. The Bishop's Bible became the second authorized version in England and in time it replaced the Geneva Bible as the one to be read in the Churches – even so, the Geneva Bible continued to be popular with the general public.

#### The Rheims-Douay Bible

When Elizabeth I came to the English throne, English Catholic scholars fled England, even as the Protestant scholars had fled, during the reign of Mary. Many settled in a Catholic seminary in Douay, Flanders, in northern France. For the first time in the history of the Catholic Church, these scholars undertook a Catholic version in the English language. The project was undertaken under the oversight of Jesuit scholar, Gregory Martin. Political pressures caused the scholars to leave Douay and move to Rheims, also in France, where they completed their work in 1582.

The Rheims-Douay Bible was not a translation of the Hebrew and Greek, but an English translation of the Latin Vulgate. The dogmatic intentions of the translators are expressed in the preface and notes that accompany the text. The Protestant “hereticks” who produced the Geneva Bible seem to be constantly in mind, as the notes were composed

The Rheims-Douay Bible received some slight revisions after 1612 and then, in 1728, a thorough revision was undertaken under the supervision of Bishop Richard Challoner of the London district. Prior to 1800, the Rheims-Douay version was revised multiple times.

#### The King James Bible

When King James VI of Scotland, became King James I of England, in 1603, the Bible, in its many English versions, was a cause of division in England. Because of the religious division in his kingdom, and with a desire to bring about unity, King James called for a conference to be held at Hampton Court in January, 1604. Both Bishops of the Church of England and Puritan clergy were invited, with the intention of having them consult together on the subject of religious toleration. After much debate, which seemed to accomplish nothing, Dr. John Reynolds, President of Corpus Christy College, Oxford, who was a spokesman for the Puritans, raised the question of the imperfections in the various English versions of the Bible. He proposed that a new translation be made which would remove some of the difficulties. He mentioned three passages that he saw as problems in the versions currently approved by the Church of England (Psalms 105:28; 106:30; Galatians 4:25). The bishops scorned his suggestion and complaints as being trivial, old, and often answered. Bishop Bancroft, a stern opponent of the Puritans replied, “if every man's humor were to be followed there would be no end of translating.”

Sadly, the Hampton Court conference did not achieve any conclusion on this or any other matter. In some ways, it had been a waste of time. Even so, King James, who had a personal interest in

Bible study and translation, endorsed the idea of producing a new translation. With the King's support, a translation committee of fifty learned men was formed to begin the project in July 1604. A list of rules of procedure was developed to guide the work of translation. The rules stipulated that

- the Bishops' Bible was to be followed and "as little altered as the truth of the original will permit," and that
- certain other translations should be consulted when they were in more agreement with the text, namely, "Tindoll's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's (The Great Bible, so named because that was the name of the printer), and Geneva" and that
- the "Old Eccleasial Words were to be kept, viz. the Word *Church* not be translated *Congregation, & c.*" and that
- no marginal notes were to be used except for necessary explanation of Hebrew or Greek words.

Most of the remaining fifteen rules dealt with procedure.

The Greek text was the Byzantine Text, chiefly, that of Erasmus, with modifications produced by Stephanus and Beza. They had to contend with the fact that there was not a standard edition of the Hebrew Massoretic Text available to those who produced the Old Testament translation.

Six panels of translators had the work divided among them

- The Old Testament was allotted to three panels
- The New Testament was allotted to two
- The Apocrypha was allotted to one

Two of the panels met at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. When any panel had finished the revision of a book of the Bible, it was sent to all of the other panels for review and criticism. Ultimate differences of opinion were to be settled at a general meeting of the chief members of each panel. The panels consisted of the professors of Greek and Hebrew at the universities and included almost all of the leading scholars of the day. It appears that some of the panel members died before the task was ended and they were replaced by others, resulting in some uncertainty about some of the names of those involved. The total number of those on the panels was from forty-eight to fifty

The work began in 1607 and for two years and nine months these panels engaged in very strenuous work. Sometime in 1609, each day for nine months, John Bois, Andrew Downes, and four others were sent to Stationers Hall in London to review the first drafts as they came from the panels.

The historic first printing was a large folio volume (16 x 10 ½ inches), from the presses of Robert Barker. An elaborate engraved title page read,

"The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New: Newly Translated out of the Originall tongues: & with the former Translations diligently compared and revised, by his Maiesties special Commandement. Appointed to be read in Churches. Anno Dom. 1611"

Three more folio editions were printed in 1611, in which there were frequent revisions.

The men who produced the KJV, clearly stated in the preface that it was not their aim to make “a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one...but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one.” The KJV is, in fact, a revision of the Bishops’ Bible, which was a revision of the Great Bible and the Great Bible a revision of Coverdale and Tyndale. A great deal of credit goes to Tyndale, for idiom and vocabulary; credit to Coverdale for the melody and harmonic beauty of language; and credit for scholarship and accuracy goes to the Geneva Version.

Significant revisions took place in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. In 1861, the American Bible Society made some orthographic changes in the editions that it published and further changes were made in 1932, to conform more closely to the orthographic style of Americans and pronunciation marks were placed over most proper names.

### THE ENGLISH BIBLE FROM 1611 ONWARD

After the publication and the acceptance of the King James Version, organized Bible translation and publication came to a standstill until the late 1800’s. However, several English translations by individuals did take place in the years following the production of the King James. Most of these we pass over without notice.

#### Edward Harwood’s New Testament

There were some noteworthy individual efforts and one of these was the Edward Harwood’s New Testament, produced in 1768. Harwood was a classical scholar who became dissatisfied with what he termed, “the bald and barbarous language of the old vulgar version.” So, in 1768, he issued a rendering of the New Testament in the style of English that was used by the upper classes of his day. Here are some examples of his rendition.

- Mary’s *Magnificat*, recorded in Luke 1:46-48, “My soul with reverence adores my Creator! And all my faculties with transport join in celebrating the goodness of God, my saviour, who hath in so signal a manner condescended to regard my obscure and humble station – Transcendent goodness! Every future age will now conjoin in celebrating my distinguished happiness!”
- The aged Simon, upon seeing the Christ child in the temple, Luke 2:29-32, declared, “O God, thy promise to me is amply fulfilled! – I now quit the port of human life with satisfaction and joy! Since thou hast indulged mine eyes with so divine a spectacle, as the great Messiah! Whom thou hast now sent into the world to bless mankind – to impart happiness to *Israel*, and to diffuse sacred light among the benighted *Heathens*!”

#### Charles Thompson’s Bible

The honor of being the first person to publish a Bible in English in America belongs to Charles Thompson. Charles was the third of six children of John Thompson, a Scots-Irish Presbyterian. In 1739, shortly after the death of his mother, Charles, his father, and two of his brothers emigrated to America. John Thompson became ill and died on the voyage. The ship’s captain, in order to escape the expense of a land burial, dumped John’s body into the sea. The captain then confiscated most of John’s Thompson’s belongings, including whatever money was in the man’s

baggage. The children were put ashore at Lewes, a landing in Delaware. The ship's captain knew a local blacksmith and so he put the ten-year-old Charles in the care of this blacksmith.

One night, Charles overheard a conversation in which the blacksmith planned to have the boy indentured (a paid slave) as an apprentice. Charles quickly ran away. While he was on the road, a kindhearted woman of a local family offered him a seat in her carriage. As they rode along, the lady asked Charles what he wanted to be. He told her that he wanted to be a scholar. This reply so pleased the woman that she took him home and put him into school. He did quite well as a student and about 1743, with the help of some benefactors, he was able to enter Reverend Francis Alison's academy at New London, Chester County, Pennsylvania. Allison was a graduate of Edinburgh University and he was able to provide Thompson with an excellent knowledge of the classics. Thompson's next move, in the late 1740's, was to open a school of his own on the farm of John Chambers, in New Castle County, Delaware.

In 1750, Thompson moved to Philadelphia, where he became a tutor in Latin and Greek at the new academy that had been established by Benjamin Franklin, the Philadelphia Academy, which later became the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1755, he became the head tutor of Latin at the Friends' Public School in Philadelphia. Through the Friends Society, he became involved in helping the Delaware Indian tribe in negotiations with the Delaware colony. By 1772, in Philadelphia, he had become a strident American patriot, leading a resistance movement against the East India Company tea.

From this time onward, he was engrossed in politics and was the unanimous choice to be the secretary of the Continental Congress. His last official act was to journey to Mt. Vernon to inform George Washington that he had been elected as President of the United States.

When he retired from public service, he retired to his wife's country estate, where he devoted the rest of his thirty-five years in revising and perfecting a version of the Scriptures – hoping to answer challenges to the authenticity of Jesus' claims of divinity and assure his readers of the Bible's credibility. At this time, no English translation of the Septuagint had been undertaken and so this was one of Thompson's major projects. His translation of the Septuagint included only those books that were in the Westminster Confession's canon. Thus, his translation omitted all Apocrypha. His Old Testament books were arranged according to the order of the King James Bible.

The Textus Receptus (Byzantine Text) was the only Greek manuscript family available to Thompson and so this is the Greek that is reflected in his New Testament.

His Bible was published in Philadelphia, in 1808-1809. The printer was Jane Aitken, one of the very few women printers in America and the first woman to be involved in printing any of the Scriptures. She produced one thousand copies of a beautifully crafted four-volume set – the Old Testament in three volumes and the New Testament in one volume.

Biblical scholars today look to Thompson's work with favor, today, but it never did catch on. It was not financially successful and many unsold copies were disposed of as waste paper.

After his wife's death, he published a Gospels Harmony – showing that instead of contradicting one another, the four Gospel accounts supplement one another.

Because scholars of more recent years respected the quality of his work, Thompson's Bible was reprinted twice – once in Britain and once in the United States (London, 1904, Colorado, 1954).

#### Noah Webster's Bible

The American lexicographer and philologist, best known for his *Dictionary of the English Language*, began to give serious attention to the revision of the King James Bible in 1828. Webster held the KJV in very high regard, but he was aware that the lapse of two centuries had resulted in changes in the form of English.

In the introduction to his revision of the KJV, he listed 150 words or phrases that he considered to be misleading to the readers of his day. He also was sensitive to terms that were indecent to use in mixed company. He wrote in his introduction,

“To these may be added many words and phrases, very offensive to delicacy and even to decency....Language which cannot be uttered in promiscuous (mixed) company without a violation of decorum, or the rules of good breeding, exposes the scriptures to the scoffs of unbelievers, impairs their authority, and multiplies or confirms the enemies of our holy religion.”

The first edition was published in 1833. For a time, Webster's Bible was the Bible used in Congregational Churches in America. A second edition was published in 1841, and three editions of his New Testament were printed in 1838, 1840, 1841. In 1987, Baker Book House published, in delux binding, the 1833 edition of Noah Webster's Bible.

#### Julia E. Smith's Bible

Julia Evelina Smith (1792-1878) was the first woman to translate the entire Bible into English. She was an unusual woman from an unusual family. Her father was Zephaniah Holister Smith, a graduate of Yale College, and in succession, a minister, a doctor, and a lawyer. Her mother was Hannah Hadassah Hickok, who was a linguist, an astronomer, a poet, and a gentlewoman farmer. Zephaniah and Hannah had five daughters.

Julia was the fourth of five daughters born to this couple. In the era in which the girls were born, education for women focused on increasing their usefulness as wives and mothers. Rudimentary reading and “ciphering,” a little music, and needlework was seen as being all that was necessary and anything beyond that might even be dangerous – it might cause them to lose their charms and perhaps make them restless and domineering.

Zephaniah and Hanna had a different perspective. They sought to give to their daughters the very best education, the very same that they would have given to sons, should they have had sons. They sought to give their daughters and education with a heavy emphasis on the classics, history, mathematics, and languages. Their eldest daughter was sent to a boarding school in Norwich, Connecticut, a boys' academy that did admit special girl students. Later on, she and her sisters attended Litchfield Academy. When they had grown beyond all that these resources offered, they sought other means of exposing their girls to broader knowledge. One summer, Julia and her younger sister, Abby, were sent to live with a French family in New Haven. Also, the older sisters taught the younger sisters. For example, in 1813, twenty-one year-old Julia

taught Latin to her sixteen year-old sister, Abby. In 1816, Julia taught herself Greek, using a Greek grammar that her father bought for her.

When Zephaniah died in 1836, Hannah and the five sisters ran the family farm in Glastonbury, Connecticut, continuing to sell farm products as an income. After the father's death, the Smith's encountered the teaching of William Miller, a Vermont farmer and Baptist preacher. Miller preached millennial messages of eschatological doom, predicting that the end of the world was at hand. Out of his teaching, formed the sect that became the Seventh Day Adventists. He determined that 1843 was to be the year that Christ would return. To heighten the expectation of Miller's followers, a brilliant comet flashed across the sky in 1842.

Miller had relied on the King James Version for his predictions. When the world did not end, according to Miller's predictions, Julia rechecked Miller's math and found it to be correct. So, the error had to be in the KJV. She wrote in her diary that she and her sisters

“saw by the margin of the [King James Version] that the text had not been given literally, and it was the literal meaning we were seeking. I had studied Latin and Greek at school, and began by translating the Greek of the New Testament, and then the Septuagint, from which our Saviour quoted one or two texts which are not in the Hebrew Bible; and there is now said to be no Hebrew Bible extant so old as the Septuagint. We all had a strong desire to learn the significance of the proper names, and I wrote to a learned friend about it, and he advised me to study Hebrew saying “it was a simple language and easily learned, there being but one book in the world of pure Hebrew, which was the Bible.”

So, at fifty-five years of age, Julia began to study Hebrew. This began eight years of intensive effort (1847-1855) in which she translated the entire Bible into small hand-bound folios. Eventually these contained ten thousand single-spaced handwritten pages of translation. By 1855, she had translated the Bible five times – twice from the Greek (Septuagint and the New Testament), twice from the Hebrew, and once from the Vulgate. Each time, she sought to produce a translation that was faithful to the original meaning of the text.

She never intended to publish her work, but circumstances caused her to do so. The town of Glastonbury began to experience financial problems and so they double-billed the taxes on the prosperous Smith farm. The town fathers seemed to think that since there was no male in the family to fight them in court, that the women could not oppose them. They were wrong. In and out of court three times, the court ruling going one way and the the other, the sisters decided to publish Julia's translation in order to prove women's intellectual capabilities. In 1876, the American Publishing Company of Hartford, Connecticut, published *The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments; Translated Literally from the Original Tongues*. The sisters paid four thousand dollars to have one thousand copies printed (they were sold for \$2.50 each). They obviously did not intend to make money from the project, but they did make the point that “a woman can do more than any man has ever done,” in translating single-handedly the entire Bible from Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Metzger, *The Bible in Translation*, page 96

### The British Revised Version and the American Standard Version

By the middle of the Nineteenth Century, with the discovery of many Greek manuscripts of the New Testament, it became apparent that the King James Version was based on a text that contained a large number of errors that were the result of centuries of manuscript copying. As noted earlier, for the most part, the King James Version was based on the text that had been edited by Theodore Beza, which was based on the text of Erasmus, which was based on a mere handful of medieval manuscripts.

