

Learning About God Together

Session 2,

Overview of the Bible

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What is the Bible?

The term “bible” is derived from the Greek word biblia, meaning “books



Today's Goal

- Understand how Scripture was developed
- Understand how we interpret the Bible
- Understand the Structure and how it came together
- How the books and letters are Organized

Question: Who was the bible written for?



But...Our
Greatest hope is
to discover how
the bible reveals
God to us in our
lives and the
world

What's Ahead:

- The Ultimate Literary Adventure
 - The Greatest Drama of all time
 - The Greatest Evils
 - The Greatest Good
 - The Greatest Romance
 - The Greatest Mysteries
 - **The Biography of a real Superman**

What's in the Bible

- **A variety of literary styles**
 - Poetry, Narrative, Letters, dialogs, proverbs, songs and allegory, History and Prophecy .
- **A collection of 66 books written by about.....**
 - 40 authors,
 - In three different languages,
 - On three different continents,
 - Over approximately 600 years some scholars feel about 1600

FirstIt is.....!

- **About God not us**
 - The account of God's action in the world and his purpose with all creation
 - Written for people in their time

**Read the Scripture
Theologically Not Literally**
e.g. Feeding of the 5000

Reading Scripture

- Study Scripture on own terms. Read it as three H's.
- **Humility** = Don't moralize. Identify with all figures in the text.
-
- **Honesty** = Admit there are discrepancies and anomalies. Read critically what's being said. ***What do you the readers bring to it from your own Hermeneutic circle e.g. fundamentalism.***
- **Humor** = Take God more seriously each time we read it and ourselves less seriously. What is God doing with the likes of us mirrored in the text. It means discerning Gods Grace in dealing with all manner of folk and then smiling a bit at how we resemble those sinners and we ourselves need to repent.

What Else?

- **It's a storehouse of wonderful stories for children and grownups.**
 - In these stories we recognize the triumphs and failures of ordinary people - and we see ourselves!
- **It's a refuge in trouble and for people in pain.**
 - in mourning, we hear how they turned to the Bible and found strength in their desperate hours.
- **It is a treasury of insight as to who we are.**
 - We are magnificent creatures of a God who loves us and gives us a purpose and a destiny.
- **It is a sourcebook for living.**
 - We find guidelines for knowing right from wrong, principles to help us in a confused society where so often "anything goes"

We are immersed into scripture like being tossed into the ocean. Like the current, we struggle with the text, where it will take us and how we will understand its depth.

However..We can't do that unless we understand it and how it Came together

How We Will Proceed

- **First:** We will use the **critical approach**. It emphasizes the understanding of the texts in their original setting It asks such questions as: “How was the text understood in its original context?” “How did it function for its early hearers?” “How does its literary form and setting affect our understanding of the text?”
- **Second:** **Canonical Approach** – How the Text Speaks to us in our time and how because of the way the canon came together can be interpreted differently
- **Third:** Study the **History** surrounding the generation of the Text
- **Fourth:** What Does the text mean to us today

What is Biblical Criticism?

- Tools to understand the Bible in different ways (Hermeneutics)-Started about 1900 C.E.
 - **Historical Criticism** – Archeology and Comparative religions and cultures
 - **Literary Criticism** – Authorship and composition
 - **Form Criticism** –The Types of Literature
 - **Redaction Criticism** -1950s VonRad/Conzelman (How the Text was changed)
 - **Critical Method**- No Faith Implications
 - **Canonical Criticism**- How the development of the canon affects how we read it

Canonical Criticism

- Started by James Sanders, Brevard Childs of Yale & Ernest Wright of Harvard
- Canonical Criticism asks the questions:
 - Who did we inherit this book from?
 - Why did the author write this story when he wrote it ?
 - How does the text speak to us today?
 - What is the function of the Canon?

