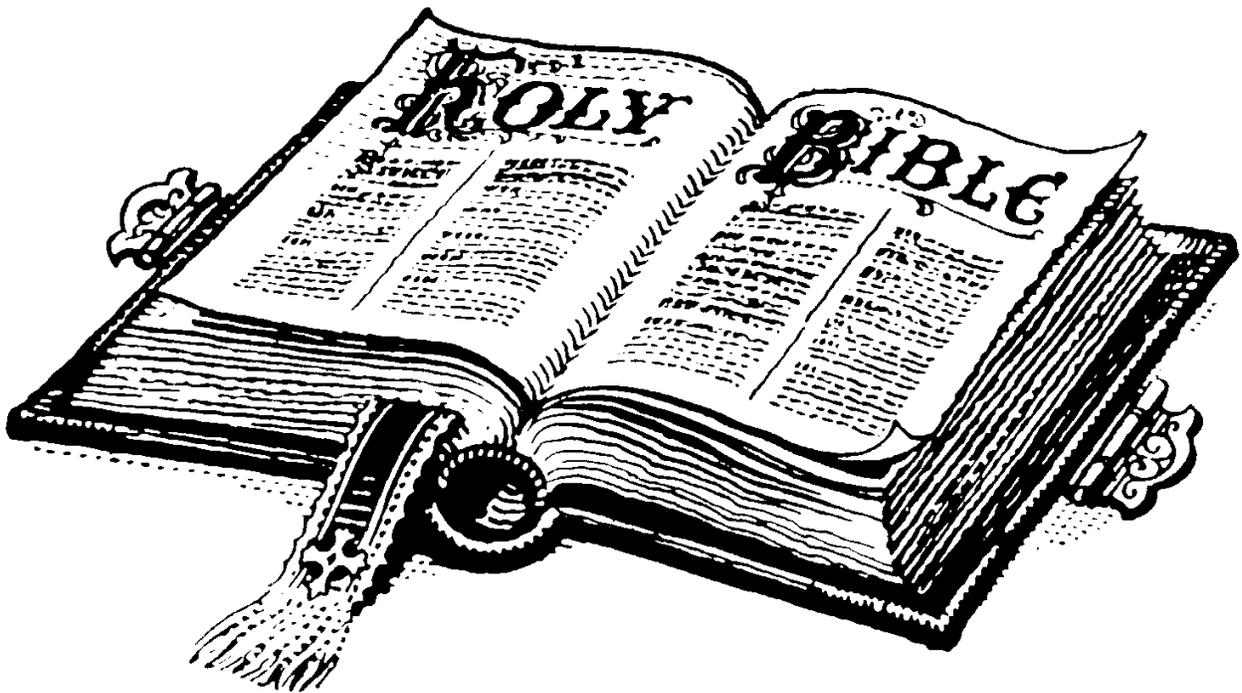


From Inspiration To Translation

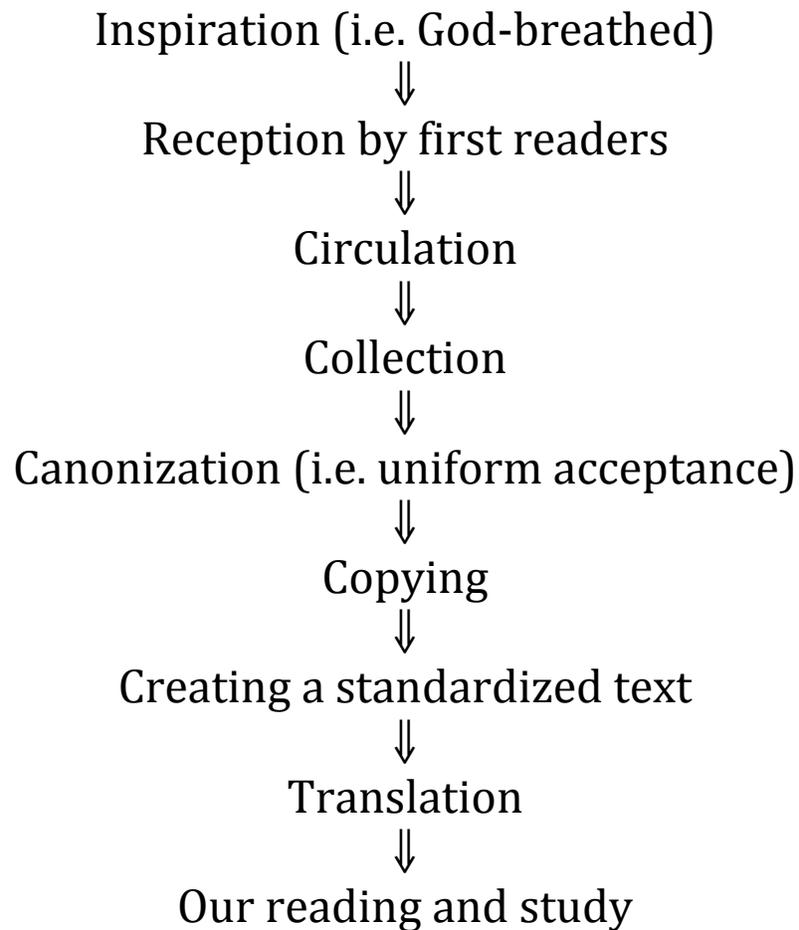


A Study Of How We Got The Bible

Sunday Morning Class, Winter 2013

Booklet By Jeremy Jones

Chain Of Communication Between God And Man



How We Got The Bible

Section One: From Inspiration To Collection

- A. Purpose Of This Study.
 - a. To find out where the collection of 66 books we know as the Bible came from and what confidence we can have that the collection is inspired.
 - b. To study the evidence which points to the words we read being the same as the inspired words first given, after a writing and collecting process which lasted 1600 years and a transmitting process which has spanned over 1900 years.
- B. Purpose of Today's Lesson.
 - a. To learn of the materials and languages used in writing to the first readers.
 - b. To examine the Biblical evidence of the circulation and collection of the books of the Bible.
- I. THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE WRITTEN WORD.
 - A. **2 Peter 1:20-21:** Men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.
 - B. **1 Corinthians 2:8-13:** God's mind in human language. Spiritual thoughts put into Spiritual words.
 - C. **2 Timothy 3:16-17:** All Scripture (i.e. writing) is inspired by God and is profitable to meet man's every need in service to God.
 - D. **Matthew 5:18-19:** Every jot and tittle of the Scriptures carries with it the authority of God.
 - E. **2 Thessalonians 2:15:** Stand firm in what was taught orally or by letters.
- II. HISTORY OF WRITING
 - A. Earliest known writing: Egyptians 5000-4000 B.C. (Note: Since I originally prepared this material the Jiahu inscriptions on Tortise shells in China have been discovered and confirmed dating to 6600 BC)
 - B. Other Examples of ancient writing: In Babylon, inscriptions of King Sargon I (2350 B.C.); also writing of Sumerians. Ebla tablets (2300 B.C.)- Northern Syria. Since 1974, 17,000 tablets have been unearthed. They contain law codes similar to Deuteronomy.
 - C. Significance: It was formerly held that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch (i.e. the first 5 books of the OT) because writing hadn't been invented yet.
- III. WRITING MATERIALS
 - A. Stone: Earliest writing material almost everywhere. Example: The Ten Commandments (**Ex. 31:18, 34:1, 28**)