Codex Alexandrinus, written in the Fifth Century, had come to England in 1627. In the Nineteenth Century, Tischendorf brought to light Codex Sinaiticus, and Codex Vaticanus became available for study for the first time. Two Cambridge professors, B. F. Wescott and F. J. A. Hort embarked on the study of these and other newly available manuscripts. After twenty-eight years of labor, they were able to produce a Greek text that was closer to the original than that which had been the basis for the King James Version. As the work of these men became known, the Upper House of the Convocation of Canterbury appointed a team of Old Testament and New Testament revisers to begin exploring the revision of the King James Version. No non-Anglican scholars were chosen for the team. The team was instructed to introduce as few alterations as possible to the KJV, and all changes had to be approved by a two-thirds majority of the team members. Should a change be approved by a simple majority, note of that should be made in the margin.

On July 7, 1870, the Lower House of the Convocation passed a resolution urging the Upper House to instruct the revision team to invite qualified American to join them in the project. This proposal was approved. Dr. Philip Schaff of Union Theological Seminary was chosen to select and invite American scholars to join in the project. Active work on the translation began, October 4, 1872.

Wescott and Hort were members of the British team. Their New Testament Greek text had not been published at the time, but confidential advance copies were printed for the team, both those in England those in America. The British team would send successive portions of their work to America, which were returned to Britain with comments from the Americans. Following the same procedure, a second revision was sent to America, then a third revision was made in England. Suggestions made by the Americans had to gain a two-thirds approval of the British team before they could be accepted.

The process took twice as long as it had taken to produce the King James Bible. The New Testament was published on May 17, 1881 and in a few days two million copies were sold in Britain and another 110,000 copies were sold in Philadelphia. Two Chicago papers printed the entire New Testament in their May 22, 1881, issues.

On May 19, 1885, the Old Testament was published, without so much fanfare as had taken place with the publication of the New Testament. The Apocrypha was completed in 1895. This was the fourth time a Church-authorized version of the Bible had been published: The Great Bible, 1539; The Bishops' Bible, 1568; The King James Bible 1611.

The British team disbanded after the publication of the Old Testament in 1885. The American team chose to continue to remain in place. The agreement that had been made with the British



stipulated that the Americans could not publish an edition of the Revised Version until fourteen years after the British Version had been published - unless the American team could produce some strong case for objecting to something in the British Version. The American team felt that they should continue their organization until the fourteen years had expired.

When some unauthorized printings of the British Version, containing some of the readings that had been preferred by the American team, began to be published in New York and Philadelphia – and then the 1898 publication by Cambridge and Oxford of a version for the American market, the American team felt that it had to act.

In 1901, the American team issued the *American Standard Version of the Bible*. It included about six hundred readings preferred by the Americans that had been rejected by the British. Most of these had to do with the difference between the language used in America and the language used in England.

Two obvious changes were the ASV's using the name, *Jehovah*, each time the tetragrammon, (*YHWH*) occurred in the Hebrew and choosing to use the term, *Holy Spirit*, rather than *Holy Ghost*, as had been done in the British version.

Because both the British Version and the American Version follow the Greek syntax so slavishly, that they are vulnerable to the charge that they are good Greek but poor English. In spite of the hopes of these diligent scholars to produce an excellent translation, which they did, neither the one in Britain nor the one in America ever replaced the KJV in the general population. The ASV usually was the preferred version used in biblically conservative American seminaries until it was replaced by the NASB in 1971 (described below).

#### The Twentieth Century New Testament

With the increasing discovery of biblical manuscripts and the papyri, many voices began to declare that another revision of the New Testament needed to be undertaken. As a result, some were produced. Most were hardly noticed, but some did gain a widespread audience. The first of these to attract some attention was *The Twentieth Century New Testament: a Translation into Modern English Made from the Original Greek Text*. The text used for this version was the Wescott and Hort Greek text.

The introduction stated that it was the work of about twenty persons who were members of various sections of the Christian Church. In 1901, the Fleming H. Revel Company issued the work of this group, and identified it as a "Tentative Edition." Criticisms and suggestions were welcomed. In 1904, a "Permanent Edition" was published.

The project was the result of the concerns of two English Christians who did not know one another. Mrs. Mary Kingsland Higgs was the wife of a Congregational minister near Manchester England. Desiring for her children to be knowledgeable in the Scriptures, she began creating a version of Mark, in modern English idiom, for her children.

Totally unknown to Mrs. Higgs, Ernest de Merindol Maland, in another part of England, whose family was bilingual, began to be troubled by the fact that when he read the Bible to his children, that they understood the French version better than the English.

Without knowing of one another, both Mrs. Higgs and Mr. Maland wrote letters to W. T. Stead, the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, conveying their desires for a modern English translation of the Scriptures. Stead put them in contact with one another and they began collaborating on a version of the Gospel of Mark.

As they expanded their work into other portions of the New Testament, they began to seek the help of others. They had Stead print in his journal a notice asking for co-workers to join them in the project. The appeal resulted in twenty people, of very diverse backgrounds, agreeing to join the project. For a long time, they did not meet; the team collaborated by correspondence. Since they did not know one another, Malan asked each one to provide a biography. Almost every biography spoke of tension and ill-health of some sort.

The people who did the work of creating this version were not linguistic or textual experts. They were ministers, and lay people. Interestingly, all of them were social liberals, independent, and strong-minded. Thus, they were driven by two things: their concern over social issues and the desire to convey the Word of God in modern English.

In spite of their lack of scholarly expertise, their work did have lasting influence. For one thing, they were translating the Wescott and Hort text - the very best available at that time. They also did such a good job of clarifying the meaning of some passages that later revisers of the New Testament adopted some of their renderings. Here are two examples:

- Matthew 10:18, "Freely ye received, freely give," in the Greek does not mean to give generously and abundantly. The text in the 1904 version reads, "You have received free of cost, give free of cost," which conveys the idea more correctly, and has been reflected in some of the more recent established versions.
- Similarly, Matthew 26:27, "Drink ye all of it," in the Greek does not mean to drink the entire contents, but rather, as the 1904 version reads, "Drink from it, all of you."

Other examples could be given, which have influenced the verbiage of later translations.

#### Weymouth's New Testament in Modern Speech

Richard Francis Weymouth was a distinguished classical scholar and a Baptist layman. He published an edition of the Greek New Testament in 1886. While headmaster of a boys school in London, from 1869— 1886, he realized that it would benefit the boys if they had a modern-speech version of the New Testament.

After he retired, he devoted himself to the project. He based his version on the Greek text that he had produced in 1886. Weymouth sought to express the Scripture in the style in which the original writers would have written if they had been writing in England at the close of the Nineteenth Century. He completed his work in 1900, but his ill health prevented his seeing the project published. Before his death, in 1902, he committed to his friend, Ernest Hampton-Cook, a Congregationalist minister, the task of publishing his work. James Clarke and Company of London published the work in 1903.

Weymouth's New Testament was an immediate popular success, both in England and America. Several editions were published in the first twenty-five years of the Twentieth Century.

### Moffat's Translation

One of the most popular Twentieth Century versions of the Bible was the work of James Moffatt, of St. Andrews College, Oxford. Moffat used a very free style of rendering the text in modern speech. The result was a very readable version of the Scriptures. His New Testament was released first in 1901. His second translation of the New Testament was released in 1913. Moffat surprised the English-speaking public by the publication of his Old Testament In 1924-1925.

Moffat took great liberty in his work, rearranging the sequence of verses, and in some cases, even rearranging the order of chapters, when he felt it was a better literary flow if one particular chapter should precede another. The Gospel of John especially received this treatment. One who is familiar with the Gospel of John in a traditional New Testament would find Moffat's New Testament quite unfamiliar. Here and there in the New Testament, he adopted readings that have very little manuscript support.

In the case of the Old Testament, Moffat regarded the traditional text as "often desperately corrupt," and on almost on every page he stated that his version contains some emendation of the traditional text. Sometimes, he felt that the text was so defective that he just left out some words, indicating that he had done so by three dots (...).<sup>214</sup> Moffat also accepted the Documentary Hypothesis, stating that not any of the Hebrew text is earlier than the seventh or eighth century BC.<sup>215</sup>

Moffat's Version did achieve some popular acceptance. In some scholarly circles, especially those of a more liberal bent, Moffat's translation had influence and his work still is referenced in some quarters.

### Goodspeed and Smith's American Translation

Edgar J. Goodspeed was professor of biblical and patristic Greek at the University of Chicago. His New Testament, published under the title, *An American Translation*, first issued in 1923, rivaled Moffat's New Testament, both in value and popularity. Goodspeed used the Wescott and Hort Greek text. Most students of versions consider it to be one of the most eloquent modern-speech versions ever produced. Goodspeed stated in his preface,

"The aim of the present translation has been to present the meaning of the different books as faithfully as possible, without bias or prejudice, in English of the same kind as the Greek of the original, so that they may be continuously and understandingly read. There is no book in the New Testament that cannot easily be read at a sitting. For American reader's, especially, who have had to depend so long upon versions made in Great Britain, there is room for a New Testament free from expressions which, however familiar in England or Scotland, are strange to American ears."

The New Testament was published in 1923, and with a few weeks, Goodspeed was approached by the University of Chicago Press asking him to undertake a rendering of the Old Testament.

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<sup>214</sup> Moffat, Preface to *A New Translation of the Bible* (New York, London, Harper & Brothers Publishers) 1935, page vi

<sup>215</sup> Op. cit. Introduction. page ix - xi

Goodspeed referred them to Professor J. J. Powis Smith of the Old Testament Department. Smith accepted the invitation to oversee such a translation and he quickly enlisted other reputable scholars related to the University of Chicago to assist him in the work.

An important feature of the Old Testament is an appendix of ninety-one pages, indicating where the translators departed from the Received Hebrew text. They assured the reader that when they did reject the received text, it usually was in order to adopt a better reading according to some ancient version. They also stated that in some instances they did adopt a conjectural reading but when this was done it was done along generally approved lines. This was the first version of the Old Testament in which the translators candidly stated that they had adopted some conjectural emendations in its translation of the Hebrew text.

The Old Testament was published in 1927. In 1931, the University of Chicago Press published both the New Testament and the Old Testament as single volume as, *The Bible: An American Translation*, with a short preface by Smith and Goodspeed. In 1938, Goodspeed translated the Apocrypha and in 1939, this was published with both the Old and New Testaments as *The Complete Bible: An American Translation*.

#### The Revised Standard Version

The success of Weymouth, Moffat, Goodspeed and Smith, caused many church leaders to realize that a revision of the 1901 *American Standard Version* was needed. In 1928, when the International Council of Religious Education obtained the copyright for the ASV, a Standard Bible Committee was appointed. The committee had fifteen members, charged with making revisions of the text that the committee felt necessary. The desire was to correct the excessively literal style of the ASV.

For two years, the committee wrestled with whether or not such a revision was needed and if so, to what extent should it be revised. Finally, in 1930, the committee decided that a revision should be undertaken and that the result should stay as close to the KJV as possible, but also give serious attention to the present knowledge of the Greek text.

By the time that the committee was ready to begin the work, the Great Depression had fallen on the western nations. The difficulty in finding funding for the project caused significant delay. Finally, in 1936, Thomas Nelson and Sons, publishers of the ASV, agreed to finance the project through advance royalties. The agreement gave Thomas Nelson and Sons the exclusive rights to publication for ten years. After the ten years, the new version would be made available to other publishers. None of the members of the translation team were to be paid for their efforts, however, the expenses for travel, lodging, and meals were to be provided.

After the work was underway, in 1939 the committee invited British scholars to join them in the effort. Hitler's invasion of Poland in the fall of 1939, and the resulting World War II made international cooperation impossible. So, the team pushed forward and the first edition of the New Testament was published in 1946 – the year after World War II had ended.

Work continued on the Old Testament and after eighty-one separate meetings, totaling 450 days of work, the complete *Revised Standard Version* was published, September 30, 1952. The new

version was launched with unprecedented publicity. In the United States and Canada, 3,418 community celebrations were held, with more than one and a half million people in attendance.

In some quarters, the opposite reaction took place. Most biblically conservative church leaders saw theological liberalism in the rendering of some portions of the version. Several members of the committee were charged with being Communists. Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy insisted that these charges be printed in the United States Air Force Training Manual. Finally, after a thorough investigation in Congress, the charges were ruled as unfounded and the edition of the manual was withdrawn.

Even so, the RSV never did find acceptance in church circles that were more biblically conservative. Biblical conservatives took issue with how some decisions were made with respect to terms and inclusion or exclusion of verses. For example, in Isaiah 7:14, the RSV reads,

*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.*

The Hebrew word is *almah* (עַלְמָה) which can mean, *young woman*. When the Jews rendered this verse into the Greek Septuagint, they chose to use the Greek term *parthenos* (παρθένος), which is the word for *virgin*. Thus, biblical conservatives argued, that the Jews always understood Isaiah 7:14 to predict the virgin birth. This is but one example of how the RSV translators steered away from terms that, in their view, would unnecessarily reinforce the traditional view of the Divinity of Christ.

Another example would be Hebrews 12:2. The RSV reads,

*looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*

All other versions available read, *Jesus the author*, (KJV, NAS, NIV, YLT), *Jesus the founder*, (ESV), etc., which presents Jesus as the source, rather than the one who showed the way – something one who is less than Divine could do.

Other expressions of the translator's philosophy is seen in the use of *Thee*, *Thou*, and *you*. The decision was made to use the old English, *Thee* and *Thou*, in reference to God and, *you*, in reference to humans. In a publication issued to explain the translation style and other matters related to the RSV, the translation committee issued *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the Testament*. In this document, an explanation is given as to the process whereby this decision was made.

“One of the great issues which the present reviser faced was whether or not to retain the second person singular, “thou,” with the correlative forms, “thee,” “thy,” “thine,” and the verb endings, “-est” and “-edst.” After two years of debate and experiment it was decided to abandon these forms and to follow modern usage, except in language addressed to God. The “-eth” and “-th” forms for verb endings in the third person are

not used at all. Something is lost, be it granted by the elimination of the plural nominate, “ye” but this is a loss that has been sustained by the English language.”<sup>216</sup>

The question then had to be faced, “Which of these terms do we use for Jesus?” The decision was made to use the human term, *you*, in reference to Jesus. Even in Peter’s confession, recorded in Matthew 16:16, the RSV reads, *You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

Responding to criticism for this decision, Dr. Clarence D. Craig,<sup>217</sup> responded,

“We translators decided that, in our opinion, there was not a man during the historical life of Jesus on earth who ever understood or believed that He was God, so we did not permit anybody to use ‘thou’ and thus address Him as deity; but did so render Rev. 5:9 that, in heaven, He is addressed as ‘God’”<sup>218</sup>

In 1971, the second edition of the RSV New Testament was issued. This version incorporated some changes that were reflected in the United Bible Societies 1975 *Greek New Testament*, which serves throughout the world as the standard text for New Testament translation, with revisions made by both Protestants and Catholics.