In other words: “It Asks Why, and picks up where the other Criticism’s leave off”

Navigating The Bible

A Few Abbreviations to Know

a or b	First or Second part of Verse (Gen 11:16b)
ASV	American Standard Version(1901)
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
cf	Compare
ff	Following Verses
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
JB	Jerusalem Bible (1966)
KJV	The Authorized King James (1611)
LXX	Septuagint
NIV	New International Version (1978)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)
Q	Quelle (Non Markan Source)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT1952) 15

The Canon & Translations

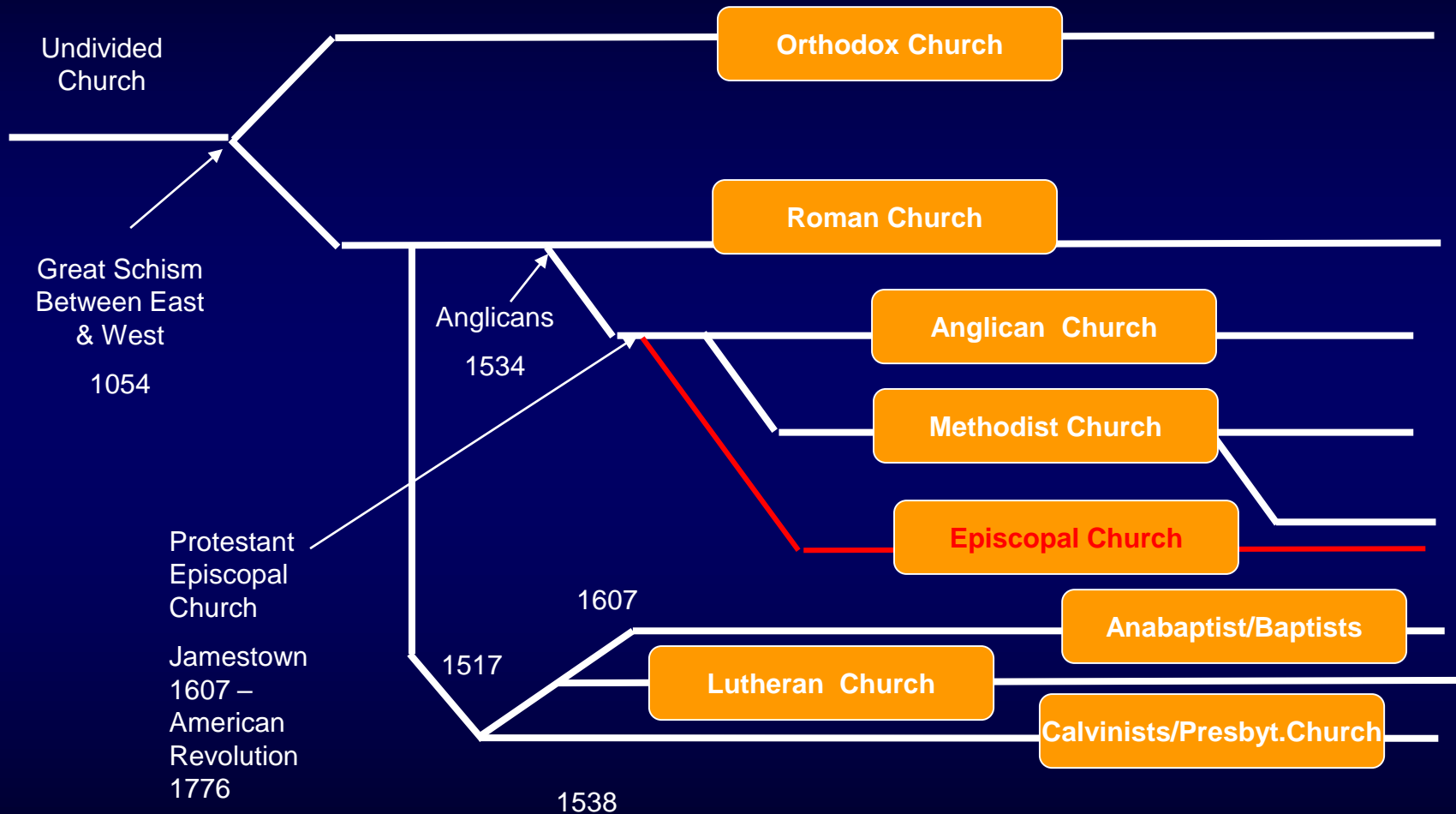
How they Came to Be

How the Bible Developed

- **ORAL Tradition:** Genealogies, poems and stories, handed down **by word of mouth** for many generations.
- **Writings - No Original** manuscripts have survived from the period before the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews into exile in 587/6 B.C.
- The OT consists of a collection of works composed at various times from the **eighth to the second century BCE;** (Note some feel it is from the **1200 BCE**)
- Most books have multiple authors - Redacted
- The whole Old Testament is written in classical Hebrew, except some brief portions which are in the Aramaic language e.g. (Ezra 4.8–6.18 and 7.12–26, Jeremiah 10.11, Daniel 2.4–7.28)