- B. Clay: Predominant in Assyria and Babylonia. (**Eze. 4:1**)
- C. Wood: Tablets of wood frequently used. (**Isa. 30:8; Hab. 2:2**)
- D. Leather: Animal skins played an important role in the history of the writing of the Bible. May be implied in **Jer. 36:23**- use of penknife.
- E. Papyrus: From plant growing along the Nile River in Egypt. Use dates back to 3500 B.C. Its rolls were the “books” of the ancient world until the 1st or 2nd century. An average roll was 30 feet long and 8-9 inches wide. Writing was usually only done on one side (note **Rev. 5:1**). NT was penned on papyrus (**2 Jn. 12; 3 Jn. 13**).
- F. Vellum or Parchment: Developed by King Eumenes (197-158 B.C.). He improved the process of treating the skins. (**2 Tim. 4:13**). Vellum is the skin of calves and antelope, while parchment is the skin of sheep and goats. Vellum was distinguished from leather in that it was not tanned. Used for more than 1,000 years in copying the NT. Much more durable than papyrus.

IV. LANGUAGES OF THE BIBLE

- A. Hebrew: Almost all of the OT was written in Hebrew. It is written left to right, contains no vowels, has different phonetics than ours, and has a vocabulary totally unrelated to English. **Psalm 119** is sectioned off by the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
- B. Aramaic: A kindred language to Hebrew spoken in Assyria and Babylon. It was used by the Jews after captivity to such an extent that there was a need for a translator (**Neh. 8:8**). Aramaic sections of Scripture include **Daniel 2:4b-7:28, Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-16, Jeremiah 10:11**. This was the language of Jesus and His followers as seen in numerous examples. (**Mk. 5:41, 7:34, Mt. 27:46, 1 Cor. 16:22, also the word “Abba” (i.e. father) in Mk. 14:36, Rom. 8:15, and Gal. 4:6**).
- C. Greek: “Koine” or “common” Greek was used, not classical Greek. For many years people believed it was some sort of special “Holy Spirit Greek” since no other literature was found written in its style. It was the universal language of the 1st century.

V. CIRCULATION AND COLLECTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Pentateuch (Law of Moses)
 - 1. **Exodus 24:3-4**: Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord.
 - 2. **Deuteronomy 31:9-13, 24-26**: A reading of the Law was done every seven years. Original was kept in the ark of the covenant, and a copy placed nearby.

3. **Joshua 8:32; Ezra 7:6:** Joshua wrote it on stones and Ezra the scribe copied it centuries later. It is believed that Ezra was one of the most influential in making and preserving many high quality copies.

B. Prophets and Writings: Indications of circulation and collection.

1. **2 Samuel**- Compare chapter **22:1ff** with **Psalms 18**
2. **1 Chronicles**- 16:8-36; Ps. 105:1-15
3. **2 Chronicles**- Recognizes Psalms (29-30), Isaiah (32-33), Lamentations (35:25), and Kings (20:34, 35:26-27).
4. **Proverbs**- copies made by men of Hezekiah (25:1)
5. **Jeremiah**- recognizes Micah (26:16-20)
6. **Ezekiel**- Recognizes Job (14:14, 20)
7. **Daniel**- Recognizes Jeremiah among “the books.”

VI. CIRCULATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. **2 Peter 1:12-15:** Peter wrote so that his message would be preserved after his death.
- B. **1 Timothy 5:17-18:** Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (Lk. 10:7); same authoritative weight as O.T. passage cited.
- C. **Colossians 4:15-16:** Laodiceans and the Colossians were to read each other’s letters.
- D. **Revelation 1:4,11:** Letter to be circulated among the seven churches of Asia.
- E. **Luke 1:1-4:** Refers to other eyewitness biographies of Jesus already written (Matthew, John).
- F. **1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:1-2; James 1:1, 1 Peter 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1, Jude 1:** Many congregational letters were written to a larger readership than one congregation. Many general letters were written.
- G. **2 Peter 3:14-16:** Peter refers to a collection of Paul’s letters.

Arrangements Of The Old Testament Books

The Hebrew Old Testament Arrangement*

The Law (Torah)	The Prophets (Nebhiim)	The Writings (Kethubhim)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genesis 2. Exodus 3. Leviticus 4. Numbers 5. Deuteronomy 	<p>A. <i>Former Prophets:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joshua 2. Judges 3. Samuel 4. Kings <p>B. <i>Latter Prophets:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isaiah 2. Jeremiah 3. Ezekiel 4. The Twelve 	<p>A. <i>Poetical Books:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psalms 2. Proverbs 3. Job <p>B. <i>Five Rolls (Megiloth):</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Song of Songs 2. Ruth 3. Lamentations 4. Esther 5. Ecclesiastes <p>C. <i>Historical Books</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daniel 2. Ezra-Nehemiah 3. Chronicles

*This is the arrangement of modern Jewish editions of the Old Testament. Cf. *Holy Scriptures, According to the Masoretic Text*; and Rudolf Kittel and Paul E. Kahle (eds.), *Biblia Hebraica*.

There were many other arrangements, including ones that combined certain books (i.e. Judges/Ruth and Jeremiah/Lamentations) to create a 22 or 24 book Arrangement based on the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

Modern English Arrangement*

The Law- 5 Books (Penteteuch)	Poetry- 5 Books	Major Prophets- 5 Books
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Genesis 2. Exodus 3. Leviticus 4. Numbers 5. Deuteronomy 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job 2. Psalms 3. Proverbs 4. Ecclesiastes 5. Song Of Solomon 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Isaiah 2. Jeremiah 3. Lamentations 4. Ezekiel 5. Daniel
<p style="text-align: center;">History- 12 Books</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joshua 2. Judges 3. Ruth 4. I Samuel 5. II Samuel 6. I Kings 7. II Kings 8. I Chronicles 9. II Chronicles 10. Ezra 11. Nehemiah 12. Esther 	<p style="text-align: center;">Minor Prophets- 12 Books</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hosea 2. Joel 3. Amos 4. Obadiah 5. Jonah 6. Micah 7. Nahum 8. Habakkuk 9. Zephaniah 10. Haggai 11. Zechariah 12. Malachi 	

*This arrangement originated from Jerome's work on the Latin Vulgate.