Soon afterwards, a significant step was taken by scholars of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain. Roman Catholics had two categories of apocryphal books: The deuterocanonical books were considered canonical.<sup>219</sup> Three books (First and Second books of Esdras, and the Prayer of Manasseh) were a part of the traditional Apocrypha, but not considered to be deuterocanonical. The Apocrypha always had been published as a unit. The Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain, under the leadership of Dom Bernard Orchard, O.S.B., and Father Reginald C. Fuller, suggested that the deuterocanonical books be published as a separate section from the three books of the Apocrypha that had not receive that designation. Their desire was to create a “common” Bible that could be used by both Protestants and Catholics (various Eastern Orthodox Churches, and some expressions of Protestantism, accept some of the Apocrypha. The 1611 KJV included it). In keeping with this suggestion, Collins Press of Glasgow published an edition so constructed in 1973.

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<sup>216</sup> *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*, by members of the Revision Committee, Luther A. Weigle, Chairman, 1946, page 56

<sup>217</sup> Concerning Dr. Craig’s Christology, several comments from his students and quotations in various journals indicate that among other things, Dr. Craig did not believe in the pre-existence of Christ, stating that this is “a mythological presentation.” Of the supernatural birth of Jesus, he considers them to have been “late stories” preserved in Matthew and Luke (*The Revised Standard Version, a Reply to Dr. Clarence T. Craig*, R. C. Foster (Pittsburgh, Evangelical Fellowship Inc.) 1947, ADDENDUM, pages 14-15

<sup>218</sup> Dr. Clarence Craig, *The Methodist Challenge*, Los Angeles, CA, as quoted in *The Revised Standard Version, a Reply to Dr. Clarence T. Craig*,

<sup>219</sup> The deuterocanonical books are: Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom (also called the Wisdom of Solomon), Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, including the Letter of Jeremiah (Additions to Jeremiah in the Septuagint), Additions to Daniel ([1]Prayer of Azariah and Song of the Three Holy Children, [2]Susanna, [3]Bel and the Dragon), 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees

In May, 1973, a specially bound copy of the Collins edition of the RSV “common” Bible was presented, in a private audience, to Pope Paul VI. The small group that presented the gift to the Pope included, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Athenagoras of London, Lady Priscilla Collins, Sir William Collins, Herbert G. May, and Bruce Metzger.

The Pope accepted the gift as a significant step in furthering ecumenical relations among the various expressions of Christianity.

This edition was not truly “ecumenical,” because it lacked the full canon recognized by the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Armenian, and other Eastern Orthodox Churches accept not only the deuterocanonical books that the Roman Catholic Church accepts, but also the Third Book of Maccabees. Also, in the Eastern Orthodox Bible, the Psalter contains Psalm 151, and the Fourth Book of Maccabees is printed as an appendix to the Old Testament. After the group left the audience with the Pope, Archbishop Athenagoras expressed to Bruce Metzger the he hoped that steps could be taken to produce a truly ecumenical version of the Scriptures.

In 1971, a subcommittee of the RSV Bible Committee already had begun a translation of the Third and Fourth Books of Maccabees and Psalm 151. In 1975, the translation of these texts was made available to the five publishers licensed to publish the RSV. In 1977, Oxford University Press in New York produced an expanded form of *The New Oxford Annotated Bible, with the Apocrypha* – the edition of the RSV that earlier had received the imprimatur of Cardinal Cushing of Boston.

A special pre-publication copy was presented to His All Holiness Dimitrios I, the ecumenical patriarch of Constantinople and the titular head of several Orthodox Churches. In receiving the gift, the ecumenical patriarch expressed satisfaction that there now was, in English, an edition of the Scriptures that all branches of the Christian church could use. Metzger commented, “For the first time since the Reformation, an edition of the Bible had received acceptance by leaders of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Churches alike.”<sup>220</sup> Of course, this means that every document that any group wants to be in the Bible is in this version, but that does not mean that every group accepts every document that is included.

#### J. B. Phillip’s Version

One of the most popular and successful “easy to read” versions was and is, J. B. Phillip’s rendition of the New Testament. While working with young people during air-raids, Phillips, who was the vicar of the Church of the Good Shepherd in London, realized that his young fellow workers could not comprehend the epistles of Paul. This disturbed him, because in his opinion, they “provide that spiritual vitamin, without which human life is at best sickly, and at most, dead.” So, sometime in 1941, when he was forced to sit an air raid shelter during a blitz, he began to work on the translation of the twenty-one epistles of the New Testament.

His desire was to convey to the modern reader the full import of the original Greek text in an easy-to-read style. He later commented that he intended to produce a translation, not for scholars

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<sup>220</sup> Metzger, op. cit. page 122

or those who had a strong Christian heritage, but for those who knew little or nothing about the Bible. C. S. Lewis learned of his project and warmly encouraged him to press forward in the task. Phillips completed this work in 1947 and published it as, *Letters to Young Churches: A Translation of the New Testament Epistles*. Geoffrey Bles of London was the publisher. It immediately became a best-seller.

Having found his efforts well-received, Phillips embarked on the other books of the New Testament. In 1952, he published, *The Gospels Translated into Modern English*. In 1955, the Book of Acts was issued as, *The Young Church in Action*. In an appendix to this rendering of Acts, Phillips gave an imaginative expansion of the sermons of Peter, Stephen, and several of Paul's sermons.

In 1956, Phillips issued, *The Book of Revelation: A New Translation of the Apocalypse*. In the preface, he indicated that he had been tempted to omit this book altogether from his translation (as Calvin had done in his New Testament Commentary), but he concluded that although the task was not the same as it had been in his other endeavors, it could prove useful and perhaps, thrilling.

In 1958, all of Phillip's work was gathered into one volume, issued as, *The New Testament in Modern English*. In 1972, he issued a revised edition. In his earlier work, he had not stayed consistently with a single Greek text, such as the Wescott and Hort or Nestle. In some places, he had chosen the Textus Receptus. In his 1972 edition, he did adhere more closely to a more critically established text. His version continues to be popular in some circles because it does speak to the reader with life and directness. Here is an example from Paul's letter to Philemon, verses 8 – 14 (1962 edition).

*And although I could rely on my authority in Christ and dare to order you to do what I consider right, I am not doing that. No, I am appealing to that love of yours, a simple personal appeal from Paul the old man, in prison for Jesus Christ's sake. I am appealing for my child. Yes, I have become a father though I have been under lock and key, and the child's name is - Onesimus! Oh, I know you have found him pretty useless in the past, but he is going to be useful now, to both of us.*

*I am sending him back to you: will you receive him as my son, part of me? I should have dearly loved to have kept him with me: he could have done what you would have done - looked after me here in prison for the Gospel's sake. But I would do nothing without consulting you first, for if you have a favour to give me, let it be spontaneous and not forced from you by circumstances!*

Very few paraphrases have been received as well as was Phillips' version and still is popular among some groups.

#### Twentieth Century Roman Catholic English Versions

Although the Latin Vulgate is the official standard of the Roman Catholic Church, in the last century there has been biblical scholarly activity among Roman Catholics. As a result of this



growing interest in manuscript studies, two Roman Catholic versions were produced in the Twentieth Century that relied on Greek and Hebrew texts: The Jerusalem Bible (1966) and The New American Bible (1970).

### *The Jerusalem Bible*

The Jerusalem Bible is the result of the work of French Dominicans at the Ecole biblique de Jerusalem. In 1948, these scholars produced a series of biblical commentaries, each of them containing one or more books of the Bible translated into French vernacular. In 1956, their work was combined into a single edition, entitled, *La Sainte Bible traduite en francais sous la direction de l'Ecole biblique de Jerusalem*.

Twenty members of the British Catholic Bible Association created an English edition that was released in 1966. This is the first complete Roman Catholic Bible to have been translated into English from the original languages, thus breaking free from Jerome's Vulgate. The editor's forward states that the objective of those involved in the work was "to serve two pressing needs facing the Church, the need to keep abreast of the times and the need to deepen theological thought." The translators attempted to meet the first of these needs by "translating the ancient text into the language we use today." The second they sought to meet by providing notes that are "neither sectarian nor superficial."

The Jerusalem Bible is the product of very serious and responsible scholarship. For the most part, the JBV follows the mainstream of textual scholarship, but there are instances in which it abandons the Greek manuscripts and follows Old Latin and Syriac manuscripts. Later editions, with some changes in the original, were issued in 1975 and, most recently, 1985.

### *The New American Bible*

In 1944, the Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine invited a group of Roman Catholic scholars to undertake a Roman Catholic translation of the Scriptures from the original languages. In the preceding decade a group of Roman Catholic scholars had begun translating the Vulgate into a somewhat contemporary English version. Their New Testament had been published in 1941. However, the 1944 request was for a translation to be undertaken using the original languages, not the Latin of the Vulgate – and the desire was for the version to reflect contemporary American English.

A quarter of a century later, in 1970, the *New American Bible* was published. This version also represents very capable and dedicated scholarship. It provides a rendering of the Scriptures in modern American English. In addition to a brief introduction to each book of the Bible, the NAB contains many helpful literary and theological annotations.

A thorough revision was begun in 1978. One characteristic of the revision is the effort to use language that is inclusive of both sexes. For example, Matthew 23:13, in the original edition reads, "You shut the doors of the kingdom of God in men's faces," whereas the revision reads, "You lock the kingdom of heaven before human beings."

### The New English Bible

In May, 1946, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland received a request from the Presbytery of Stirling and Dunblane that a translation of the Bible be produced in the language used by contemporary English speakers. After several months of negotiations with representatives of the major Protestant denominations in Britain, as well as those of Oxford and Cambridge, the work was undertaken by a committee of outstanding English scholars. Four panels were created to deal with the respective portions of Scripture:

- Old Testament panel, to be convened by G. R. Driver, of Oxford
- The Apocrypha panel, to be convened by G. D. Kilpatrick, of Oxford
- The New Testament panel, to be convened by C. H. Dodd, Cambridge
- Dodd was to serve as the general director of the entire project and convener of the panel to oversee the literary revision of the entire work.

Each book of the Bible was assigned to a single translator, who did not have to be a member of one of the panels. When the translator's work was done, he submitted to the appropriate panel a typed transcript of his work. The panel then discussed and revised the transcript. When the panel had completed its work, the results were sent to the literary panel for suggestions on improving the English style. The final form then was reached by an agreement between the two panels.

The New Testament was released in 1961. Most reviewers noted the freedom of rendering and the insertion of words for which there was no authority in the text. Here are some examples (the inserted words are in italics):

- Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:15: *guardian* angel
- Romans 12:4 *human* body
- I Corinthians 13:8 tongues *of ecstasy*
- I Thessalonians 4:12: Those who sleep *in death*
- Colossians 1:22: in his body of flesh *and blood*
- Revelation 1:4: in *the province of* Asia
- Revelation 1:5: his *life's* blood

Other changes reflect what in linguistics is known as, "periphrasis." Here are some examples:

- Mark 15:31, etc., "scribes" is rendered, *doctors of law*
- Matthew 25:14-30, the parable of the talents, is rendered, *bags of gold*
- Colossians 1:2, etc. "saints" is rendered as *God's People*
- I John 4:7, etc. "beloved" is rendered, *dear friends*
- Revelation 12:19, etc., "it is written," is rendered, *there is a text which reads*

The Old Testament was published in 1970, with similar language traits displayed.

What originally was planned as a minor revision of the NEB, resulted in a major revision, issued in 1989. In the original work, Roman Catholic representatives had attended as observers. For the revision, the Roman Catholic scholars became full members of the team, as did scholars from the Salvation Army and the Moravian Church. Readers acquainted with the original NEB will note some obvious changes in wording

## The New International Version

*The New International Version New Testament* was published in 1972, followed by the entire Bible in 1978 with updated versions published in 1984 and 2011. 100 evangelical scholars did the work on the first edition.<sup>221</sup> This version follows the dynamic equivalency principle of translation (see ADDENDUM I for an explanation of translation and transmission styles). The publicity released prior to the publication of the NIV stressed the interdenominational and international backgrounds of those who did the work. The preface listed thirteen different denominations and movements represented among the translators. Ninety-seven individuals were listed. Eighty-seven of these were American; three each from Canada and Great Britain; two each from Australia and New Zealand. These worked in twenty teams, each team being composed of five individuals: two co-translators, two consultants, and one English stylist.

The initial vision for the project was provided by a single individual – an engineer working with General Electric in Seattle by the name of Howard Long. Long was a lifelong devotee of the King James Version, but when he quoted the Bible to his friends he was distressed to find that they just couldn't relate to the terminology. Long saw the need for a translation that captured the truths he loved in the language that his contemporaries spoke.

For 10 years, Long and a growing group of like-minded supporters drove this idea, often speaking to various church leaders about the need for a new translation. Two groups, the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church (1956) and the National Association of Evangelicals (1957) totally independent of one another began to make plans for a version of the Bible that would reflect conservative theology, and also be acceptable to modern readers. As a result of serendipitous conversations, the two committees met together and merged their efforts. Over the years, other scholars became interested and the committee grew. In 1968, Edwin H. Palmer, a noted scholar, educator, and pastor of Reformed Churches, was appointed to the role of being full-time executive secretary of the project.

A self-governing body of fifteen biblical scholars, the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) was formed and charged with the responsibility to proceed with the project. In 1968 the New York Bible Society (which subsequently became the International Bible Society and then Biblica) generously undertook the financial sponsorship of the project. The translation of each book was assigned to translation teams, each made up of two lead translators, two translation consultants, and a stylistic consultant where necessary. Here is a summary of the process followed by the translators:

- The initial translations produced by these teams were carefully scrutinized and revised by intermediate editorial committees of five biblical scholars to check them against the source texts and assess them for comprehensibility.
- Each edited text was then submitted to a general committee of eight to twelve members before being distributed to a selected group of outside critics and to all members of the CBT in preparation for a final review.

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<sup>221</sup> Two of the scholars who did this work are known to me (JWG): Dr. Roy Hayden, of Oral Roberts University, and Dr. Lewis Foster, of The Cincinnati Bible Seminary.

- Samples of the translation were tested for clarity and ease of reading with pastors, students, scholars, and lay people across the full breadth of the intended audience. It is doubtful that any other translation has undergone a more thorough process of review and revision.

Here is one of the translators' comments on the work that was done on the NIV.