The Episcopal Church and How We View Scripture vs. Other Denominations

Where We Come From



How Episcopalian's View Scripture

- The word "Bible" is used by Christians to refer to the OT and NT, the two parts of scripture. Other books, called the Apocrypha (Hidden), are often included in the Bible (BCP, p. 853).
- In the Jewish tradition the OT is called Hebrew Scripture. When early Christians began to select writings for their scripture, they wanted to keep the Hebrew scripture and therefore chose to use the titles Old Testament (or covenant) for the Jewish writings and New Testament for the normative Christian writings.
- The Apocrypha is a collection of books written by people of the old covenant. The Articles of Religion note that these books may be read "for example of life and instruction of manners," **but are not used to establish any doctrine (Art. VI, BCP, p. 868)**. Selections from the Apocrypha are included in the BCP lectionaries for the Holy Eucharist and the Daily Office.
- ***Interpret through Tradition and Reason***

What Evangelicals Say?

- We believe that we are being plunged into a period of time about which the Bible says more than about any other period of time in history.
- *They take scripture Literally – a relatively new way to understand the bible (since ~1900ce)*
- *To evangelicals the bible is the law as the Pope is to the RC Church*

Other Churches and Denominations Views of Scripture

Church or Denomination	View of Scripture
Roman Catholic	Teaches without error truth needed for salvation. Interpret with tradition and Papacy
Orthodox	Without error in matters of faith only. Use Tradition especially the 7 Counsels
Lutheran	Alone is an authorities witness to Gospel
Presbyterian	Inspired and Infallible. Final rule of faith
Methodist	Inspired and Infallible. Final rule of faith
Congregational	Witness of the word of God
Baptist and Pentecostal	Inspired and without error
Evangelical	Inspired and without error

Our Cultural Make up

- Our Cultural makeup determines how we read scripture

Skin Color/Race

Sex

Age

Language

Sexual Orientation

Adopted

Education

Parent

Nationality

Military exp

Single

Language

Economic Status

Religion

Married

Phy. Condition

Geography

Parents



Our Cultural Components Can Change Day to Day

Greco-Roman Influence on Western Culture

- Western culture was influenced primarily by Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian traditions.
 - With the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.E. Palestine, the Jewish homeland, came under Greek domination. Moreover, Jews had dispersed throughout the Greek-dominated Mediterranean world.
- Although most Jews resisted Greek ways, some Jews nevertheless adopted Greek ideas during this period.
- Later, when the Romans conquered the lands along the Mediterranean, their culture became dominant.

Christianity Emerges from Judaism

- Christianity emerged from Judaism in the first century C.E.. (Common Era) as an independent religious tradition and quickly spread throughout the Greco-Roman world.
- In the 317 CE the emperor Constantine embraced Christianity.
- Since then, most Western views of the nature of God, the nature of human beings, and morals and values were shaped in dialogue with Greco-Roman traditions and Christian traditions.
- **The Bible underpinned it all..However!**

Views on How the Bible Influenced History

- Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, believed that the claims of Jewish faith and Greek philosophy could be harmonized.
- Tertullian, the Christian lawyer-theologian, thought that the traditions of Christian faith had little in common with Greco-Roman culture. He believed they dealt with separate realms.
- Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas, sought a synthesis of the two traditions within a larger historical or philosophical framework.

The conclusion is, most of Western culture's basic ideas and values derive from the faith traditions of the Bible Greece/Rome.