The Old Testament Apocrypha

Type Of Book	Revised Standard Version	Douay (200 BC-AD 100)
Didactic	1. The Wisdom Of Solomon (c. 30 BC)	Book Of Wisdom
	2. Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) (c.132 BC)	Ecclesiastes
Religious	3. Tobit (c. 200 BC)	Tobias
Romance	4. Judith (c. 150 BC)	Judith
Historic	5. I Esdras (c. 150-100 BC)	III Esdras*
	6. I Maccabees (c. 110 BC)	I Maccabees
	7. II Maccabees (c. 110-70 BC)	II Maccabees
Prophetic	8. Baruch (c. 150-50 BC)	Baruch chapters 1-5
	9. Letter Of Jeremiah (c. 300-100 BC)	Baruch chapter 6
	10. II Esdras (c. AD 100)	IV Esdras*
Legendary	11. Additions To Esther (140-130 BC)	Esther 10:4-16:24
	12. Prayer of Azariah (Song of Three Young Men; from 2nd or 1st century BC)	Daniel 3:24-90
	13. Susana (2nd or 1st century BC)	Daniel 13
	14. Bel and the Dragon (c. 100 BC)	Daniel 14
	15. Prayer of Manasseh (2nd or 1st century BC)	Prayer of Manasseh*

*Books not accepted as Canonical at the Council of Trent

Later III Maccabees, IV Macabees, and Psalm 151 also became part of the official list of OT Apocrypha. These three books were never accepted by the Catholic Church.

How We Got The Bible

Section Two: Canonization And Copying Of The Old Testament

Introduction: Purpose of this lesson:

- How did the 39 books come to be considered as inspired?
- What are the Apocrypha and should they be accepted or rejected?
- What evidence is there that the OT was faithfully copied after it was inspired?

I. IMPORTANT TERMS IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF BOOKS AS INSPIRED

- A. Inspiration- literally “God-breathed.” Jesus often made an argument from only one word. The implication is that EVERY word of Scripture is verbally inspired. **(Mk. 12:26-27; Jn. 10:34-35)**
- B. Canon- from Greek “kanon”- a rod, ruler, staff, or measuring rod; metaphorically a standard or norm **(cp. Gal. 6:16)**. The books that are officially accepted as inspired. Term first used by Athenasius (AD 296-373).
- C. Homologomena- literally “one word” or agreement- those books accepted by virtually everyone as inspired from the beginning.
- D. Antilogomena- literally “spoken against”- those books which at one time or another have been disputed as to their inspiration. Often due to doubts about authorship or style, or because heretics and false teachers used the books as the basis for their false teachings.
- E. Pseudopigrapha- literally “false writings”. These books were written under pen names of Biblical characters (i.e. Baruch). This was often to add credibility to their messages. These books were rejected as uninspired by virtually everyone from the beginning.
- F. Apocrypha- literally “hidden or secret”. Term derived from either a positive or a negative opinion. Positive- books for the spiritually enlightened. Negative- books in which it is difficult to find inspiration. Most of the OT apocrypha are accepted by some (Catholic church), while all of the NT apocrypha are rejected by all.

II. SEEING THE OLD TESTAMENT AS AN ARRANGED COLLECTION OF BOOKS

- A. See chart #1 in lesson book.

III. FIVE TESTS OF CANONICITY

- A. Authoritative? Does the book speak with the authority of God? Is there a “Thus saith the Lord” or an “It is written?”
- B. Prophetic? Was the book written by a recognized man of God? Do his words and deeds fulfill the “test of a prophet?” **(Deut. 18:15-22)**

- a. Are his words really from God?
 - b. Do the things he foretells come true?
- C. Authentic? Does the book tell the truth compared to previously received revelation? Is it consistent (with itself and other writers) or are there contradictions?
- D. Dynamic? Does the book come with the life-changing power of God?
- E. Reception? Has the book been received as inspired by the first AND later readers? When was it accepted? What were reasons for hesitation if it was debated?

IV. HISTORICAL CONFIRMATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CANON

- A. Prologue to Ecclesiasticus (132 BC)- refers to the threefold division of the canon recognized by his grandfather, Jesus ben Sirach in about 200 BC. *“Whereas many and great things have been delivered to us by the Law and the Prophets and the others that have followed in their steps...”*
- B. Jesus Christ (AD 30)- Mentioned a twofold and threefold division of the canon (**Lk. 24:27, 44**) and made a statement reflecting the beginning and ending of what He recognized as the canon, Genesis to 2 Chronicles (**Mt. 23:35**).
- C. Philo (AD 40)- referred to the *“Law, Prophets, and hymns and others which foster perfect knowledge and piety.”*
- D. Josephus (AD 37-95)- *“We have not tens of thousands of books, discordant and conflicting, but only twenty-two containing the record of all time, which have been justly believed to be divine...”* *“From Artaxerxes (the successor of Xerxes) until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit because the exact succession of prophets ceased. But what faith we have placed in our own writings is evident by our conduct; for though so long a time has now passed, no one has dared to add anything to them, or to take anything from them, or to alter anything in them.”*
- E. Council of Jamnia (AD 90)- formal recognition of Hebrew canon (though it had been the same since hundreds of years before Christ).

V. THE ANTILOGOMENA OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Song Of Solomon- Appeared too sensual in nature. The physical attraction of the body is put in “bold” terms (**4:1-8, 5:9-16, 7:1-13**). *“God has placed this Song in the canon in order to teach us the purity and the sanctity of the estate of marriage which He himself established from the beginning”*- E.J. Young

- B. Ecclesiastes- Appeared to have too pessimistic a view of life. Called “the Song of Skepticism.” These critics missed the conclusion **(12:13)**. Many charged that it promoted Epicureanism, but passages thought to teach this are taken out of context.
- C. Esther- The name of God is absent from the book. However, His providence is found throughout **(i.e. 4:14)**, and we find the salvation of the Jews so that the promise to Abraham could be fulfilled.
- D. Ezekiel- Jewish school of Shammai thought that there was a contradiction with the Law of Moses. No specific examples have stood the test of investigation. Rather the conflict is with *their interpretation* of the books.
- E. Proverbs- Said to contradict itself. The Talmud says, “*The book of Proverbs also they sought to hide, because it’s words contradicted one to another*” **(26:4-5; an example of a supposed contradiction)**.

VI. THE BOOKS OF THE APOCRYPHA

- A. See chart #2 in the lesson book.

VII. SHOULD THE APOCRYPHA BE ACCEPTED?

- A. Not inspired- most claim to be of man’s wisdom rather than inspiration (see Ecclesiasticus)-“*My grandfather, Jesus, when he had much given himself to the reading of the Law and the Prophets, and other books of our fathers, and had gotten therein good judgment, was drawn on also himself to write something pertaining to learning and wisdom.*”
- B. Not prophetic- no prophets of God recognized during the time period of their writing (approx. 400 BC to 3 AD).
- C. Not authentic- based on teachings and predictions made.
 - a. **2 Maccabees**- prayer for the dead; buying atonement **(12:39-45)**; intercession of saints in prayer **(15:12-16)**.
 - b. **Tobit**- Historically inaccurate: Tobit’s life covers 931 BC to 722 BC, yet his age is 112! **Chapters 6, 11** (fish story); Alms save **(12:8-10)**.
 - c. **Judith**- Historically inaccurate: Nebuchadnezzar, King of Nineveh **(1:1)**; He is also given to exaggeration **(10:18-19)**.
 - d. **Ecclesiasticus**- Contains untruths **(3:14ff, 29ff; 42:14)**; includes trivial matters (i.e. table manners in **31:12-24**)
 - e. **Bel and the Dragon**- legendary instead of real. Story of the food for Bel. Daniel kills a dragon with a “hairball.”