*“How do you say that today? Each new translation of Scripture has special guidelines for the kind of translation it wishes to be. One principle held before the eyes of these (NIV) translators was the need to put the truths of Scripture into expression used and understood today. This was to be a contemporary translation. The question constantly asked around the translation table was, ‘How do you say that today.’ First, they wanted to be sure what the inspired author had written in the original Greek. Then they wanted to be sure of what he meant. Finally, they wanted to put that truth into contemporary English, the way one could best say it today. This was not an attempt to produce a colloquial translation, short-lived and appreciated by only a limited group. It was beautiful enough to inspire awe as it is read from the pulpit, simple enough to be clear to the young person, interesting enough to attract the non-Christian, and meaningful enough to stir the soul of the devotional reader. But the principle which heads the list was expressed this way: ‘At every point the translation shall be faithful to the Word of God as represented by the most accurate text of the original languages of Scripture.’”*<sup>222</sup>

The NIV is the first English Bible Version to become more popular (measured by sales after its release) than the King James Version.

From the very start, the NIV sought to bring modern Bible readers as close as possible to the experience of the very first Bible readers: providing the best possible blend of transparency to the original documents and comprehension of the original meaning in every verse.

With this clarity of focus, came the realization that the work of translating the NIV would never be truly complete. As new discoveries were made about the biblical world and its languages, and as the norms of English usage developed and changed, the NIV would also need to change to hold true to its original vision. So, in the original NIV charter, provision was made not just to issue periodic updates to the text but to create a mechanism for constant monitoring of changes in biblical scholarship and English usage. The CBT was charged to meet every year to review, maintain, and strengthen the NIV's ability to accurately and faithfully render God's unchanging Word in constantly changing modern English.

The 2011 update is the latest version. Many conservative groups that readily received the original version of the NIV have rejected the 2011 revision because of some of the changes, especially the “gender neutral” stance displayed in the translation

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<sup>222</sup> Dr. Lewis Foster, “A New Translation: True and Clear,” *The Christian Standard* (Cincinnati, The Standard Publishing Co.) 1974, page 5

*Today's New International Version New Testament* was published in 2002 followed by the entire Bible in 2005. Thirteen evangelical scholars worked on the translation.<sup>223</sup> Forty other scholars, many of them experts on specific books of the Bible, reviewed the translations teams' work. They came from a range of Evangelical denominational backgrounds.<sup>224</sup> Of interest is the style of changes that this version made in the NIV. In some instances it moved more toward a formal equivalency style.

The TNIV found acceptance in England but not in the United States. Some denominations and denominational bookstores refused to market it. One of the main problems was the gender-neutral language.<sup>225</sup>

As a marketing move, when the 2011 edition of the NIV was released (see above) both the TNIV and the 1984 edition of the NIV were discontinued. Keith Danby, president and chief executive officer of Biblica, said that they erred in presenting past updates - failing to convince people that revisions were needed and underestimating readers' loyalty to the 1984 NIV. Thus, Biblica removed the competition with the newer versions of the NIV, by discontinuing the marketing of the earlier versions and the TNIV.<sup>226</sup>

#### The Living Bible Paraphrase

Kenneth Taylor produced the *Living Bible Paraphrase* in 1971. Ken and Margaret Taylor had family devotions each evening after supper. As a part of those devotions, Ken often asked the children a few questions to make sure they had understood the day's Bible reading. When he asked this question, he was often met with blank stares. So Ken would restate the meaning of the passage in simpler terms. One evening after he had explained the meaning of one particular verse from the King James Version, Janet, then about eight, said, "But Daddy, if that's what it means, why doesn't it say so?"

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<sup>223</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, Kenneth L. Barker, John H. Stek, Donald H. Madvig, R. T. France, Gordon Fee, Karen H. Jobes, Walter Liefeld, Douglas J. Moo, Bruce K. Waltke, Larry L. Walker, Herbert M. Wolf and Martin Selman.

<sup>224</sup> *Preface to the TNIV Bible*

<sup>225</sup> Denominations supportive of the TNIV include the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), which officially endorsed the TNIV as an acceptable translation for use, the Evangelical Covenant Church and the Free Methodist Church of North America. Evangelical scholars and pastoral leaders supporting the project include Mark L. Strauss, Tremper Longman, John Ortberg, Adam Hamilton, Craig Blomberg, Darrell Bock, Don Carson, Peter Furler, Bill Hybels, Ben Witherington III, Lee Strobel, John Stott, Philip Yancey, Dan Kimball, Terri Blackstock, Erwin McManus, Ted Haggard and others.

Opposition to the TNIV was quite strong in some quarters. In June 2002, over 100 evangelical leaders signed a 'Statement of Concern' opposing the TNIV. The Presbyterian Church in America and the Southern Baptist Convention passed resolutions opposing the TNIV and other inclusive-language translations. Evangelical scholars and pastoral leaders critical of inclusive language translations and thus opposed to the TNIV include John F. MacArthur, J. I. Packer, Jack T. Chick, Gail Riplinger, James Dobson, Jerry Falwell, Texe Marrs, Wayne Grudem, Peter Ruckman, D. James Kennedy, Josh McDowell, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., John Piper, Pat Robertson, R.C. Sproul, and Joni Eareckson Tada.

<sup>226</sup> "TNIV discontinued". *USA Today*. 2009-09-01.

One Saturday morning, while puzzling over how to communicate to his children the meaning of that evening's Scripture passage, Ken decided to write out a simpler version of the passage in advance. It worked, and he began doing that as the family read through the epistles.

He thought that other families might also find his paraphrase helpful, so he sent the manuscript to several publishers. When they all turned him down, he decided to publish it himself. The Taylors formed their own publishing company, which they named, Tyndale House Publishers in honor of William Tyndale. He called the book *Living Letters* and arranged for 2,000 copies to be printed.

*Living Letters* (the New Testament epistles) was published in 1962, and within a few years it was followed by a series of books containing other portions of Scripture paraphrased into modern English. The complete edition, *The Living Bible*, was published in 1971. Over the next twenty-five years, Tyndale House flourished, and more than 40 million copies of *The Living Bible* were sold in dozens of different formats. *The Living Letters* and *The Living Bible Paraphrase* were quite popular with many in the Jesus Movement of the 1960's and early 1970's. Special editions were published with cover art that appealed to the hippie culture.

#### The New American Standard Bible

In 1959, the Lockman Foundation of La Habra, California,<sup>227</sup> launched a new translation project, based on the 1901 *American Standard Version*. Since the copyright of the ASV had expired, the Lockman Foundation was free to use and to revise the text. Fifty-eight anonymous translators from a variety of denominational backgrounds published the *New American Standard Bible* in 1971.

The Forward to the NASB describes the view of Scripture held by the translators and the motivation for undertaking the work.

“The New American Standard Bible has been produced with the conviction that the words of Scripture as originally penned in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were inspired by God. Since they are the eternal Word of God, the Holy Scriptures speak with fresh power to each generation, to give wisdom that leads to salvation that men may serve Christ to the glory of God.

The Editorial Board had a twofold purpose in making this translation, to adhere as closely as possible to the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and to make the translation in a fluent and readable style according to current English usage.”

The Lockman Foundation declared its four-fold aim as:

1. These publications shall be true to the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
2. They shall be grammatically correct.
3. They shall be understandable to the masses

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<sup>227</sup> The Lockman Foundation is a non-profit Christian corporation formed in 1942 to promote the translation of the Bible in several languages.

4. They shall give the Lord Jesus Christ His proper place, the place which the Word give Him; no work will ever be personalized.<sup>228</sup>

Note that the fourth of these stated aims explains why the translators sought to remain anonymous.

The teams that worked in this version, made some changes in the wording of the ASV. Here are some of the distinctives of this version:

- Instead of *Jehovah*, as the personal name of God, when the tetragrammaton occurs in the Old Testament, the NASB renders it as “the LORD.”
- The NASB reverted to the practice followed in the Geneva Bible and the King James Bible of beginning each verse as a paragraph, whereas the tendency in recent version was to follow more contemporary English paragraph divisions.
- Old Testament quotations are printed in small capital letters. For example, Luke 4:10-11, quoting Psalm 91:11-12,

*for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' and, 'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'*

- Thou, Thee, and Thy are not used in the original NASB except in the language of prayer and when addressing Deity. These terms are used when addressing Christ.

In 1995, the Lockman Foundation updated the NASB. The update is labeled, NASBU (often, NAU). Here are some of the changes made in the update:<sup>229</sup>

- Passages with Old English "thee's" and "thou's" etc. have been updated to modern English.
- Words and Phrases that could be misunderstood due to changes in their meaning during the past 20 years have been updated to current English.
- Verses with difficult word order or vocabulary have been retranslated into smoother English.
- Sentences beginning with "And" have often been retranslated for better English, in recognition of differences in style between the ancient languages and modern English. The original Greek and Hebrew did not have punctuation as is found in English, and in many cases modern English punctuation serves as a substitute for "And" in the original. In some other cases, "and" is translated by a different word such as "then" or "but" as called for by the context, when the word in the original language allows such translation.

#### The New Living Translation

*The New Living Translation*, is the result of an effort by the publisher of *The Living Bible Paraphrase* to improve the reputation of that version. The publishers at Tyndale House were frustrated by the fact that *The Living Bible Paraphrase* had not been accepted by pastors and seminary professors. Most seminary professors spoke negatively of the *Living Bible*

<sup>228</sup> *The New American Standard Bible*, Foreword (Nashville, Holman Bible Publishers) 1975 edition, pg.1

<sup>229</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-American-Standard-Bible-NASB/>

*Paraphrase*, and discouraged its use because it was a paraphrase, and because it contained Kenneth Taylor's theological slant (among other things, Taylor's Arminianism and some of the dispensationalism of the Scofield Reference Bible). As the Tyndale House Publishers pondered how to make the *Living Bible* more acceptable to seminary professors, and thus blunt their criticism, they decided to ask a committee of seminary professors to undertake a revision of the *Living Bible* – thinking that if seminary professors were involved in the revision, then this would squelch the criticisms. Ultimately, with Kenneth Taylor's blessing a team of 90 scholars was assembled to undertake the project. As the task was undertaken, the team realized that the closest thing to this goal that they could achieve was to produce a dynamic equivalency version that retained the language of *The Living Bible Paraphrase* where it was possible to do so. The first edition, published in 1996, did retain a large portion of *The Living Bible* paraphrases and in some quarters, the NLT was criticized for some of the problems that resulted from this diluted process.<sup>230</sup> The two later revisions (2004 and 2007) addressed and removed many of these legitimate criticisms.

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<sup>230</sup> Craig Blomberg of Denver Seminary, one of the NLT "reviewers," has served on the translation committee of four different recently published versions. In an article describing his work on the various versions, he wrote the following concerning the procedure followed by those who were on the NLT translation committee. Note the difference between the process followed in the production of the NIV (footnote 30) and Bloomberg's description of the process followed in the production of the NLT:

"With the New Living Translation, the Bible was divided into sixths, with a scholar appointed general editor over each large chunk. Then individuals books of the Bible (or small collections of books) were parceled out to three experts (I worked on Matthew), who compiled long lists of suggestions for revising Ken Taylor's original Living Bible Paraphrased. We ranked these in terms of priority, sent them to the general editor over our part of the Bible, who synthesized a selection of them, interacted with a Tyndale House stylist, and sent a draft back to us for us to repeat the process. Eventually the full translation emerged. Craig Blomberg, *Demystifying Bible Translation and Where Our Culture Is with Inclusive Language* <http://zondervan.typepad.com/koinonia/2008/08/demystifying-bi.html>

This leaves us with the impression that the "reviewers" did not meet to discuss the revision and vote on changes (the press release that accompanied the first publication of the NLT stated the process differently). According to the above quoted Bloomberg statement, the work done to produce the NLT essentially was a revision of the Living Bible Paraphrase, rather than a serious translation of the Hebrew and Greek

Blomberg further stated that the NLT is not suitable as a regular Bible for adults. Blomberg explained that in his view, the NLT is for "kids or very poor adult readers." He suggested that readers of the NLT should move on to a more accurate version when they are able. "I relished the chance to work on the NLT team to convert the LBP into a truly dynamic-equivalent translation, but I never recommend it to anyone except to supplement the reading of a more literal translation to generate freshness and new insights, unless they are kids or very poor adult readers." Craig Blomberg, *review of The Word of God in English by Leland Ryken, Denver Journal: An Online Review of Current Biblical and Theological Studies*, volume 6 (July 2003).

There also were unresolved disagreements between some who worked on the translation. For example, one of the overseeing "reviewers," Robert Bergen, objected to the gender neutral stance displayed in the NLT. Bergen noted that in the Hebrew society, men were dominant, thus biblical writers employed male language. In Bergen's translation of the book of Exodus, he retained the original language. He stated, "I'm not going to recreate ancient Israel into a sexless society," As quoted in, Mark R. Norton, ed., *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House, 1996.



## The New King James Version

*The New King James Version* translation has become one of the best-selling Bibles of all time. As of July 2012 (the latest figures that I could find – JWG) it is the third best-selling Bible in the United States, after the NIV and KJV.

Dr. Arthur Farstad, Greek professor at Dallas Theological Seminary, was the scholar who first envisioned producing a King James Version in more contemporary English. The NKJV translation project was inaugurated in 1975, when 130 biblical scholars, pastors, and theologians were invited to come together to consider the project. Two meetings were held (Nashville and Chicago). These men prepared the guidelines for the NKJV and became the translation committee.

The aim of its translators was to update the vocabulary and grammar of the King James Version, while preserving the classic style and literary beauty of the original 1611 King James Version. The translators were theologically conservative and were committed to unyielding faithfulness to the original Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew texts including the insights available in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They also planned for most of the New King James Bibles to be published with helpful study aids, such as event descriptions, a history of each book, and added dictionary and updated concordance. It took a total of seven years to complete the project.

Thomas Nelson, Inc. was to be the publisher. The New Testament was published in 1979, the Psalms in 1980, and the full Bible in 1982. In England the NKJV was published as the Revised Authorized Version, in order to link it to the KJV (the Authorized Version) in the minds of British Bible purchasers. Now, the title, the Revised Authorized Version, has been abandoned and the New King James Version is used universally.

According to the preface of the New King James Version (p. v-vi), the NKJV uses the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of the *Biblia Hebraica* for the Old Testament. This is carefully compared with the majority text that was used by the 1611 King James translators. i.e. the Ben Hayyim edition of the Mikraot Gedolot published by Bomberg in 1524–1525 AD; about a century before the production of the 1611 KJV.

Both the King James Version and the New King James Version use the Masoretic Majority Text – however, the NKJV uses a manuscript older than that which was available to the KJV translators in 1611. The 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, used by the NKJV, is based on the older Leningrad Manuscript B19a.

The New King James Version uses the Textus Receptus ("Received Text") for the New Testament, just as the original King James Version had used. As explained in the NKJV preface, the NKJV contains notes in the center column which acknowledge variations from *Novum Testamentum Graece* (designated NU after Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies) and the Majority Text (designated M).<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>231</sup> The Textus Receptus, is a version of the Majority Text that was produced by Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza – see page 20 in these notes.