The Western View of Life after Death

- Western views of life after death include both the biblical view of the resurrection of the body and the Greek view of the immortality of the soul.
- Today these views heavily influenced by Quantum Physics and NDEs

In Scripture we speak of resurrection of the body which is not separate from the Soul

The Enlightenment

- The 30 year religious wars (1614-1648) in Europe (Germany) must never happen again. 30% reduction in German Population
- The rise of modern science and sociology began to challenge the Bible and Christian Thought.(Newton, Descartes, Kant)

***Western Culture emerges from Greco/Roman
Judaism and Transitions to Modern Thought
Reason Comes into PLAY***

Everyday Quotes Affect Culture

- **Fear:** Do not fear, for I am with you; Isaiah 41:10
- **Wealth and The Good Life** "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:9-10
- **Ethics;** The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity. Proverbs 11:3
- **Business;** Without consultation, plans are frustrated, but with many counselors they succeed. Proverbs 15:22
- **Just War:** For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory. Proverbs 24:6
- **Loneness/Motivation;** The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Deuteronomy 31:8
- **Justice;** An Eye for an eye a tooth for a tooth. Matthew 5:38 (Hammurabi code)

The Integrity of the Manuscripts How Do we Know?



Terms to Know

- **Autographs:** Are original texts were written either by the author's own hand or by a scribe under their personal supervision. Original Text
- **Manuscripts:** Until Gutenberg first printed the Latin Bible in 1456, all Bibles were **CAREFULLY** hand copied onto papyrus, parchment, and paper-errors were made!.
- **Translations:** When the Bible is translated into a different language it is usually translated from the original Hebrew and Greek. However some translations in the past were derived from an earlier translation. For example the first English translation by John Wycliffe in 1380 was prepared from the Latin Vulgate.

Original Texts & How do they compare to the Bible

- **Tacitus**, the Roman historian, wrote his Annals of Imperial Rome in about A.D. 116. Only **one** manuscript of his work remains. It was copied about 850 A.D.
- **Josephus**, a Jewish historian, wrote The Jewish War shortly after 70 A.D. There are nine manuscripts in Greek which date from 1000-1200 A.D. and **one** Latin translation from around 400 A.D.
- **Homer's** Iliad was written around 800 B.C. It was as important to ancient Greeks as the Bible was to the Hebrews. There are over **650** manuscripts remaining but they date from 200 to 300 A.D. which is over a thousand years after the Iliad was written.

Original Manuscripts

- **The Dead Sea Scrolls:** date from 200 B.C. - 70 A.D. and contain the entire book of Isaiah and portions of every other Old Testament book but Esther.
- **Geniza Fragments:** portions the Old Testament in Hebrew and Aramaic, discovered in 1947 in an old synagogue in Cairo, Egypt, which date from 400 CE.
- **Ben Asher Manuscripts:** five or six generations of this family made copies of the Old Testament using the Masoretic Hebrew text, from 700-950 A.D.
- **Aleppo Codex:** contains the complete Old Testament and is dated around 950 CE. Unfortunately over one quarter of this Codex was destroyed in anti-Jewish riots in 1947.

What is the Canon?

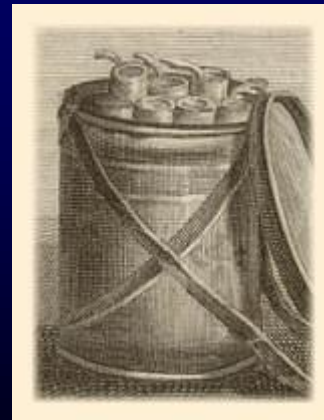
- Writings that are regarded as authoritative for a religious community are known collectively as that group's **“canon”** (from the Greek word *kanon*, meaning “reed”).
- In the ancient world a reed was often used as a measuring rod, and therefore “canon” came to refer to a norm or standard by which to judge or measure.
- ***A collection of Books***

HOW WAS THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON DETERMINED? The Rules at Carthage!

- *First*, the books must have apostolic authority-- that is, they must have been written either by the apostles themselves, who were eyewitnesses to what they wrote about, or by associates of the apostles.
- *Second*, there was the criterion of conformity to what was called the "rule of faith." In other words, was the document congruent with the basic Christian tradition that the church recognized as normative.
- *Third*, there was the criterion of whether a document had enjoyed continuous acceptance and usage by the church at large.

Developing The Final Canon?