- D. Not Dynamic-legendary rather than life-changing.
- E. Not received- the first and all early readers understood them to be man's work, not God's. They were accepted by the Catholic church in 1546 at the council of Trent in response to Protestants.

VIII. THE COPYING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

- A. Four oldest manuscripts of our OT text:
 - a. Cairo Codex- (AD 895)- Former and latter prophets.
 - b. Leningrad Codex- (AD 916)- Contained the prophets.
 - c. British Museum Codex- (10th century)- Contained the Pentateuch
 - d. Leningrad Codex- (AD 1008) – Contains entire OT
- B. Why so few manuscripts?
 - a. Animal skins are highly perishable
 - b. War- Jerusalem was conquered 47 times from 1800 BC to AD 1948
 - c. Ceremonial burial of worn out manuscripts
 - d. Masoretes made standardized text and destroyed manuscripts with variants.
- C. How can we be sure of the OT text?
 - a. Strict scribal techniques of the Masoretes (AD 500-1000) They numbered words, letters, and verses of each book. They counted how many times each letter was used in each book. They calculated the middle verse, middle word, and middle letter of each book. They then checked these things EVERY TIME to ensure their manuscripts were accurate. These rules were officially put in place and practiced during the Talmudic period of 300 BC-AD 500. (See addendum to chapter on next page).
 - b. Septuagint (LXX)- Greek translation of the OT. (300-200 BC) Got its name from the 70 translators who translated the Pentateuch. This was the Bible used by Jesus and His Apostles. It closely parallels the Masoretic text.
 - c. The Dead Sea Scrolls- Found in 1947. Found in a sanctuary of the Essenes, a group of monastic hermit-like Jews who lived in the desert and followed a strict Jewish lifestyle to be free from the influences of the Romans. They contained scrolls from every book except Esther. One complete Isaiah scroll dates from 100 BC. The amazing thing is that there is NO SIGNIFICANT VARIATIONS from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the Masoretic manuscripts- a transmission period of 1000 years!

Lesson 2 Addendum
Copying Rules For The Talmudic Period (300 BC to AD 500)

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

The New Testament Apocrypha

Apocryphal Gospels	Apocryphal Acts	Apocryphal Epistles	Apocryphal Apocalypses
<i>Infancy Gospels</i>	Acts of John	The Letter to the Laodiceans	The Apocalypse of Peter
The Protoevangelium of James	Acts of Paul	Third Corinthians	The Apocalypse of Paul
The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew	Acts of Peter	The Letter of the Corinthians to Paul	The Apocalypse of James
The Life of John The Baptist	Acts of Andrew	The Epistles of Clement	The Apocalypse of Thomas
The History of the Carpenter Joseph	Acts of Thomas	The Epistle of Barnabas	The Apocalypse of Stephen
<i>Jewish- Christian Gospels</i>	Acts of the Martyrs	The Letter of Polycarp to the Trallians	The Apocryphon of John
Gospel of the Ebionites	Acts of the Twelve	The Letter of Ignatius to the Philippians	The Apocalypse of the Virgin Mary
Gospel of the Hebrews	Acts of Timothy		The Shepherd of Hermas
Gospel of the Nazarenes			
<i>Heretical Gospels</i>			
Gospel of Thomas			
Gospel of Peter			
Gospel of Nicodemus			
Gospel of Judas			
Gospel of Mary (Magdalene)			

This list is by no means exhaustive. Gnostics and other heretical sects wrote numerous books and often attributed them to Biblical authors. These were *never* widely accepted for numerous reasons. Even a quick read of these works will show they are of a different character and nature of the canonical books.

How We Got The Bible

Section 3: The Canonization And Copying Of The New Testament

Introduction: Purpose Of this lesson

- This lesson is intended to explain the process whereby the inspiration of the 27 books of the New Testament was recognized and how the words of God have been preserved for us through the copying process.
- To inform about the overwhelming number of manuscripts that are available that assure us of the fact we can know the original words of the New Testament.

I. THE CANONIZATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

A. Review of Important Terms

1. inspiration- “God-breathed”
2. canon- accepted list of inspired books
3. homologomena- books accepted by virtually everyone
4. antilogomena- books disputed by some but later universally accepted
5. pseudopigrapha- books rejected by virtually everyone
6. apocrypha- books that are accepted by some, rejected by most
7. autographs- the original copies of the books.

B. Review of criteria in accepting a book as inspired (canonical)

1. Authoritative? Is there a, “Thus saith the Lord?”
2. Prophetic? Who wrote the book?
3. Authentic? Does the book contradict accepted books?
4. Dynamic? Is there a life-changing message?
5. Reception? Was the book received by original and early reader?

C. New Testament recognition of Canon

1. Paul recognized Luke’s work (**1 Timothy 5:18; cp. Luke 10:7**)
2. Peter recognized Paul’s work (**2 Peter 3:15-16**)

- D. Recognition of the canon (See chart #4)
1. By individuals- All books but 3 John quoted *before* AD 150. All books named as authentic by AD 215 except 2 Timothy, Philemon, James, 2 Peter, and 2 and 3 John.
 2. By various canons- Marcion made a canon to fit his beliefs in AD 140. The first *legitimate* canon was the Muratorian (AD 170) that included all but Hebrews, James, and 1 and 2 Peter. The Baracoccio canon (AD 206) included all but Revelation. The canon of Athanasius (AD 367) included our present 27 accepted books.
 3. By translations- Old Latin (AD 200) had the same books as the Muratorian canon. Old Syriac (170 AD) had all but 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation.
 4. By councils- Council of Nicea (AD 325) recognized all but James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Jude. Future councils recognized our present 27 Books.
- E. The New Testament Antilogomena
1. Hebrews- Question of authorship. In the East, it was considered to be written by Paul and was readily received. In the West, the authorship was undecided and this made people unsure about it. Also, the Montanist sect based their false doctrine on it.
 2. James- There was some question of authorship (which James?) but main question was authenticity. Question was also how to reconcile James' teaching of salvation by works with Paul's teaching about salvation by faith. Martin Luther put it at the end of his Bible, calling it a "right strawy epistle."
 3. 2 Peter- Question of authorship. Difference in style with 1 Peter which had been readily accepted (including biographical details). A closer look revealed many similarities.
 4. 2 and 3 John- Question of authorship. These short letters were of a private nature and enjoyed much more limited circulation. Author refers to himself as "the elder" rather than "the apostle." Even so, these books were recognized quicker than 2 Peter was.
 5. Jude- Question of authenticity. It refers to 2 pseudopigraphal books, The Book of Enoch (**vss. 14-15**) and the Assumption of Moses (**vs. 9**). However Jude was not the only one to quote uninspired sources. Paul quoted Aratus (**Acts. 17:28**), Menander (**1 Cor. 15:32**), and Epimenides (**Tit. 1:12**).