The NKJV translators sought to produce a formal equivalence version, which they called, "complete equivalence" in contrast to "dynamic equivalence." The task of updating the English of the KJV involved significant changes in word order, grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. One of the most significant features of the NKJV was its abandonment of the historic second person pronouns "thou", "thee", "ye", "thy", and "thine". Verb forms were also modernized in the NKJV (for example, "speaks" rather than "speaketh").<sup>232</sup>

#### The English Standard Version

*The English Standard Version*, first published in 2001, with later publications in 2007 and 2011, is a formal equivalency translation. The preface to the ESV states,

“The ESV is an ‘essentially literal’ translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible 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. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original.

...Therefore, to the extent that plain English permits and the meaning in each case allows, we have sought to use the same English word for important recurring words in the original; and, as far as grammar and syntax allow, we have rendered Old Testament passages cited in the New in ways that show their correspondence. Thus in each of these areas, as well as throughout the Bible as a whole, we have sought to capture the echoes and overtones of meaning that are so abundantly present in the original texts. As an essentially literal translation, then, the ESV seeks to carry over every possible nuance of meaning in the original words of Scripture into our own language.”

#### The Holman Christian Study Bible

The publishers of *The Holman Christian Study Bible* present the following as the background for the version’s publication.<sup>233</sup>

“After several years of preliminary development, Holman Bible Publishers, the oldest Bible publisher in America, assembled an international, interdenominational team of 100 scholars, editors, stylists, and proofreaders, all of whom were committed to biblical inerrancy. Outside consultants and reviewers contributed valuable suggestions from their areas of expertise. An executive team then edited, polished, and reviewed the final manuscripts.”

The publishers describe the HCSB translation style, as “Optimal Equivalence. Here is their description of the process:

<sup>232</sup> See ADDENDUM O for KJV loyalists’ reaction to the NKJV

<sup>233</sup> The quotes in this section are found in *Introduction to the Holman Christian Standard Bible*, Holman Publishers, 1999. The introduction to the *HCSB®* states, “*Optimal Equivalence*: This approach seeks to combine the best features of both formal and dynamic equivalence. In the many places throughout Scripture where a word for word rendering is clearly understandable, a literal translation is used. In places where a literal rendering might be unclear, then a more dynamic translation is given. The *HCSB®* has

“In practice, translations are seldom if ever purely formal or dynamic but favor one theory of Bible translation or the other to varying degrees. Optimal equivalence as a translation philosophy recognizes that form cannot be neatly separated from meaning and should not be changed (for example, nouns to verbs or third person “they” to second person “you”) unless comprehension demands it. The primary goal of translation is to convey the sense of the original with as much clarity as the original text and the translation language permit. Optimal equivalence appreciates the goals of formal equivalence but also recognizes its limitations.

Optimal equivalence starts with an exhaustive analysis of the text at every level (word, phrase, clause, sentence, discourse) in the original language to determine its original meaning and intention (or purpose). Then relying on the latest and best language tools and experts, the nearest corresponding semantic and linguistic equivalents are used to convey as much of the information and intention of the original text with as much clarity and readability as possible. This process assures the maximum transfer of both the words and thoughts contained in the original.

The HCSB uses optimal equivalence as its translation philosophy. When a literal translation meets these criteria, it is used. When clarity and readability demand an idiomatic translation, the reader can still access the form of the original text by means of a footnote with the abbreviation ‘Lit.’”

In explaining the HCSB gender language policy, the introduction states,

“Some people today ignore the Bible’s teachings on distinctive roles of men and women in family and church and have an agenda to eliminate those distinctions in every arena of life. These people have begun a program to engineer the removal of a perceived male bias in the English language. The targets of this program have been such traditional linguistic practices as the generic use of “man” or “men,” as well as “he,” “him,” and “his.”

A group of Bible scholars, translators, and other evangelical leaders met in 1997 to respond to this issue as it affects Bible translation. This group produced the “Guidelines for Translation of Gender-Related Language in Scripture” (adopted May 27, 1997 and revised Sept. 9, 1997). The HCSB was produced in accordance with these guidelines.

The goal of the translators has not been to promote a cultural ideology but to faithfully translate the Bible. While the HCSB avoids using “man” or “he” unnecessarily, the translation does not restructure sentences to avoid them when they are in the text. For example, the translators have not changed “him” to “you” or to “them,” neither have they avoided other masculine words such as “father” or “son” by translating them in generic terms such as “parent” or “child.”

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chosen to use the balance and beauty of optimal equivalence for a fresh translation of God's word that is both faithful to the words God inspired and ‘user friendly’ to modern readers.”  
([biblegateway.com/HCSB](http://biblegateway.com/HCSB))

## The New English Translation

*The New English Translation* (NET Bible) is a free, on-line Bible version. The NET Bible was initially conceived at an annual meeting in Philadelphia of the Society of Biblical Literature. The translation project originally started as an attempt to provide a digital version of a modern English translation over the Internet and on CD-ROM without cost for the user:<sup>234</sup> "The NET Bible project was commissioned to create a faithful Bible translation that could be placed on the Internet, downloaded for free, and used around the world for ministry."<sup>235</sup>

Many of those involved in the project's initial discussions eventually became part of the translation team. The translation and extensive notes were undertaken by more than twenty biblical scholars who worked directly from the best currently available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. It is an original English translation, rather than a revision of an earlier version.<sup>236</sup>

The translators used a formal equivalent approach to their work, but did use dynamic equivalent language. W. Hall Harris, the NET Bible Project Director, in the preface to the first edition, wrote,

"The translators and editors used the notes to give a translation that was formally equivalent, while placing a somewhat more functionally [or dynamically] equivalent translation in the text itself to promote better readability and understandability."

A real plus in this version is the inclusion of extensive notes<sup>237</sup> to which Harris refers in the above quote. Thus, the reader is able to "look over the shoulders" of the translator and see why a particular text was rendered as it was. Based on the inclusion of these extensive notes, Harris, in the above cited preface, states, "The longstanding tension between these two different approaches to Bible translation has thus been fundamentally solved." Perhaps a greater benefit provided by the notes is the reader's ability to evaluate the decision made by the translators, allowing the Bible student to agree or disagree with the translator's rendering of the text.

Of special note also is the motivation stated in the above quoted preface - to create a faithful Bible translation that could be placed on the Internet, downloaded for free, and used around the world for ministry. The reality of doing this has proven some challenges, but the philosophy has guided the copyright process.<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> The NET now is also available in printed form that can be purchased at Christian bookstores and other outlets.

<sup>235</sup> Preface to the NET Bible First Edition"

<sup>236</sup> Now the NET Bible has both English and Chinese versions. The Chinese version is also called Chinese NET Bible.

<sup>237</sup> 60,932 translators' notes

<sup>238</sup> "The NET Bible's approach towards copyright comprises a full copyright license.<sup>238</sup> which is explained in its "Ministry First" statement,<sup>238</sup> both of which emphasize its openness and freedom. The publishers claim that "after 10 years, the NET Bible is still the only major modern translation that can be downloaded free in its entirety and used seamlessly in presentations and documents." However, as of October 2010, the NET Bible's copyright statement is over 1500 words long, and contains different conditions for generic copyright, [diglots](#) and bible quotations in multiple formats, including commercial and non-commercial publications.

**Earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were other versions that enjoyed wide use.**

- *The Scofield Reference Bible* is a KJV with a few archaic terms updated, and in some instances, verses expanded for clarity. The SRB contains footnotes based on J. Nelson Darby's pre-millennial Futurist view of Prophecy and the end-times.
- *The Amplified Bible* is an attempt to make clear to people the meaning of obscure or difficult terms, by listing synonyms or expanding verses.
- Beck, Williams, Young, and others have produced private translations that have been popular in some quarters.

In recent years, there have been so many paraphrases and versions produced (many targeted toward special interests or groups) that it is almost impossible to keep a current list.

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The NET Bible's approach to copyright is self-summarized as:

The Bible is God's gift to humanity – it should be free. (see original preface)

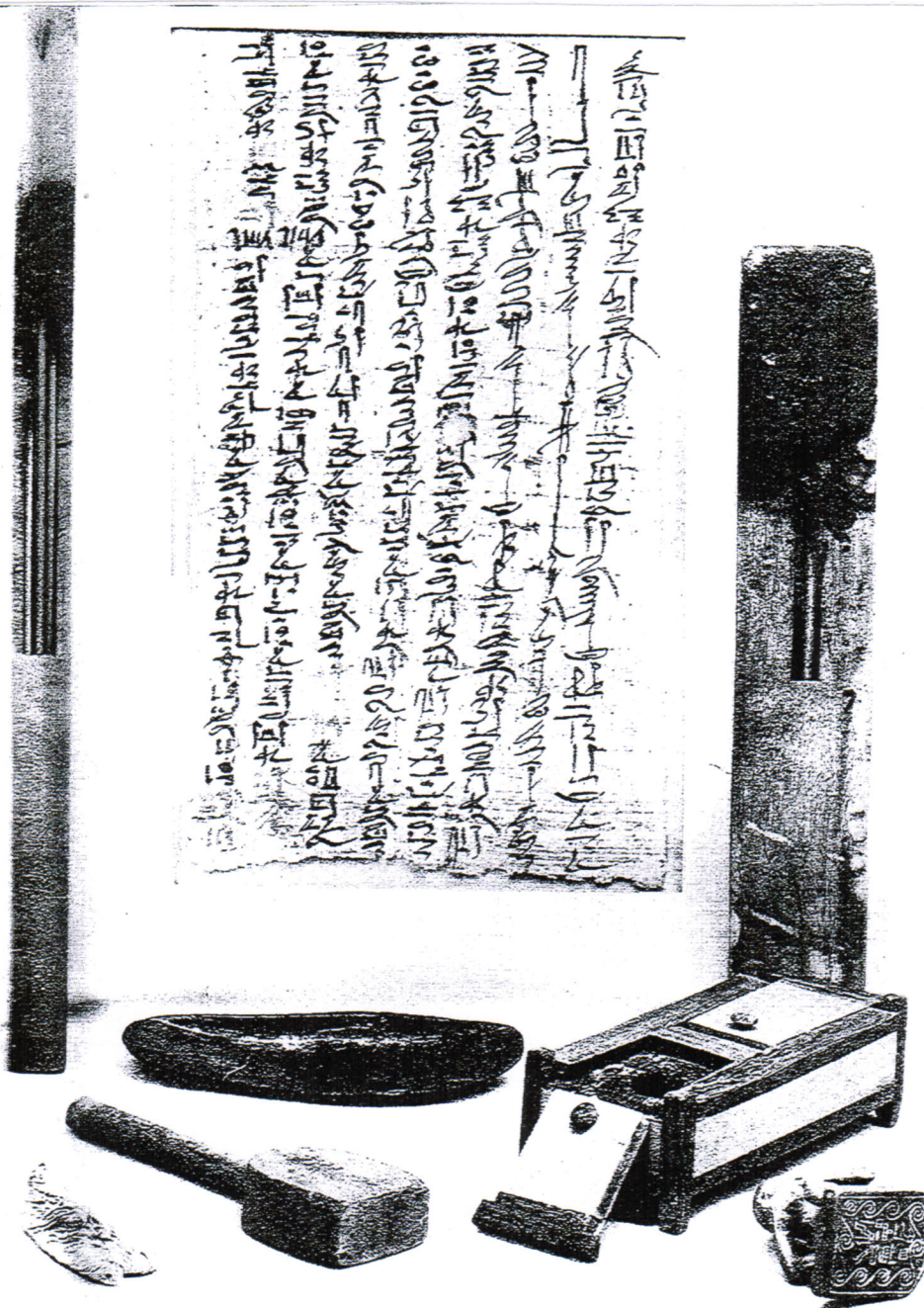
In "Copyright Innovations – Toward a New Model," the Ministry First position statement makes at least four additional important clarifications:

- We still don't fully like the copyright notice for the NET Bible, but in our litigious world it remains a challenge...
- We believe that 1 Tim 5:17-18 (the author has the right to be paid) and Lev 23:22 (allow the poor and foreigner free access) can be simultaneously satisfied far better with a new Internet model...
- We want all authors to know that the NET Bible is a safe choice.
- It is time for ministry to be more free – and for a Bible which puts ministry first....Let us know how we can better serve your needs.

However, these statements do not form part of the copyright notice itself, so their legal value is unclear.

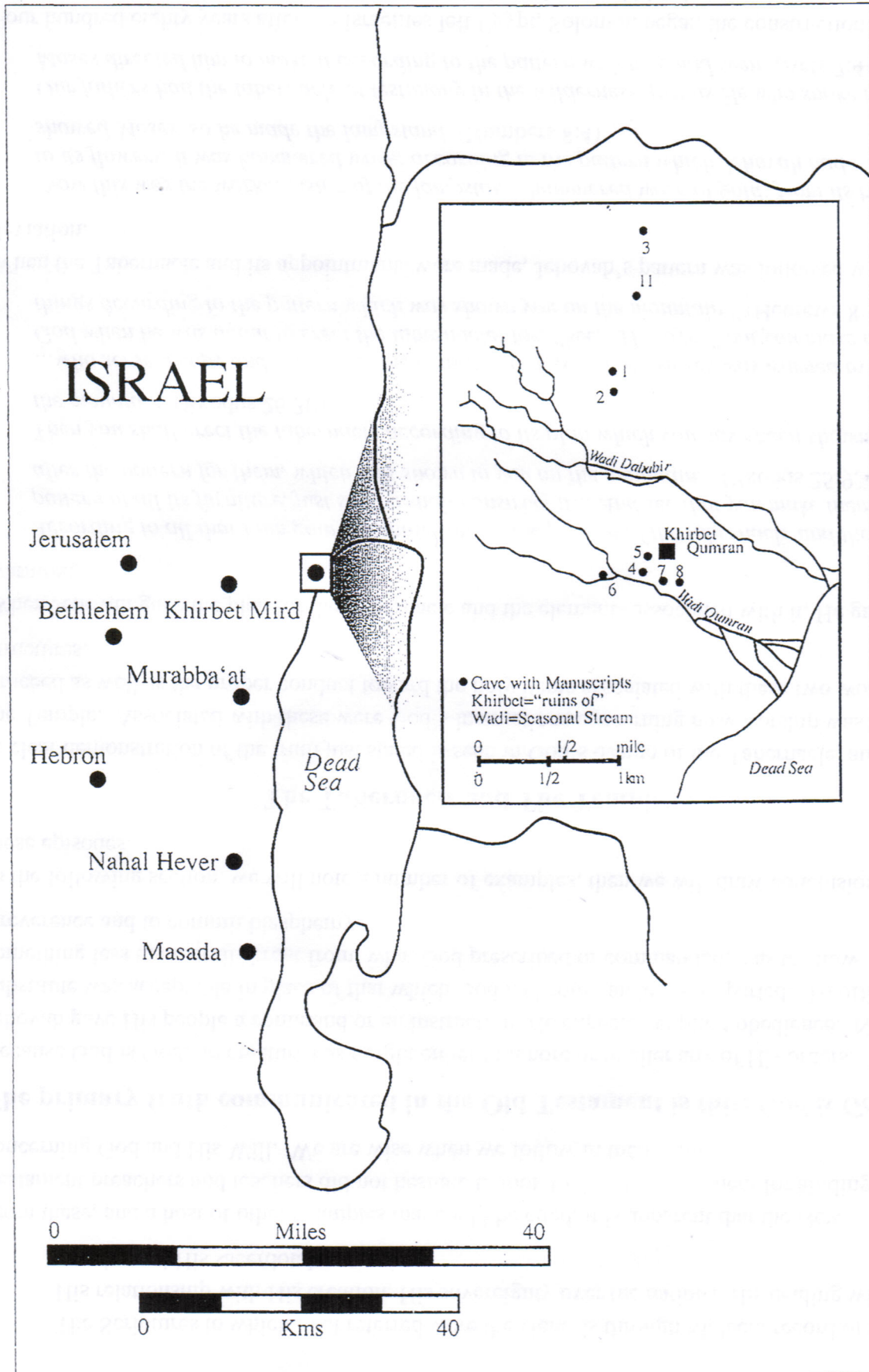
## ADDENDUM A

### Ancient Writing Materials



This is a collection of ancient writing equipment from the Twelfth Dynasty (also known as the Middle Kingdom) c.2000-1780 BC. This is the sort of equipment that was unchanged throughout the 3000 years that papyrus was used as a writing material. The narrow pieces on the left and the right are palettes of wood, used as cases for reed pens and writing brushes. The obsidian bowl in the center held water for mixing ink. The wooden box on the right is an inkwell. The wooden mallet was used for pounding papyrus rushes together. The object on the lower right is a woodcut used for stamping. The document in the center - written in vertical columns of hieratic text - is a letter written by a mortuary priest in the Eleventh Dynasty (2134-1991 BC)