- The selection of writings to be included in the NT was not final until about 360 A.D. Some Christians did not want to include the Gospel of John or the Second Letter of Peter.
- After a long period of time, the currently accepted canon of scripture was determined on the basis of apostolic authorship or attribution and widespread acceptance of the texts included in the canon.



The First Bibles

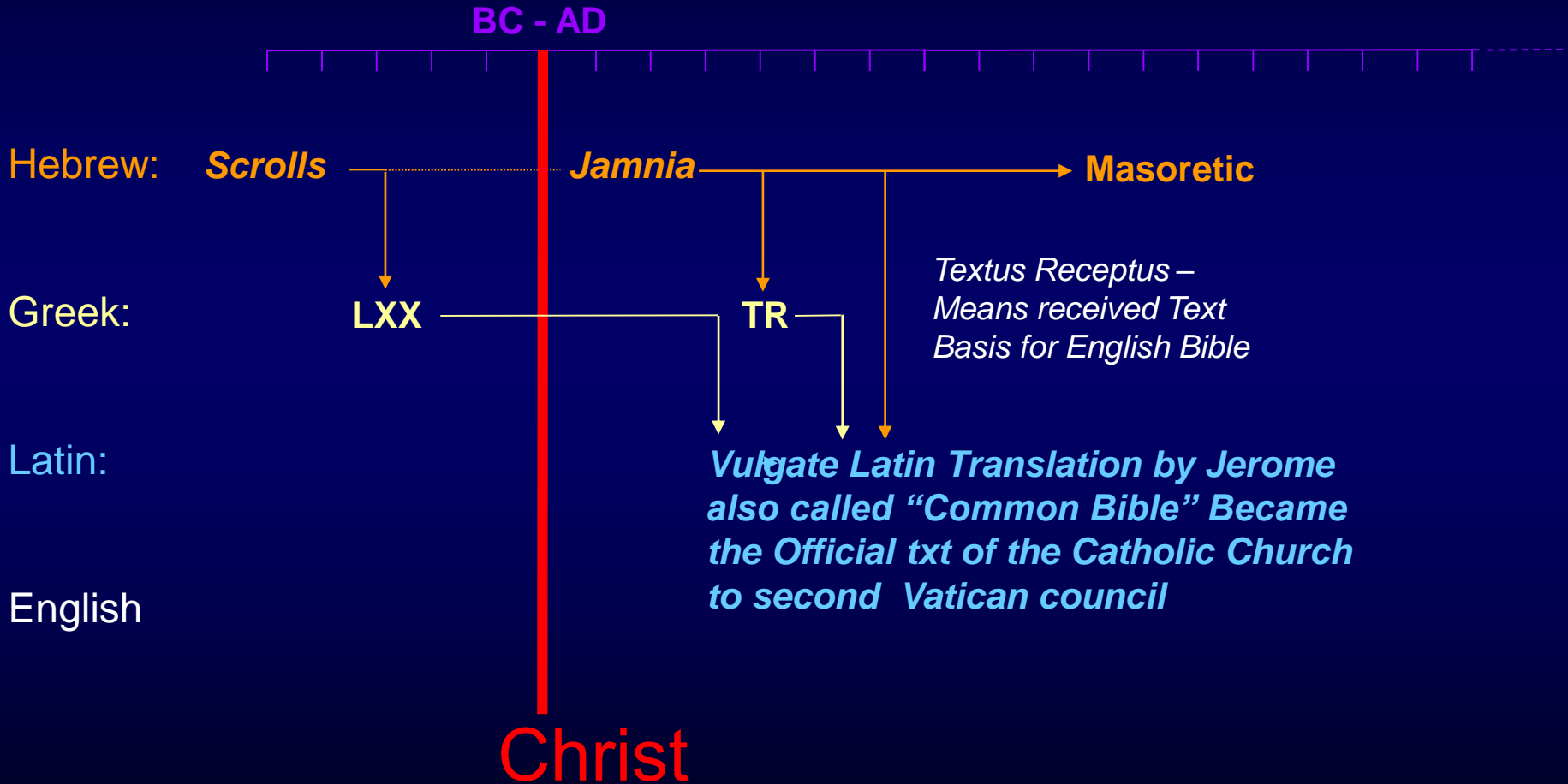
First English Translation

- 1380 A.D. **The first English translation of the Bible was by John Wycliffe**. from the Latin Vulgate. Wycliffe was forced to translate from the Latin Vulgate because he did not know Hebrew or Greek.
- 1456 A.D. Gutenberg produced the first printed Bible in Latin. Printing revolutionized the way books were made. From now on books could be published in great numbers and at a lower cost. **Printing presses greatly helped Bible distribution and lowered cost**