6. Revelation- Question of Authenticity. The Montanist sect developed a millennial doctrine from the book. The early Christians resolved the problem realizing the problem was with the interpreters, NOT the book.

F. THE BOOKS OF THE APOCRYPHA

1. See chart #5 in the lesson book.

G. PROBLEMS WITH THE NT APOCRYPHA

1. Apocryphal Gospels- Fill in stories about what happened in Jesus' early years and ministry. These are not in keeping with the revealed nature, character, and teachings of Jesus.
 - Describe a mischievous young Jesus
 - Describe the "miraculous" birth of Mary.
 - Often contain "secret sayings" of Jesus. (**Gospel of Thomas**)
 - Often revise the Biblical accounts. (**i.e. making Judas a hero in "The Gospel of Judas**)
2. Apocryphal Acts- Contain legendary journeys, heroics, miracles, and teachings of the Apostles and the early church. These disagree with the chronology, the message, the purpose, and the character of the Biblical accounts of the early church.
 - Show some reverence for apostles and the original accounts.
 - Some have talking animals and obedient bugs!
 - Some include descriptions of early church traditions. (**i.e. Preaching of the Gospel in India in "The Acts Of Thomas"**)
3. Apocryphal Epistles- Many claim to be works of Paul, Peter, or the other Apostles. They give us "missing" correspondences mentioned in the Bible.
 - The Epistle to the Laodiceans (**see Colossians 4:16**)
 - Third Corinthians, Corinthian letter to Paul (**see 1 Cor. 5:9, 7:1**)
4. Apocryphal Apocalypses- Books patterned off of John's Revelation. Apocalypses were a particularly Jewish type of literature, known to be highly symbolic, written in times of persecution and hardship. These were nothing like John's work containing fantasies, nonsense, and false teachings.
 - **The Apocalypse Of Paul**- attempts to give the details of Paul's vision in **2 Cor. 12:2**.
 - **The Apocalypse of Peter**- present visions of the resurrected Lord and images of hell.
 - "The New Testament Apocrypha is often interesting and informative, yet usually unreliable historically and always unauthoritative for matters of faith and practice." (Dr. Scott Duvall)

II. THE COPYING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

- A. The number of extant (surviving) manuscripts- 5,563 and rising.
- B. There are far more copies of the NT in existence than the ancient work with the next most- Homer's *Illiad*- which has only 643. Most ancient works have less than ten copies that have survived.
- C. The manuscripts consist of:
 1. Papyri- 85.
 2. Uncials- 268. Written in all capital letters with no spaces between words and no punctuation. From the 4th to 9th century.
 3. Miniscules- 2,792. Written in small, cursive handwriting. From the 9th century until Gutenberg's printing press.
 4. Lectionaries- 2,193. Short sections of Scripture readings. From the 6th century onward.
 5. Ostraca- 25. Broken pieces of pottery.
 6. Translations- Old Syriac, Syriac, Old Latin. From AD 50 onward. Latin Vulgate (AD 384) has 10,000 manuscripts in existence!
 7. Church fathers- 36,000. Quotes before AD 325. All but 11 verses were quoted by the end of the 2nd century so that even if we no longer had the manuscripts at all we could almost perfectly reconstruct the text!
- D. The Most Important Manuscripts:
 1. Vatican- (Codex B). Earliest and most important. From 4th century. Contains practically ALL the OT and NT. Considered the most exact.
 2. Sinaitic- Almost as important as the Vatican. From middle of 4th century. Contains part of the OT and the complete NT.
 3. Alexandrian- (Codex A). From 5th century. Contains most of both Testaments. It is not quite the quality of the 2 above. All of these have been discovered AFTER the translation of the KJV.
- E. Time between the original writing and the first surviving copy? The Bible vs. other ancient writings? The Bible has a SIGNIFICANTLY shorter amount of time between autograph and the first surviving manuscript than any other ancient writing. For example, the earliest copy of Homer's *Illiad* was made over 1,000 years from the original being written.

How We Got The Bible

Section Four: Creating A Standard Text

Introduction: Purpose Of The Lesson

This lesson will explain how scholars have reviewed the extant (i.e. existing) manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments and made judgments concerning the variant readings, which exist in order to create a standardized text that reflects as closely as possible what was first written. The student will find a solid basis for confidence in the original language texts from which our English translations have been made- that indeed the Word of God has been preserved for our study and obedience.

I. REASON FOR MANUSCRIPT VARIANTS IN O.T. AND N.T. COPIES

A. Unintentional

1. Errors of the eye- wrong division of words- HEISNOWHERE; omission of letters, words (**1 Sam. 13:1**), whole lines; repetitions (**Mt. 27:17**); transposition of letters or words; confusions of spelling, abbreviation. Hebrew letters were also used for numbers and could easily be confused.
2. Errors of the ear- scribes sometimes made copies while listening to a reader. (“here” vs. “hear”)
3. Errors of memory- for some phrases or verses some relied on memory rather than copying, cp. **Eph. 5:9** where some put “fruit of the Spirit” (**Gal. 5:22**) instead of “fruit of the light.”
4. Errors of Judgment- Scribal notes accidentally became part of the text. Cp. **2 Cor. 8:4-5**. Perhaps also **1 Jn. 5:8; Jn. 7:53-8:11; Acts 8:37**.

B. Intentional (deliberate, with good intentions)

1. To smooth out language and grammar- spelling changes, verb forms, etc.
2. To harmonize a passage with a similar passage- To make **Lk. 11:2-4** agree with **Mt. 6:9-13**; To make **Acts 9:5-6** agree with **Acts 26:14-15**; quotations changed to conform to the LXX- “This people” (**Mt. 15:8**); “You shall not bear false witness” (**Rom. 13:9**).
3. To harmonize the facts of a passage with the facts elsewhere in Scripture (**Jn. 19:14**).

II. OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS: FEW, BUT GOOD COPIES

- A. What did Masoretes do with copies with variant readings? Disposed of them
- B. How did Masoretes do their work- meticulous (**See Section 2**)
- C. How many variants found among Masoretic manuscripts? Not many!