ADDENDUM B  
Map of Dead Sea and Qumran Area



## ADDENDUM C

### Photograph of Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)



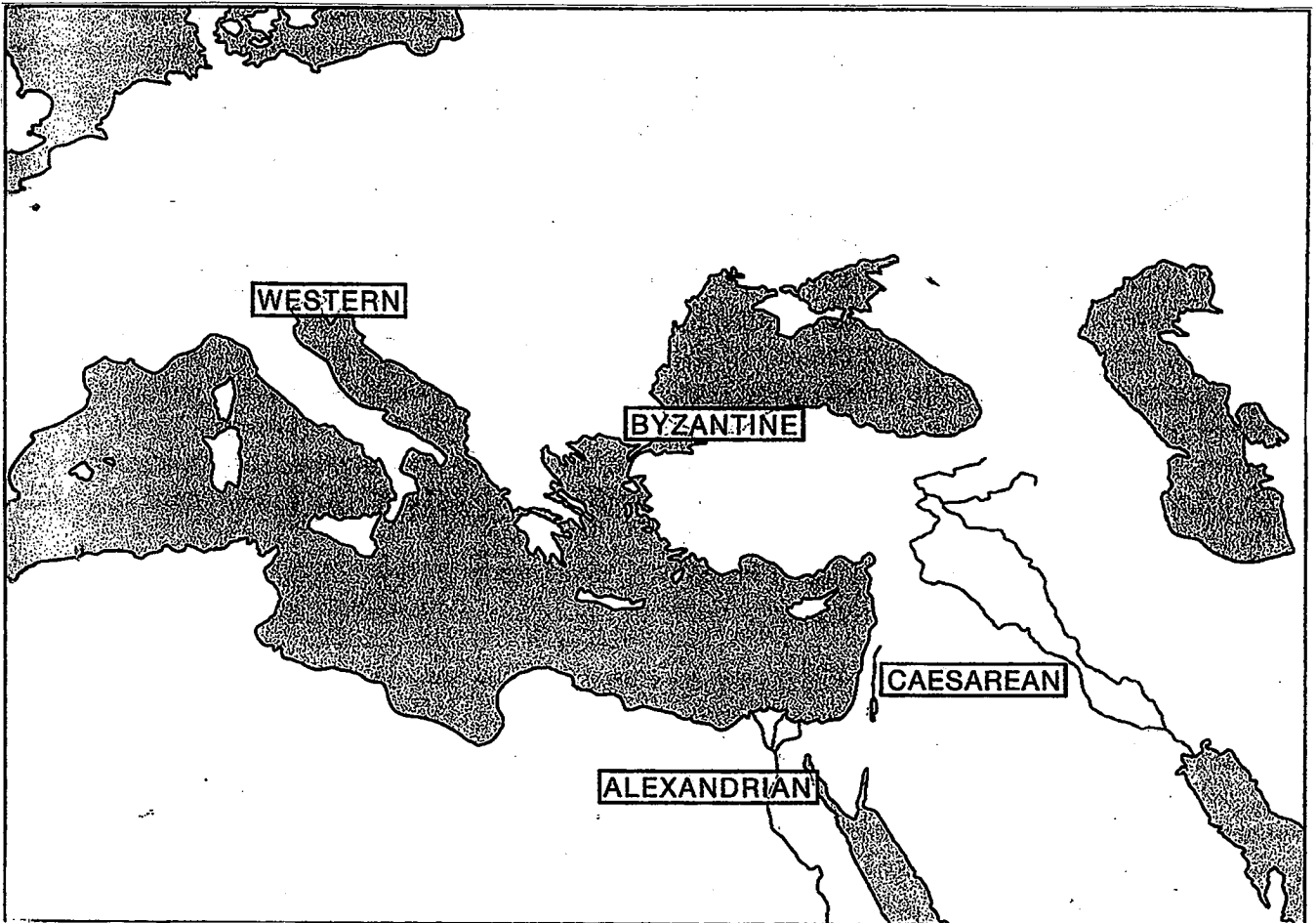
The scroll is opened to columns XXXII and XXXIII, containing Isaiah 38:4-40:28.

Isaiah 38:21-22 was inadvertently omitted by the scribe. Note that these verses have been added and extend vertically into the margin. Note also that another correction has been made beginning on line seven in the left-hand column. In the middle of the line, the scribe jumped ahead from 40:7 to 40:8 – his eye had dropped down because the word **צִיץ** (*tsyts* - flower) is repeated in verse 8. When the error was discovered, dots were placed on the words that were incorrect and the rest of verse seven was added above the line and in the margin.



## ADDENDUM D

### Geographical Identity of Text Types<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, Benjamin Merkle, Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* (Nashville, B & H Academic) 2016, page 27

# ADDENDUM E

An example of a critical apparatus and the documents referenced in the apparatus

## THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Principal Manuscripts and Versions  
cited in the Textual Apparatus

Abbreviations: e—Gospels; a—Acts; p—Pauline Epistles; c—General Epistles;  
r—Revelation. Roman numerals indicate approximate date of writing.

No.	Content	Papyri		Uncials	
		Date	No.	Date	No.
p <sub>1</sub>	e	III	p <sub>46</sub>	III	A.
p <sub>2</sub>	e	VI	p <sub>47</sub>	II/III	B.
p <sub>3</sub>	e	VI/VII	p <sub>48</sub>	III	C.
p <sub>4</sub>	e	III	p <sub>49</sub>	III	D.
p <sub>5</sub>	e	III	p <sub>50</sub>	III	D.
p <sub>6</sub>	e	IV	p <sub>51</sub>	IV/V	E.
p <sub>8</sub>	a	IV	p <sub>58</sub>	IV/V	G.
p <sub>10</sub>	a	IV	p <sub>59</sub>	VI	H.
p <sub>11</sub>	p	VII	p <sub>60</sub>	VII	I.
p <sub>13</sub>	p	III/IV	p <sub>61</sub>	VII	K.
p <sub>16</sub>	p	III	p <sub>63</sub>	V/VI	K.
p <sub>18</sub>	r	III/IV	p <sub>64</sub>	V/VI	L.
p <sub>19</sub>	e	IV/V	p <sub>65</sub>	II/III	P.
p <sub>21</sub>	e	IV/V	p <sub>67</sub>	III	T.
p <sub>22</sub>	e	III	p <sub>68</sub>	II/III	W.
p <sub>23</sub>	e	III	p <sub>70</sub>	VIII	X.
p <sub>24</sub>	r	IV	p <sub>71</sub>	III	Δ.
p <sub>25</sub>	e	IV	p <sub>72</sub>	IV	Θ.
p <sub>26</sub>	p	VI/VII	p <sub>74</sub>	III/IV	II.
p <sub>27</sub>	p	III	p <sub>76</sub>	VII	Ψ.
p <sub>30</sub>	p	III		VII	
p <sub>33</sub>	a	VI		III	
p <sub>36</sub>	e	VI		VI	
p <sub>37</sub>	e	III/IV		V	
p <sub>38</sub>	a	III/IV		IX	
p <sub>39</sub>	a	III		IX	
p <sub>40</sub>	p	III		X	
p <sub>41</sub>	a	VIII		X	

No.	Content	Uncials		Uncials		Uncials		Minuscules		Minuscules		Lectioŋes	
		Date	No.	Date	No.	Date	No.	Content	Date	No.	Content	Date	No.
054	e	VIII	0108	VII	0177	e	X	f <sup>1</sup>	1854	apcr	XI	185	
056	apc	X	0109	VII	0179	e	V1	f <sup>13</sup>	1859	acr	XIV	111	
058	e	IV	0110	VI	0180	e	VI	1	1877	apc	XIV	292	
059	e	IV/V	0111	VII	0181	e	IV	28	1881	apc	XIV	299	
060	e	VI	0112	V	0182	e	V	33	1962	p	XI	303	
061	p	V	0113	V	0186	e	V/V1	81	1984	p	XI	309	
062	p	V	0115	VIII	0187	e	VI	88	1985	p	XVI	313	
063	e	IX	0116	VIII	0189	a	IV	94	2020	r	XV	333	
064	e	VI	0117	IX	0190	e	VI	104	2042	r	XIV	374	
065	e	VI	0119	IX	0191	e	V1	181	2053	r	XIII	381	
066	a	VI	0120	IX	0193	e	V1	326	2065	r	XV	390	
067	e	VI	0121a	X	0196	e	IX	330	2073	r	XIV	397	
068	e	V	0121b	X	0197	e	IX	436	2081	r	XI	457	
070	e	VI	0122	IX	0201	e	V	451	2127	e	XII	547	
071	e	V/V1	0124	V7	0202	e	IV	565	2138	apcr	XI	597	
073	e	VI	0125	VI	0206	e	IV	614	2148	e	XIV	647	
074	e	VI	0126	IX	0207	e	IV	629	2174	e	XIV	680	
076	a	V/V1	0128	IX	0208	e	VI	630	2344	apcr	XI	833	
078	e	VI	0129	IX	0209	pc	V1	700	2412	r	XIV	847	
085	e	VI	0130	IX	0210	e	V1	892	2432	e	XIV	883	
086	e	VI	0141	IX	0214	e	IV	945	2492	e	XIII	950	
087	e	VI	0142	IX	0216	e	V	1006	2495	capcr	XIV/XV	1021	
088	e	VI	0133	IX	0217	e	V	1009				1197	
089	e	VI	0134	IX	0220	e	V	1010				1183a	
090	e	VI	0136	IX	0221	e	III	1071				11231	
092b	e	VI	0146	IX	0222	e	IV	1079				1298	
093	e	VI	0148	IX	0223	e	IV	1195				1386	
095	ac	V1	0155	IX	0225	e	V	1210				1385	
096	a	V1	0156	IX	0226	e	III	1241				1385	
097	a	V1	0159	IX	0230	e	IV	1242				1441	
098	a	V1	0162	IX	0234	e	III	1253				1441	
099	a	V1	0165	IX	0235	e	III	1344				1441	
0100	e	V1	0170	V	0236	e	V1/V11	1344				1579	
0102	e	V1	0171	V	0237	e	V	1355				1579	
0105	e	V1	0172	V	0238	e	V	1505				1589	
0106	e	V1	0175	V	0242	e	V	1515				1617	
0107	e	V1	0176	V	0244	e	V	1646				1637	
		V1	0176	V	0246	e	V	1739				1642	
		V1	0176	V	0250	e	V	1828				1663	

Versions Old Latin			Versions Old Latin			Versions Coptic		
Abb.	Content	Date	Abb.	Content	Date	Abb.	Content	Date
it <sup>a</sup>	e	IV	it <sup>ph</sup>	a	XII	cop <sup>sa</sup>	ea	III
it <sup>b</sup>	e	V	it <sup>r</sup>	e	VII	cop <sup>bo</sup>	ea	IV
it <sup>c</sup>	ea	IX	it <sup>q</sup>	e	VII	cop <sup>fay</sup>	ea	IV
it <sup>d</sup>	e	VII	it <sup>d</sup>	c	VII	cop <sup>ach</sup>	e	IV
it <sup>e</sup>	e	V	it <sup>r1</sup>	a	VIII/VIII	cop <sup>ach</sup> <sup>2</sup>	e	IV
it <sup>f</sup>	e	VII	it <sup>r2</sup>	e	VII			
it <sup>g</sup>	e	VII	it <sup>r3</sup>	e	VIII/IX			
it <sup>h</sup>	ea	V	it <sup>p</sup>	e	VII/VIII			
it <sup>i</sup>	e	V	it <sup>s</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>j</sup>	e	V	it <sup>s1</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>k</sup>	e	V	it <sup>s2</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>l</sup>	e	V	it <sup>s3</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>m</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>n</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t1</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>o</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t2</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>p</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t3</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>q</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t4</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>r</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t5</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>s</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t6</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>t</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t7</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>u</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t8</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>v</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t9</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>w</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t10</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>x</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t11</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>y</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t12</sup>	e	V			
it <sup>z</sup>	e	V	it <sup>t13</sup>	e	V			

Principal Symbols and Abbreviations  
(See Introduction, pages xli-xlvii)