1st-3rd Century Translations

- 180 A.D. Translations of the NT from Greek into Latin, Syriac, and Coptic
- 195 A.D. Parts of the Old Latin were found in quotes by the church father Tertullian, who lived around 160-220 A.D. in North Africa.
- 300 A.D. Translation of the New Testament from Greek into Syriac.
- 300 A.D. The Coptic Versions: Coptic was spoken in four dialects in Egypt.
- 380 A.D. **The Latin Vulgate was translated by St. Jerome.** He translated into Latin the Old Testament from the Hebrew and the New Testament from Greek. **The Latin Vulgate became the Bible of the Western Church until the Protestant Reformation in the 1500's.**

History of the English Bible



English Bible

- 1382 Wycliffe Bible (from Vulgate)
- 1526 Tyndale Bible (1st English NT)
- 1534 Luther's Bible (1st German)
- 1535 Coverdale's (1st Complete)
- 1537 Matthew Bible (from Tyndale's notes)
- 1539 Great Bible (Coverdale's revision)
- 1560 Geneva Bible (Whittingham, et al)
- 1568 Bishop's Bible (Revised "Great Bible")
- 1609 Douay/Rheims Bible (Vulgate rendering)
- 1611 King James Version

King James Version

- James VI of Scotland becomes King of England (known as “James I”)
- 1607, More than 50 scholars, through prayerful committees
- 5556 manuscripts available; major reliance on *Textus Receptus*
- Heralded as “the noblest monument of English prose”

Marcion*
(b. 85)

Irenaeus
(b. 130)

Athanasius
(b. 296) & Council
Carthage 397

	Matthew	Matthew
	Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke	Luke
	John	John
	Acts	Acts
Romans	Romans	Romans
1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians
	1 Timothy	1 Timothy
	2 Timothy	2 Timothy
	Titus	Titus
Philemon	Philemon	Philemon
	<i>Hebrews</i>	Hebrews
	<i>James</i>	James
	1 Peter	1 Peter
	<i>2 Peter</i>	2 Peter
	1 John	1 John
	<i>2 John</i>	2 John
	<i>3 John</i>	3 John
	<i>Jude</i>	Jude
	Revelation	Revelation**

Different Canons

20th Century Translations

- 1928 A.D. The ASV is copywrited to protect it from unauthorized Translations
- 1950 A.D. **RSV Published based on KJ and Tyndale's Bibles**
- 1968 A.D. The United Bible Societies publishes 4th Edition of the Greek NT. This NT made use of the oldest Greek manuscripts which date from 175 A.D. **This was the Greek New Testament text from which the NASV and the NIV were translated.**
- 1971 A.D. **New American Standard Version (NASV)** published. It makes use of the wealth of older Hebrew and Greek text that weren't available at the time of the translation of the KJV. Its follows the Greek in a word for word style.
- 1983 A.D. **New International Version (NIV)** published. Made use of the oldest manuscript evidence. It is more of a "thought-for-thought" translation. It reads more easily than NRSV
- 1989 A.D. **NRSV Published – Current Version we use**

RSV and NRSV History

- The **RSV** was published in the following stages:
 1. New Testament First Edition (1946; originally copyrighted to the International Council of Religious Education)
 2. Old Testament (and thus the full Protestant Bible) (1952)
 3. Apocrypha(1957)
 4. Modified Edition (only a few changes) (1962)
 5. **Catholic Edition**(NT 1965, Full RSV-CE 1966)
 6. New Testament, Second Edition (1971)
 7. Common Bible (1973)
 8. Apocrypha, Expanded Edition (1977)
 9. Second Catholic Edition (2006)

The Final Form

Council of Carthage
In 397 CE Locked down the Canon