- D. How did Masoretes handle parallel O.T. passages? Very trustworthy
 - E. How does the Masoretic text compare with the Septuagint (LXX)? Favorable
 - F. What does the testimony of the Dead Sea Scrolls (AD 1947) say about the Masoretic text? It was copied faithfully over a 1000 year period- Scribal rules and the process of counting were followed effectively!
- III. CREATING A STANDARDIZED TEXT
- A. If Masoretic Text and other manuscripts agree, we must not reject this reading and resort to conjecture.
 - B. If Masoretic Text and other manuscripts disagree, the Masoretic reading is to be preferred.
 - C. When the Masoretic Text is doubtful or impossible because it doesn't make sense in context and other manuscripts provide a satisfactory reading, other manuscripts are to be preferred.
 - D. Where neither the Masoretic Text nor other manuscripts provide a possible or probable text, conjecture is permissible with due consideration for the well-known causes of textual corruption.
- IV. NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS: MANY, BUT POORER
- A. Evidence from which to reconstruct a text to reflect the original is quite abundant **(See Section 3)**
 - 1. Papyri- 85 (fragments)
 - 2. Uncials- 268 (all caps, no spaces or punctuation; most important ones)
 - 3. Miniscules- 2,792 (cursive)
 - 4. Lectionaries- 2,193 (scripture readings)
 - 5. Ostraca- 25 (broken pottery)
 - 6. Translations- Date from AD 150
 - 7. Patristics (Church Fathers)- They quote from all but 11 verses by AD 200.
 - B. Why so many variants (200,000) in NT Manuscripts?
 - 1. No professional scribes like OT- bound to be more mistakes by amateurs with no prescribed method to assure accuracy.

2. So many more manuscripts that the OT- the more something is copied the more errors there will be.
 3. Methodology of counting variants- one misspelling copied 10,000 times is 10,000 variants.
 4. Number of variants actually a plus! More evidence to study to be sure about the text; mistakes can help confirm the original reading.
- C. How many significant variants?
1. Percentage having any significance (i.e. involving more than spelling or style)- 12.5
 2. Percentage involving more than trivialities- 1.7
 3. Percentage involving a teaching, precept, or duty which is not abundantly shown by other undoubted passages- 0!

V. CRITERIA FOR CREATING THE STANDARDIZED TEXT OF THE NT

A. External Evidence

1. Chronological- Older text type *generally* carries more weight
2. Geographical- wider support, the better
3. Genealogical- reading is strengthened if it is found in two or more families. Four major textual families: Alexandrian, Caesarean, Western, and Byzantine. Alexandrian (best); Byzantine (worst); Alexandrian (most unique variants).

B. Internal Evidence

1. Older reading- closer to the original is better.
2. More difficult reading- scribe may have tried to smooth out perceived errors or differences.
3. Shorter reading- (unless evidence of accidental or intentional omission) the tendency was to add further explanation to the text
4. Reading which best explains variants- it can often be clearly seen what must have been the original reading before a scribe made a mistake.
5. Reading with the widest geographical support.- the wider spread the better.
6. Reading which conforms to the author's way of writing (i.e. style)

7. Reading which reflects no doctrinal bias- scribe was not trying to enhance or prove a theological point.

VI. SOME SIGNIFICANT NT VARIANTS

- A. **John 5:3b-4** "Waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted."- Not found in the earliest and best manuscripts...likely started out as scribal notes.
- B. **1 John 5:7** "For there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one"- Found in the Vulgate. Erasmus made rash vow that he would include it in his text if one manuscript was found with it- one was found, a 1520 manuscript, so he included it. KJV followed his text.
- C. **Mark 16:9-20** Lacking in many of the oldest manuscripts. Jerome said that almost all Greek copies do not have the verses. Some who have them include marks from scribes indicating doubt. *The author of this material, however, believes there is good contextual evidence for the inspiration of this section.*
- D. **John 7:53-8:11** Not in the oldest or best manuscripts. Earliest manuscript containing it is Bezae (AD 550). Some versions even place it in different locations (after **Jn. 7:36, 21:24**, and even **Lk. 21:38**). Many of these manuscripts have markings containing scribal doubts.

How We Got The Bible

Section Five: Translation From The Original Languages Into English

Introduction: Purpose of this Lesson

We have studied how the inspired writings were collected, received as inspired, and copied, as well as how reliable standardized texts have been made from the copies. In all of this we have found abundant evidence to trust that the Bible is the Word of God. All that remains to be studied is the translation of the reconstructed texts of the original languages into English. A reliable translation into our language is the last link in the chain to complete our confidence that what God breathed out long ago is what we are able to read, study, obey, and be saved by today.

- I. PIONEERS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION
 - A. Partial English translations of the Scriptures- began to be made as early as AD 700. These were paraphrases, songs, and poems.
 - B. John Wycliffe (AD 1320-1384)- Significance: first complete English translation (from Latin) His work wasn't completed until after his death.
 - C. William Tyndale (AD 1492-1536)- Significance: First complete English translation from the original languages. He was burned at the stake for his translating work and for his religious views.
 - D. Miles Coverdale (AD 1488-1569)- Significance: First printing of the whole Bible into English; first translation to circulate without official hindrance. It was the first to separate it into chapters, including a summary at the end of each. Coverdale was one of Tyndale's assistants.
 - E. Thomas Matthew (AD 1500-1555)- Significance: First Bible to be circulated with the consent of the King of England. It was the first to put the Scriptures into modern English.
- II. EARLY ENGLISH BIBLES
 - A. Great Bible (1539)- Significance: Used in churches. Preface read, "This is the Bible appointed to the use of the churches." A revision of Matthew's Bible under the direction of Coverdale.
 - B. Geneva Bible (NT in 1557, whole Bible in 1560)- Significance: The Home Bible. Basic text was Tyndale but it used the latest textual evidence available. First to use italics, verses. Went through 140 editions prior to 1644. Retained popularity even during the first generation of the KJV.

- C. Bishop's Bible (1568)- Significance: Bible for public reading. Found in the churches from 1568-1611. Most of its translators were Bishops, giving it its name. It was a revision of the Great Bible and became the basis for the KJV.
- III. THE KING JAMES VERSION (1611)
- A. Purpose- To provide a satisfactory translation for public and private use.
 - B. Procedure of Translation- 48 choice Greek and Hebrew scholars divided into 8 groups. Each did a part and reviewed the other's work. Took 4 years.
 - C. Preface: "The translators to the readers..."-sought to justify the efforts to those who thought their old Bibles were good enough.
 - D. Reasons for supremacy- Greek and Hebrew scholarship had made tremendous strides since Tyndale. Great literary time (Shakespeare). A better translation was needed. The revision was impartial, not the work of one man or party.
 - E. Weaknesses- From today's vantage point, it had an inadequate textual base. The most important manuscripts were found *after* its translation. Contains many archaic words. Greek and Hebrew scholarship is now much improved from its last revision (1879).
- IV. THE ENGLISH (NT 1881, OT 1885) AND AMERICAN REVISIONS (1901)
- A. Procedure of Translation- 2 committees of 27 scholars worked 15 years on OT and 11 years on NT with the advisory help of 2 American committees.
 - B. Why did two separate versions result from the work?
Disagreement over idiom and spelling.
 - C. Evaluation of the American Standard- Based on Greek text far superior to the KJV. More accurate translation. Cleared up some archaic language, but retained and multiplied it also ("aforetime," "would fain," "howbeit," "us-ward," "you-ward"). Charles Spurgeon said of it that it was, "Strong in Greek, weak in English."
- V. THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION (NT 1946, OT 1952)
- A. Revision of? The American Standard Version
 - B. First translation to be based upon newly discovered manuscripts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were found in 1947.
 - C. The NT translation is not considered to be as literal as the translation of the ASV was.