- [ ] enclose a letter A, B, C, D which indicate the relative degree of certainty for the reading adopted in the text.
- [ ] enclose words which are regarded as having dubious textual validity.
- [ ] enclose passages which are regarded as later additions to the text, but which are of evident antiquity and importance.
- ( ) indicate that a witness or edition supports the reading for which it is cited, but with minor differences.
- \* the reading of the original hand of the manuscript.
- ? indicates that a witness is probably in support of a reading, but there is some doubt.
- ASV American Standard Version (1901)
- AV Authorized or King James Version (1611)
- BPz B.F.B.S. Greek N.T. (2nd edition, 1958)
- Boy Boyer Greek N.T. (4th edition, 1959)
- Byz the reading of the majority of Byzantine manuscripts.
- Byzpt a part of the Byzantine manuscript tradition.
- causal indicates the causal function of *ὅτι* in a given passage.
- con the conjecture of conjecture
- comm the commentary section of a manuscript where the reading differs from the accompanying Greek text.
- dash indicates a break in the syntax of a sentence.
- Datesarron<sup>a,c</sup>, etc different text used in the Punctuation Appendix when the text of an edition or version is so different that no correspondence can be indicated with the other editions and versions cited.
- direct indicates that *ὅτι* introduces direct discourse.
- ed edition(s) of a Church Father or a modern translation.
- ellipses words in an incomplete sentence which need to be supplied, indicated by three dots.
- exclamation not marked in Greek texts, but often used in translations to indicate rhetorical questions or emphatic statements.
- gr the Greek text of a bilingual manuscript (D.E.G.) where it differs from the corresponding text in the accompanying language. Also used to distinguish the Greek text of a Church Father from a version in another language.
- indirect indicates that *ὅτι* introduces indirect discourse.
- interrogative indicates that *ὅτι* introduces an interrogative construction.
- Jer Jerusalem Bible (French edition, 1958)
- lat the Latin version of a Greek Church Father.
- l a lectionary, identified by the superscript number following it.
- lm a lectionary in its Menologion.
- ls a lectionary in its Synaxarion.
- lpt an individual lectionary which contains a passage two or more times with readings differing from each other, hence listed as supporting a reading in "part".
- Let the reading of the majority of lectionaries in the Synaxarion and in the Menologion, when these agree.
- Let<sup>lm</sup> the Menologion readings when these differ from the Synaxarion or appear only in the Menologion.
- Luth Luther Version (revised, 1956)
- LXX the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament.
- major a major break in transition in the punctuation of a given passage.
- minor a minor break or transition in the punctuation of a given passage.
- mg textual evidence contained in the margin of a manuscript or version.
- ms, mss manuscript(s) of an ancient version, or of the writings of a Church Father, when different from the edited text.
- NEB The New English Bible N.T. (1961)
- Nes Nestle-Aland Greek N.T. (25th edition, 1963).
- none no break or transition in the punctuation of a given passage.
- paragraph a paragraph break or transition in contrast with a full sentence break.
- parens parenthesis marks used to enclose explanatory or supplementary material, or to indicate similarity of readings.
- RSV Revised Standard Version (1952).
- RV Revised or English Revised Version (1881).
- W-H Westcott-Hort Greek N.T. (1881).
- Zür Zurich Version (1942).
- Seg<sup>2</sup> Second Version (revised, 1962).
- sfc an abnormally exactly reproduced from the original.
- supp a portion of a manuscript supplied by a later hand where the original is missing.
- Theodotion Theodotion's text of the Greek Old Testament.
- TR Textus Receptus (Oxford edition, 1873)
- Tr A Translation for Translators (1966).
- ††† the text of a manuscript of the N.T. or of a Church Father when it differs from another reading given in the commentary section which accompanies the text.
- wid indicates apparent support for a given reading in a manuscript whose state of preservation makes complete verification impossible.

\* not cited in this edition in the Gospels.

# ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ

## Salutation

**1** Παύλος δοῦλος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, **2** ὃ προεπηγγέλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἀγίας, **3** περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ<sup>a</sup> τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, **4** τοῦ ὀρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει κατὰ πνεῦμα ἀγιοσύνης ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, ὃ δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν εἰς ὑπακοήν πείσεως ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσι ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ὅ ἐν οἷς ἔστε καὶ ὑμεῖς κλητοὶ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, **7** πᾶσι τοῖς ὄντι ἐν Ἰωάννῃ ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἀγίοις· χάρις ὑμῶν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

## Paul's Desire to Visit Rome

**8** Πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ περὶ πάντων ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὄλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. **9** μάρις γάρ μου ἔστιν ὃ

<sup>1</sup> **7** [B] ἐν Ἰωάννῃ p<sup>10</sup>,s<sup>10</sup>id<sup>4</sup> N A B C D<sup>ab</sup> K P Ψ 33 81 98 104 181 380 436 451 614 629 630 1241 1739<sup>xi</sup> 1877 1881 1962 1984 1985 2127 2492 2495 Byz Lect i<sup>er</sup>,d,dom,e,x,s VE syp<sup>h</sup>,h,pal cop<sup>ae</sup>,bo arm Origen<sup>sc</sup>,lae Ambrosiaster Augustine // omīi G 1739<sup>ms</sup> 1908<sup>ms</sup> it<sup>e</sup> Origen

<sup>2</sup> **7** [B] ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ p<sup>10</sup>,s<sup>10</sup> N A B C K P Ψ 81 88 104 181 380 436 451 614 629 630 1241 1739 1877 1881 1962 1984 1985 2127 2492 2495 Byz Lect i<sup>dem</sup>,x,s VE syp<sup>h</sup>,h,pal cop<sup>ae</sup>,bo arm Origen<sup>sc</sup>,lae Ambrosiaster<sup>ms</sup> Augustine // ἐν ἀγάπῃ θεοῦ G i<sup>er</sup>,d<sup>s</sup>, Ambrosiaster Pelagius // omīi D<sup>ab</sup> it<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup> <sup>2-3</sup> a minor, a none; (NEB) (Seg) // a none, a minor; WH Bov TR // a minor, a minor; TR (AV) RV ASV RSV Zür Luth Jer // a none, a none; NAS BPS

<sup>1</sup> ἀφωρισμένος...θεοῦ Ae 9:15; 13:2; Ga 1:15      <sup>2</sup> Ro 16:25-26; Tv 1:2      <sup>3</sup> τοῦ γενομένου  
...Δαυὶδ Mt 22:42; 2 Tm 2:8      κατὰ σάρκα Ro 9:5      <sup>4</sup> τοῦ ὀρισθέντος...νεκρῶν Ae 13:33  
<sup>5</sup> Ae 28:16-18; Ro 15:18; Ga 3:7, 9      <sup>7</sup> κλητοῖς ἀγίοις 1 Cor 12; 2 Cor 11      χάρις...Χριστοῦ  
Nu 6:25-26; 1 Cor 1:3; 2 Cor 1:3      <sup>8</sup> ἡ πίστις...κόσμῳ 1 Th 1:8      <sup>9</sup> μάρις...θεός Phd 1:8;  
1 Th 2:5, 10

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VI, 5-7 . . . . . v, 648	XI, 16 . . . . . v, 149	XVIII, 14 . . . . . iii, 605	XXIII, 9 . . . . . viii, 11
VI, 6 . . . . . iii, 612; viii, 245.	XI, 26-28 . . . . . iv, 130	XVIII, 16, 17 . . . . . i, 224, 263.	XXIII, 9, 17 . . . . . viii, 520
VI, 8 . . . . . iv, 15	XI, 26 . . . . . v, 149	XVIII, 20-23, 33 . . . . . i, 224.	XXIII, 11 . . . . . i, 561
VI, 9 . . . . . iii, 152; viii, 137.	XI, 26-XII, 5 . . . . . iv, 7	XVIII, 21 . . . . . iii, 317; viii, 245.	XXIII, 31 . . . . . i, 113
VI, 11 . . . . . vii, 187	XI, 28 . . . . . viii, 88	XVIII, 22 . . . . . i, 263; ii, 359.	XXIV, 16 . . . . . ii, 439
VI, 14 (box) . . . . . vii, 359	XI, 31 . . . . . iii, 53	XVIII, 23, 25 . . . . . vi, 18	XXIV, 22, 25 . . . . . i, 344
VI, 15 . . . . . i, 344	XII-XV . . . . . iii, 153	XVIII, 23 . . . . . ii, 359	XXIV, 64, 65 . . . . . iii, 689; iv, 34.
VI, 18 . . . . . i, 343; iii, 153	XII . . . . . vii, 474; 488	XVIII, 25, 27 . . . . . vii, 448.	XXV, 7 . . . . . iii, 151
VI, 19, 20 . . . . . iv, 62	XII, 1-3 . . . . . i, 7	XVIII, 25 . . . . . ii, 440	XXV, 21-23 . . . . . iii, 151
VI, VII . . . . . vii, 488	XII, 1 . . . . . v, 67	XVIII, 27 . . . . . i, 9, 64; ii, 428.	XXV, 21-24 . . . . . iv, 82
VII . . . . . i, 7	XII, 3 . . . . . i, 492; viii, 374; 479.	XIX . . . . . iii, 523; vii, 466; 488.	XXV, 21, 23 . . . . . i, 145
VII, 1 . . . . . iii, 152; iv, 151; viii, 238.	XII, 5 . . . . . iii, 153	XIX, 1-29 . . . . . iii, 153	XXV, 22, 23 . . . . . iii, 207
VII, 2, 3 . . . . . iii, 153	XII, 7 . . . . . v, 627	XIX, 1, 10 . . . . . i, 224	XXV, 23-26 . . . . . i, 493
VII, 2 . . . . . v, 646; vii, 343.	XII, 10-20 . . . . . iv, 19	XIX, 4 . . . . . iv, 130	XXV, 23 . . . . . v, 169; 512
VII, 3 . . . . . iv, 62	XIII, 8 . . . . . iv, 131	XIX, 10, 11 . . . . . iv, 458	XXV, 26 . . . . . iii, 151, 207.
VII, 6 . . . . . v, 197	XIII, 13, 14, 15, 17; i, 561.	XIX, 11 . . . . . iv, 42	XXV, 27-34 . . . . . iv, 113
VII, 7 . . . . . iv, 62	XIII, 14-16 . . . . . i, 7	XIX, 16-25 . . . . . i, 225	XXV, 31 . . . . . v, 632
VI, 16 . . . . . i, 263	XIII, 16 . . . . . vii, 472	XIX, 17 . . . . . iii, 387; iv, 518; vi, 277.	XXV, 34 . . . . . iii, 646; viii, 37.
VIII . . . . . vii, 474	XIV . . . . . iii, 153	XIX, 22 . . . . . i, 487	XXVI . . . . . vii, 474
VIII, 1 . . . . . v, 198; viii, 761.	XIV, 18 . . . . . iii, 153; v, 359; 512.	XIX, 23-29 . . . . . iii, 162	XXVI, 3 . . . . . viii, 472
VIII, 10, 12 . . . . . i, 204	XIV, 22 . . . . . i, 467	XIX, 23 . . . . . i, 224	XXVI, 4 . . . . . i, 259
VIII, 21 . . . . . v, 615; viii, 245; 760.	XIV, 23 . . . . . ii, 582	XIX, 24 . . . . . i, 8, 110, 263, 418; iii, 523; v, 544; 629, 636; vii, 448.	XXVI, 6-11 . . . . . iv, 19
IX . . . . . vii, 348; 504	XV, 5, 6 . . . . . i, 7	XIX, 24 . . . . . i, 8, 110, 263, 418; iii, 523; v, 544; 629, 636; vii, 448.	XXVI, 15 . . . . . iv, 517
IX, 1, 2 . . . . . iii, 651	XV, 5 . . . . . i, 422, 470; iv, 547; vi, 293.	XIX, 26 . . . . . v, 287	XXVII . . . . . v, 168
IX, 1 . . . . . ii, 387; viii, 85	XV, 6 . . . . . i, 146, 245; ii, 445; iii, 711; v, 510, 545.	XIX, 27, 28 . . . . . i, 223	XXVII, 1 . . . . . v, 63
	XV, 9 . . . . . vi, 325	XIX, 28 . . . . . viii, 598	XXVII, 9 . . . . . v, 169
	XV, 13-16 . . . . . viii, 246	XIX, 30-38 . . . . . iv, 79	XXVII, 15 . . . . . iv, 19
	XV, 13 . . . . . i, 561; iii, 153.	XIX, 31-33 . . . . . i, 135, 505.	XXVII, 20 . . . . . v, 169
	XV, 19 . . . . . i, 343	XIX, 37, 38 . . . . . v, 215	XXVII, 25 . . . . . iii, 646; viii, 37.
			XXVII, 27-29 . . . . . i, 562; v, 513
			XXVII, 27 . . . . . iv, 417
			XXVII, 28 . . . . . iii, 343

## ADDENDUM G

### Websites dealing with textual criticism<sup>1</sup>

<a href="http://csntm.org">csntm.org</a>	Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts. Executive Director, Daniel Wallace
<a href="http://nobts.edu/cntts">nobts.edu/cntts</a>	H. Milton Haggard Center for New Testament Textual Studies, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
<a href="http://ntgateway.com">ntgateway.com</a>	Website overseen by NT scholar Mark Goodacre; includes helpful section of text criticism links
<a href="http://evangelicaltextualcritism.blogspot.com">evangelicaltextualcritism.blogspot.com</a>	Forum to discuss biblical manuscripts and textual history from an evangelical perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> Recommended by Andreas J. Kostenberger, Benjamin L. Merkle, Robert L. Plummer, *Going Deeper with New Testament Greek* (Nashville, B & H Academic) 2016, page 35

## ADDENDUM H

### Excerpts from the Gospel of Thomas

The so-called, Gospel of Thomas is Gnostic text that supposedly is a collection of sayings and stories that are not found in the four Gospels of the canon. They are not written in any recognizable chronological or schematic order. Some do resemble sayings found in the synoptics. For example, Saying 9, is the Parable of the Sower. Others not only are different, but somewhat bizarre. Here are some examples:

#### Saying 7

Jesus said, “Blessed is the lion which the man shall eat, and the lion become man; and cursed is the man whom the lion shall eat and the lion become man.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Saying 11

Jesus said, “This heaven will pass away, and the one above it will pass away. The dead are not alive, and the living will not die. In the days when you consumed what is dead, you made it what is alive. When you come to dwell in the light, what will you do? On the day when were one you became two. But when you become two, what will you do?”<sup>2</sup>

#### Saying 114

Simon Peter said to them: “Let Mary go forth from among us, for women are not worthy of life.” Jesus said, “Behold, I shall lead her, that I may make her male, in order that she may become a living spirit like you males. For every woman who makes herself male shall enter the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> R. A. Baker, *How the New Testament Canon was Formed* ([www.churchhistory101.com](http://www.churchhistory101.com)), 2008, page 8

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit. page 4

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit. page 8 Many feminist scholars and their sympathizers criticize the integrity of the New Testament, claiming that it reflects the male-dominated culture of the early church. These scholars often use passages from the Gospel of Thomas in their arguments, but they studiously avoid Saying 114.



## ADDENDUM I

### TRANSLATION AND TRANSMISSION STYLES

**Three styles of transmission are displayed in current English versions: Formal Equivalency, Dynamic Equivalency, and Paraphrase.**

**Formal Equivalency** refers to the style of translation in which an effort is made to produce a word for word translation. Those who practice *Formal Equivalency* translation seek to produce as literal a translation as is possible. No Formal Equivalency version is totally a literal, word for word, translation. The differences between languages make it impossible to produce a readable, absolutely literal, word for word, translation.