- D. Contains a few notable controversial translations, including “young maiden” instead of “virgin” in **Isaiah 7:14**.
 - E. Chose to include the OT Apocrypha.
- VI. THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION (1971)
- A. Revision of? The American Standard Version
 - B. Improvements? More readable, greater accuracy of verb tenses.
 - C. Retains? “Thee” and “Thou” for God out of respect
 - D. It was updated in 1995 for greater readability and smoother reading, thee and thou removed. Further clarity from the 20 years of scholarship reflected in the text. It is widely considered to be the most accurate version today.
- VII. THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NT 1973, OT 1978)
- A. A new type of translation: A “thought for thought” (dynamic equivalence) rather than “word for word” (formal equivalence)
 - B. This is often helpful in understanding difficult cultural idioms. (i.e. “get ready” instead of “gird up your loins”) but left room for a few errors to creep into this version based upon doctrinal slants of the authors. Some of the translators did not believe in biblical inerrancy and one was a lesbian.
 - 1. “Sinful nature” instead of “flesh” (i.e. Romans 8:3)
 - 2. “Cult prostitutes” instead of “sodomites” (1 Kings 15:12)
 - C. Overall not a bad translation. See addendum for more information on translation issues.
- VIII. THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NT 1979, OT 1982)
- A. First revision of the King James since 1879
 - B. Since it is a revision of the KJV, this means that is based upon the textus receptus (Received Text) meaning it doesn’t take into account the three best manuscripts or the Dead Sea Scrolls.
 - C. It is readable and accurate, but doesn’t include more accuracy than the KJV.
- IX. THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (2001)
- A. Revision of?- The Revised Standard Version
 - B. Translators sought to be a literal translation while seeking “to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible

writer, while taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages.”

- C. Much more literal than the NIV and more idiomatic than the NASB.
 - D. Largely fixed the doctrinal slant of the RSV (including **Isa. 7:14**)
 - E. Criticized for “gender-neutral” language, not using italics for supplied words, not capitalizing deity, and not using red ink for Jesus’ speech as did the NASB. Newer editions have included a few of these features. Overall it is a good solid translation.
- X. THE HOLMAN CHRISTIAN STANDARD VERSION (NT 1999, OT 2004)
- A. A unique translation in that it was translated by 100 scholars who believed in the inerrancy of Scriptures. Work undertaken by the same minds who created the NKJV but with most recent scholarship. It was funded largely by the Southern Baptist convention so some caution is advised with it’s use.
 - B. Translators sought for “optimal equivalence” rather than “formal equivalence” (word for word, i.e. NASB) or “dynamic equivalence” (thought for thought, i.e. NIV). This means that as much as possible they tried to capture the meaning behind every word and phrase, sometimes they were exact and other times paraphrasing.
 - C. Changes wording of some very well-known passages of Scripture (i.e. John 3:16) but not in a wrong way.
 - D. Unique in that it is the only modern version to include God’s name a “Yahweh” in every instance it is so used. (Most other version put “the Lord God” in all caps to denote this).
 - E. Actually quite a good version if you can get used to the different wordings.
- XI. QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING A TRANSLATION
- A. Translation from the original language?
 - B. Translators use the best available manuscript evidence?
 - C. Translators believe in the inspiration of the Bible?
 - D. Translation done by committee rather than one man?
 - E. Translators from various religious backgrounds?
 - F. Translation “word for word,” “thought for thought,” or somewhere in between?

- G. Translation easily understood?
 - H. Translators put words they supplied in italics?
- XII. CONCLUSION
- A. If a translation has been done properly, we can have confidence when we read that we are reading God's Words to man.
 - B. Not every "Bible" is a translation (some are paraphrases)
 - C. Headings on pages are not part of the inspired text and can be misleading.
 - D. Not every translation is reliable.
 - E. No translator is inspired in his work.
 - F. All translations will have some mistakes (cp. "Easter" instead of "Pentecost" in the KJV- **Acts 12:4**)
 - G. There is great value in comparing translations.

Lesson 5 Addendum

Translation Problems In The New International Version (NIV)

The twentieth century has brought about an explosion of modern day translations of the Word of God. Among them preeminently stands the New International Version. Though the NIV is an excellent modern-day translation it still has some problems that should be noted by anyone who uses and studies from that version.

Several preliminary points regarding Bible translation need to be understood. **FIRST**, every man-made translation has it's own unique problems, yet in spite of this reality God's Word of Truth can still be learned from every single major version of the Bible. These include the King James Version, the American Standard Version, The Revised Standard Version, The New American Standard, The New King James Version, The New International Version, The English Standard Version, and The Holman Christian Standard Version. **SECOND**, the process of textual criticism (i.e. how the Bible came to us) and Bible translation theory (i.e. how the Bible got into the words of the common man) are at best, very complicated and require a high degree of competency in the original as well as the repository languages of the Word of God. **THIRD**, there is no such thing as a literal word-for word translation of the Word of God. The very process of translation involves not just words but thoughts and meanings as well. All translation involves some degree of interpretation. Any translation should seek to be as literal as possible, yet as free as necessary. One of the most important aspects of any translation is that it must communicate the mind of God clearly and accurately to modern man. **FOURTH**, the criticisms leveled against most major translations, while often stemming from a zeal for God and His inspired Word, are frequently based upon ignorance and misunderstanding of textual criticism, translation theory, and the original languages of the Bible. What is more, if the same criticisms and arguments that are used against the new versions were used against the KJV and the NKJV then they would be found to be just as "problematic." Yet, we can still learn the Truth from any of the major versions of God if we carefully study to show ourselves approved as we prove all things and hold fast to that which is good.

With these points in mind, carefully consider the following potential translation problems that are found in the New International Version.

Psalm 51:5- A more literal translation would be, "surely in iniquity I was born, and in sin did my mother conceive me." The NIV's, "I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me," might leave the impression of the Calvinistic doctrine of total hereditary depravity. But a closer view of the poetic context of the Psalm and a consideration of the rest of Scripture would render that view untenable.

Matthew 5:32- The word “so” in the phrase “a woman so divorced” in the NIV is NOT in the Greek text. This may leave the impression that a man can marry a divorced woman in certain situations without committing adultery.

Luke 16:23- The NIV sometimes obscures the distinction between “hell” and “hades” (cf. **Acts 2:27, 31**)...but see the footnotes as well as Matthew 16:18. Also, in the Old Testament, the NIV often translates “Sheol” only as “the grave” ...but again, see the footnotes.

John 3:8- The Greek text says, “So is everyone born of the Spirit,” NOT as the NIV renders it, “so it is with everyone...” This seems to imply that the direct mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit in conversion, and places emphasis on the person that is born again, rather than upon the new birth.