The *King James Version*, the *American Standard Version*, the *New American Standard Version*, and the *English Standard Version*, are examples of this style of translation.

**Dynamic Equivalency** (also known as, **Functional Equivalency**) refers to a style of translation in which the translator is more concerned with communicating the meaning of the text rather than a word for word literal translation i.e., thought for thought, rather than word for word. Eugene Nida was the one who developed the Dynamic Equivalence Theory of Bible translation. He was a founding charter member of Wycliffe Bible Translators, and the translators associated with this ministry follow their founder's Dynamic Equivalency/Functional Equivalency style of Scripture production. In the glossary of *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Nida wrote that dynamic equivalence is the "quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the *response* of the *receptor* is essentially like that of the original receptors."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the reader of the Dynamic Equivalency version will have the same intellectual and emotional response to the text that the original Greek-speaking readers had when they read the Greek text of the New Testament. Especially important to those who follow this procedure is the heart response of the reader.

The *New International Version*, the *New Living Translation*, and the *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (in a modified form), are examples of this style of translation.

**Paraphrase** is not a translation but an unhindered interpretation – in one sense, it is a commentary, rather than a translation. The more popular contemporary paraphrases are the work of an individual, rather than the work of a committee. Those who produce a paraphrase interpret what a passage means, then in their own words, communicate that meaning without any accountability to the original language (which is at variance with the method used by responsible Dynamic Equivalency translators, who, even though not tied to a literal word for word translation, do seek to remain constrained by the original text). Paraphrases reflect the theology and subjective inclinations of those doing the work and should not be used to determine Scriptural truth. The most popular example of a paraphrase is Ken Taylor's *The Living Bible*. A popular paraphrase of more recent origin is Eugene Peterson's *The Message*.

Genesis 6:1-2 is an example of the difference between a translation and a paraphrase.

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<sup>1</sup> Nida, Eugene A., and Charles R. Taber. *The Theory and Practice of Translation, With Special Reference to Bible Translating*, (Leiden: Brill) 1969, p 200.

The NAS **translates** these verses, *Now it came about, when men began to multiply on the face of the land, and daughters were born to them, that the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves, whomever they chose.*

The 1971 version of the Living Bible **paraphrases** these same verses, *Now a population explosion took place upon the earth. It was at this time that beings from the spirit world looked upon the beautiful earth women and took any they desired as wives.*

The NAS is a literal translation of the Hebrew. The Living Bible is a paraphraser's interpretation of what he thinks the Hebrew means (i.e. Hebrew: *Sons of God*; Taylor: *beings from the spirit world*) . As stated above, a paraphrase is not a translation in any sense, but, for all practical purposes, a combination of interpretation and commentary on Scripture.

### **Excursus**

#### **A Comparison and Interweaving of Formal Equivalency and Dynamic Equivalency**

James R. White illustrates the difference in these two styles by calling attention to the French expression, "*j' ai le cafard.*" Literally, this means, "I have a cockroach." This is the *formal equivalency* translation. However, this is a French idiomatic expression that does not mean, literally, what the words say. The French use this expression to mean, "I am depressed," or "I have the blues." This is how the expression would be translated using *dynamic equivalency*.

Even though the translators of various versions commit themselves to one or the other of the above styles, all versions do slip over into the other style in some instances. Thus, the Dynamic Equivalency NIV translates by formal equivalency, in some instances. On the other hand, the Formal Equivalency NASB translates by dynamic equivalency in some passages.

In passages where there is more than one interpretation, the Dynamic Equivalency style requires the translator to choose one of the possible interpretations before he can produce his translation, whereas the Formal Equivalency translators do not interpret, but seek to produce what the original language says and allow the reader to determine the correct interpretation.

Thus, all Dynamic/Functional Equivalency versions, by the very nature of the process, are interpretations, since the process requires the translator to interpret the meaning before he can render the text into the receptor language. Usually, the interpretation is clear and beyond question, but not always so. Since the process usually is done by a committee of sincere linguists, there is accountability in how a passage is rendered.

In theory, Formal Equivalency versions seek to avoid interpretation, but render the text without interpretation – although in some instances, this cannot be done because the style of the Greek or Hebrew requires the translator to reach a conclusion as to the intent of the author before a rendering of the text can be undertaken.

## An Example of Ambiguity in Translation Style and the Cause Thereof

An illustration of the manner in which versions cross over from one style of translation to the other is demonstrated in how an assortment of versions have rendered I Timothy 3:11

**The Greek text reads:**

Γυναίικας	ὡσαύτως	σεμνάς	μὴ	διαβόλους	νηφαλίους	πιστάς	ἐν	πάσιν
Women	similarly	honorable	not	slanderers	temperate	faithful	in	all things
(wives)		(serious)		(accusers)	(sober)			

The term rendered as *woman* or *wife*, is the noun, *gune* (γυνή). In referring to husbands and wives, Greek expresses this in the manner that often is heard in colloquial English, i.e., *She is my woman - He is my man*. Depending on the context and modifying terms attached to the noun, the translator must determine whether the noun is to be translated as *woman* or *wife*.

Paul used the term, *gune* (γυνή) sixty-one times in his letters (If Hebrews is considered to be authored by Paul – if not, then he used the term sixty times).

- In 36 of these instances, the term refers to wives and is so indicated by the presence of the term, *husband*, or a possessive pronoun such as, *autou* (αὐτοῦ), “his.”
- In 24 instances it is clear that the term is to be rendered, *woman*. This is evident because of the context as well as the absence of any modifying terms, such as *husband*, or *his [wife]*.

This leaves I Timothy 3:11 as the one instance in which some decision must be made as to how the term should be rendered. The reason that a question concerning how the term is to be rendered in this verse is the context - it occurs in the list of requirements for overseers and deacons – otherwise it would be rendered in the usual manner, *woman*.

The Greek in this verse does not contain the term, *their*, nor is there any term for *husband* in the verse. Even so, some translators who have made the decision that the verse refers to the wives of deacons have inserted the term, *their* – thus it is rendered, *their wives*, or by some similar extended expression.

Those who have followed a strict Formal Equivalency style have rendered the term, *women*, because there is no grammatical reason to render it otherwise. This rendering forces the exegete to make a decision concerning to which women Paul refers:

- Is Paul referring to the wives of deacons,
- or is he referring to deaconesses, indicating that there are standards for women who occupy that role, even as there are standards for men who occupy the role of deacons?

The point being that Formal Equivalency leaves to the exegete the responsibility for making that decision, whereas those who follow other styles make the decision for the exegete.

**The following are examples of how some of the more popular versions render this verse:**

**Young's Literal Translation:** *Women -- in like manner grave, not false accusers, vigilant, faithful in all things.*

**New American Standard Version:** *Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.*

**Revised Standard Version:** *The women likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.*

**King James Version:** *Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.*

**New King James Version:** *Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things.*

**Holman Christian Standard Bible:** *Wives, too, must be worthy of respect, not slanderers, self-controlled, faithful in everything.*

**English Standard Version:** *Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things.*

**New International Version:** *In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.*

**New Living Translation:** *In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not slander others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do.*

### **A comparison of John 3:16 as rendered in several contemporary versions**

For thus	loved	(the) God	the world	so as	the son	
οὕτως γὰρ	ἠγάπηνησεν	ὁ θεὸς	τὸν κόσμον,	ὥστε	τὸν υἱὸν	
the only begotten	He gave	so that	all	the believing	into	Him not
τὸν μονογενῆ	ἔδωκεν,	ἵνα	πᾶς	ὁ πιστεύων	εἰς	αὐτὸν μὴ
may perish	but have	life	eternal. <sup>2</sup>			
ἀπόληται	ἀλλ' ἔχη	ζωὴν	αἰώνιον			

1. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16 ASV)
2. For God had such love for the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever has faith in him may not come to destruction but have eternal life. (John 3:16 BBE)
3. "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 CSB)

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<sup>2</sup>There is legitimate debate as to how the term, αἰώνιον, should be rendered. The idea behind this adjective is a time the end of which is not known or set. Thus, terms such as, *eternal, unending, everlasting, age-during, etc.* have been used in an effort to render the term. The noun form of this word is, αἰών, which often is rendered *age* (examples: Matthew 12:32; 13:39; 28:20). At other places in Scripture the term is rendered *eternity, forever, etc.* (examples: Matthew 6:13; 21:19; II Peter 3:18).

4. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16 ERV)*
5. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 ESV)*
6. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16 KJV)*
7. *"This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.(John 3:16 MSG)*
8. *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NAS)*
9. *For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NET)*
10. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIB)*
11. *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NIV)*
12. *"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 NLT)*
13. *For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 RSV)*
14. *For God loved the world so much that he gave his only son so that anyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16 TLB)*
15. *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 TNIV)*
16. *for God did so love the world, that His Son -- the only begotten -- He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during. (John 3:16 YLT)*

## **Examples of Bibles Currently Available and the Style of Rendering**

### **Formal Equivalency Versions**

King James Version (1611)	New King James Version (1982)
Douay-Rheims (1610)	Green's Literal Translation (1985)
Young's Literal Translation (1862)	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
Revised Version (1885)	New American Standard Bible (1995)
American Standard Version (1901)	English Standard Version (2001)
Revised Standard Version (1952)	Lexham English Bible (2011, 2012)

### **Moderate use of dynamic equivalence**

Holman Christian Standard Bible <sup>3</sup>	New English Translation
Modern Language Bible	New International Version
New American Bible	Today's New International Version
The Jerusalem Bible	

### **Extensive use of dynamic equivalence**

Complete Jewish Bible	New English Bible
Contemporary English Version	New Jerusalem Bible
God's Word Translation	New Living Translation
Good News Bible	Revised English Bible

### **Extensive use of paraphrase**

The Message (2002)
The Living Bible (1971)
The New Testament in Modern English (1958- 1972)

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<sup>3</sup> See earlier section describing the Holman Study Bible.

## ADDENDUM J

### Reaction to the NKJV by KJV Loyalists

The following is excerpted from an article by Chick Publications and is an example of how some KJV loyalists reacted to the NKJV.

#### Is Jesus "God's Son" or "God's Servant?"

#### Do you see a difference between these two Bible versions?

King James Version	New King James Version
Acts 3:25 - Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.	Acts 3:25 - You are the sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.
Acts 3:26 - Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.	Acts 3:26 - To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from his iniquities.

In the KJV, we find that Jesus is God's Son. In the NKJV, we find that He is God's servant. These are clearly not the same! The Greek word found in the text here is *pais*. It can be used in Greek for either "son" or "servant." So, which one is correct here?

The solution is simple: look at the context in which it is used. In English, we have many words that can have more than one meaning. If a translator, going from English to another language, came across the word "bear," he would have a choice of meanings. But it wouldn't take rocket science to figure out which one to use.

If the passage described a man with a heavy burden, the translator would understand that the man is going to "bear," or "carry" the burden. If, on the other hand, the passage described a hairy beast climbing a tree, the translator would understand the correct meaning here applies to a forest-dwelling animal that will eat nearly anything it finds. It's not really very hard.

Now look at the Bible passage above. What is being discussed?

- "children of the prophets"
- "covenant which God made with our fathers"
- "in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed."

It's clear, isn't it? The passage is talking about "children," and "fathers" and "seed." The word *pais* means "son." But the New King James translators chose "servant." Why? They were not

alone. The New World Translation, created by the Jehovah's Witnesses who deny the deity of Jesus, translated this word "servant" also. So do the NIV, ASV, NASB and other modern Bible translations.

Could it be that these modern translators disagree that *pais* can be translated "son?" No, the NKJV committee translates this very word as "boy," "child" or "son" in Matthew 2:16; 17:18; 21:15; Luke 2:43; 9:42; and John 4:51. Yet they refused to translate the word as "son" in this powerful sermon where Peter presents Jesus as Messiah and Son of God.

One has to ask, why were these translators so determined to deny the deity of Jesus in this passage? Is this a Bible you can trust with your eternal destiny?<sup>1</sup> 135

How should we respond to these charges? Were the translators of the NKJV seeking to downplay the divinity of Christ — have the "NIV, ASV, NASB and other modern Bible translations," ...somehow been guilty of denying or downgrading the Divinity of Christ? Have the NIV, ASV, NASB, and NKJV thrown in their lot with the Jehovah's Witnesses? How valid are the charges the above articles levels against the NKJV?

First note that the Greek word, υἱός (huios) which normally is rendered, *son*, is the term used in Acts 3:25. Further note that the KJV does not render this Greek term as, *sons*, but rather as, *children*. The NKJV, on the other hand, does accurately and literally render the term, *sons*.

Why did the KJV translators feel that they had the liberty to render the term by an English word other than one that translated literally, the term, υἱός? Could it not be that they thought that the English reading public would be more in tune with this "dynamic equivalency" rendering, *children* — paying attention to the audience, so to speak.

The critical article quoted above is correct in stating that παις (*pais*) can be rendered as *son* or *servant*. However, the matter is not that simple. The term does not necessarily mean, *son*, and one would have to determine the context to see if it should be so rendered. The term primarily means, *child*, either male or female — not *son* — unless surrounding context defines the person referred to be a male child. The term, as noted, also is used to refer to a servant, male or female; it also is used to describe a devotee of a deity.

Also, the analogy of the word, *bear*, meaning either to carry something or the name of an animal, is not an appropriate analogy for this discussion. That analogy is based on the spelling of a word — two words spelled the same way. However, the question concerning the best rendering of παις is a judgment call as to which rendering is most likely the sense or shade of meaning that the speaker sought to present to his audience. Child and servant do have a relationship — they are subject to a higher authority and a good servant has a child-like quality in his

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subservience. It is worth noting that slaves often are viewed as somewhat child-like in their dependency, powerlessness, and serving a master as a child would serve a parent.

If Peter wanted to emphasize that this one of whom he spoke was the *Son of God*, why did he not use the very clear term, υἱός (*huios*)? Perhaps it was because of the line of thought of which this verse is a link in the chain — the prophet like Moses that God would raise up and this one of whom Peter spoke was/is that one — thus, the term, παῖς, which is appropriate to use for a prophet would be more fitting. For that matter, the audience to whom Peter spoke would be baffled and probably put off if he had used the term, υἱός. That would have been an intellectual challenge to them — thinking of this one as the *Son of God* — which would have detracted from Peter's argument. So, we might assume that Peter used the ambiguous, παῖς, which would not have offended anyone and in an English translation of the Greek that sense of indefiniteness would be appropriate.

We might wish that the NKJV translators (as well as translators of other modern versions), had rendered παῖς as *child*, rather than, *servant*, but knowing the theologically conservative background of the translators and their commitment to the Divinity of Christ, it is not appropriate to accuse them of lessening the emphasis on the Divinity of Christ.