Acts 3:31- The more literal translation, “Until the times of restoration of all things,” might be better than the NIV’s “Until the time comes for God to restore everything.” But neither translation can support the heresy of premillennialism. (A similar problem might be noted in **Eph. 1:10**)

Romans 1:16- This passage literally says, “From faith to faith” rather than’ “By faith from first to last,” as in the NIV, which might be taken to support the doctrine of salvation by faith only.

Romans 7:5- The translation of the Greek term for “flesh” in the NIV is rendered “sinful nature” in **Romans 7:5, 18, 25; 8:3, 4,5,7,9,12,13; 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 5:13, 16,17,19,24; 6:8; Col. 2:11, 13; 2 Pet. 2:10, 18**. See footnotes in these passages. This is one of the most serious translation problems in the NIV and could be used to support the heresy of Calvinism. One of the best interpretive translations of “flesh” is “sinful flesh” or “sinful self.”

1 Corinthians 2:14- Literally the translation should read, “But a natural man,” or, “The unspiritual man,” rather than, “the man without the Spirit.” The NIV’s translation seems to imply that unless one has the Holy Spirit in him he cannot even understand the Word of God. Such a doctrine has no basis in Scripture.

1 Corinthians 7:15- The text literally reads, “Has not been enslaved,” or, “Is not under bondage,” rather than, “Is not bound.” The NIV seems to imply that the marriage bond is broken. This is not apparently what Paul was saying.

Galatians 5:6- The text actually says, “Faith working through love,” but the NIV translates it as, “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” The NIV seems to make an unnecessary expansive interpretation at this point that may weaken the demands of “faith’s working.” Sometimes, the NIV is a little too free in it’s translation of the New Testament, and a more literal precision may be called for.

1 Timothy 4:14- The passage actually says “With the laying on of the hands of the body of elders,” NOT, “When the body of elders laid their hands on you,” as in the NIV. The NIV seems to create an unnecessary conflict with **2 Timothy 1:6** where Paul stated that Timothy received miraculous gifts through the laying on of the Apostle’s hands.

It must once again be stated that all translations are the work of men and that all translations, like the KJV and the NIV, contain problems of textual, translational, and at times doctrinal importance. But, at the same time, it must be emphasized that all of these translations contain the very mind of God that can be discerned through careful intelligent study. It is simply amazing that in spite of all the “problems” real and imagined one may find with the modern versions, it is still possible to find the very words of God that can make us wise unto salvation.

One last point with regard to the NIV. One of the greatest features of a modern version like the NIV is that it speaks clearly to the hearts of today’s men and women. One of the tragic and undeniable realities of older versions is that they no longer do. It should also be noticed that the greatest strength of the NIV may be in its translation of the Old Testament. The NIV’s translation of this portion of the Word of God is virtually unsurpassed! In fact, the NIV is perhaps one of the easiest translations to read and understand of all of the versions available today.

Lesson 4 Questions

History Of Writing, Writing Materials, Divisions Of The Bible

1. List some advantages of written words over other forms of communication.
2. Where were some of the earliest writings found? When have they been dated to? What does this mean for the writing of the Bible?
3. What were the earliest types of writing materials? Which ones have the best chance of being discovered today? Why?
4. What languages was the Bible written in? Which parts are in each language?
5. What *internal* evidence is there for the inspiration of Scripture? Provides Bible verses to back up your answer.
6. What were the three major divisions of the Hebrew Bible? Find an example in the NT where Jesus confirmed this grouping of Bible books.

Lesson 5 Questions

Copying, Collection, And Acceptance Of OT Inspired Works

1. How important was the preservation of the Scriptures to the Jewish people? What steps did they take to make sure it stood the test of time?
2. Are there many manuscript copies of the OT remaining today? Why or why not? Can we trust that it has been faithfully preserved?
3. What are the five tests of canonicity? What makes a book inspired? Do you believe this is an accurate method for determining inspiration? Can the modern Bible student have confidence they are reading the Bible God intended them to read?
4. If a book was part of the Antilogomena (disputed books) should that bother Christians today? Can you understand why these books were disputed?
5. Pick one of the Apocryphal books from the Catholic Bible to research. Read part or all of it this week and determine whether you believe the right decision was made to exclude it from the canon. Bring your findings to discuss next class.

Lesson 6 Questions

Writing and Collection of the NT; Do we have the full Gospel?

1. How many books are there in the NT? How many of these were “disputed” in their authenticity? Should any of the opposition to these books give us cause for alarm?
2. Does the Bible include ALL of the writings of the Apostles? Prove your answer with Scriptural evidence.
3. Do any NT writers recognize another writer’s work as inspired? If so, where in the Bible can we read about this?
4. Some NT writers (Jude most notably) quote from Apocryphal books (**The Assumption of Moses, 1 Enoch**). Why would an inspired writer do this? What value did Jude and others see in some of these “lost books?”
5. Many “lost gospels” have been discovered in recent years and have been popularized by secular sources, such as the History Channel. Why were these books excluded from the original collection of the NT? Should we give them any weight today?
6. How many surviving manuscripts of the NT are there? How many remain of the next best preserved (Homer’s *Illiad*)? How much of the Bible is quoted by the “church fathers?”
7. In a few sentences describe how you would explain to a non-believer your belief that our modern Bible of 66 books is inspired, complete, and authoritative today.

Lesson 7 Questions

Is My Bible Accurate? Was The Bible Faithfully Copied?

1. When someone today makes statements such as, "The Bible is full of errors," is this accurate in any way? What reasons are there for differences in manuscripts? Have you ever made similar errors?
2. What is meant by "Intentional Changes" made in copying? How can we tell what the original text said with multiple texts?
3. Why was the find of the Dead Sea Scrolls so important? What do they prove?
4. How many variants are there in NT manuscripts? What is the reason for so many? Should this shake our faith in the accuracy of our modern Bibles?
5. What general rules can help determine between 2 different readings of a text? Explain the role of footnotes in modern study Bibles.
6. What are some of the most commonly questioned variants in the NT? Do any of the main points of Christianity get damaged if these sections were removed? Pick one of these from the outline to research and provide evidence in class for its acceptance or rejection.

Lesson 8 Questions

Modern English Translations

1. Pick one of the 5 translating pioneers listed in section 5 of the outline. Research a little about his work and bring your findings to class.

2. Pick one of the 3 early Bibles listed in section 5 of the outline. Research a little about the importance and the use of this translation.

3. What year was the complete King James Version first released? What year was it most recently revised? What was its significance?

4. What was important about the Revised Standard Version? Were there any problems with it?

5. What was important about the NIV? Is it a translation or is it a paraphrase? Is there value in it? Were there any problems with its translation process?

6. What are good rules for picking a modern Bible translation? What is the value of studying with more than one? As a challenge this week read a section of Scripture in your preferred version, then read it in another version. Compare. Bring your observations to class.

7. Why do you use the version of the Bible that you currently are using?