

BIBLE: ORIGIN/EYTOLOGY Bible = Greek word = book . "Holy Bible," refers to = "Holy book," written in 3 languages (Hebrew/Greek/Aramaic). Written over a period of 1500+ years. Written by 40+ authors on 3 continents (Asia/Africa/Europe). --Examples of authors: peasants, kings, philosophers, doctors, fishermen, poets, statesmen.

OLD TESTAMENT (OT) *Testament = Covenant. Contains 39 books, and make up $\frac{3}{4}$ of Bible. Goes from creation to about BC 450. Broken down into major sections: The Pentateuch, History, Poetry or Writings or Wisdom Literature, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets.

INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD - About 400 years of silence, between the Old + New Covenants.

NEW TESTAMENT (NT) Made up of 27 Books, and make up $\frac{1}{4}$ of Bible. The NT can be broken down in 4 sections: **The Gospels** (biography), **Acts** (history), **Romans-Jude** (the Letters or Epistles to people and Churches), and **Revelation** (prophecy).

The Gospels – The first 4 books of the New Testament are the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Gospel," means "good news," and the good news is all about the life/death/burial and resurrection of Jesus – Letters to Christians and Churches on how to live in light of Jesus life/death/burial/resurrection/ascension and return. The first 3 Gospels -- Matthew, Mark and Luke -- are similar in content and structure, because of this, they are grouped and often referred to as the "Synoptic Gospels." Compared to the Synoptics, the book of John has different subject material and organization from the synoptics.

THE BIBLE is still the best-selling book of all time. It is a library of books, that is 1 book. The **OT** was originally written on **papyrus** (a form of paper made from reeds). By the time the **NT** was written, **parchments** were also used (dried animal skins)...these pages were put together and then rolled into a scroll.

CHAPTERS & VERSES Were added later to provide addresses (not unlike our homes). *In 1205 **Stephen Langton**, a theology professor who later was the Archbishop of Canterbury began using Bible **chapters**. *In 1240, **Cardinal Hugo of St. Cher** published a Latin Bible w/the 1,189 **chapter divisions** that exist today. ***Robert Stephanus**, a Protestant book printer was condemned as a heretic for printing Bibles. He fled on horseback with his family and randomly made **verse divisions** within Langton's chapter divisions. His system was used for the **first English Bible (aka – The Geneva New Testament of 1577)**.

Protestant = A member of western Christianity that follows principles of the Reformation; includes Baptist/Presbyterian/Lutheran/etc.,

Heretic = Someone opposed to a generally accepted religious truth.

*It's important to understand the Bible's chapters and verses weren't originally used with any logical or consistent method, and while they are helpful, they're not authoritative. Since the Bible wasn't intended to be read in bits and pieces, but as one work together -- reading verses out of context can lead to a serious misunderstanding.

CANNON What's the cannon of scripture? The cannon is the collection of books the Church has

recognized as having authority in matters of faith and doctrine.

Cannon = Comes from Greek word 'Kanon', and Hebrew word 'qanch' = both meaning "a ruler" or "a measuring stick/rod." The cannon is an authority that other truth claims are compared and measured by. Cannon is talking about books that have divine authority; these are the books of our Bible. The **first ecclesiastical councils to classify the canonical books** were held both in North Africa. @**Hippo Regius in 393** (*the synod of Hippo*) and @**Carthage in 397**. Those councils didn't impose something new into Christian communities, they just organized what was already being practiced.

250 Years before Jesus, Greek speaking Jews living in Alexandria Egypt translated the OT into Greek – The Hebrew to Greek translation aka **the Septuagint**. (This was 70 scholars in 70 days). They changed the context of books, rearranged books, added books...all for unknown reasons. Early Christians followed Jesus and used the same books found in the Hebrew Bible today. But, as the center of Christianity moved away from Jerusalem, and since Christians read + worshipped more commonly in Greek than Hebrew – there was more openness to the Septuagint.

There was a long and complicated debate about the **validity and status** of these books. Eventually, the Roman Catholic Church adopted many of the books from the Septuagint into its Latin version called, "**The Vulgate**." These books are referred to as "**deuterocanonical**," meaning that they were brought into the cannon much later.

As **the Reformers** attempted to rid the Church of traditional teachings and get "back to the Bible," they also rejected the "deuterocanonical" books, labeling them as "Apocrypha". **Apocrypha** = a Greek word = "secret", "hidden"....aka false/bad/heretical/fake news. While the apocrypha can have some valid historical context, this is not divinely inspired scripture so you should read them with this in mind.

Anyway, the reformers kept the ordering of the Vulgate but returned it to the authoritative books of Jesus, the Hebrew speaking Jews, and early Christianity.

The early Church recognized most of the books in the New Testament as canonical. The 4 gospels, the writings of Paul, Acts, 1 John, 1 Peter, and Revelation were universally accepted. Hebrews remained in debate for several centuries because of the anonymity of the author. The status of: James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John and Jude fluctuated according to Church age & judgment, this is why you will occasionally see them omitted historically from canonical lists.

Some of the works of apostles: The letter of Barnabbas, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the 1st and 2nd letters of Clement are sporadically cited as scripture, but are not listed typically in formal canonical lists.

In the **4th Century** the Church moved to **settle these issues in the New Testament Cannon**. In the **East** it was done in the **34th Paschal Letter of Athanasius in AD 367**. In the West it was fixed at the **Council of Carthage** (mentioned earlier).

SO, HOW DID THE CHURCH KNOW WHAT TO INCLUDE AND EXCLUDE?

3 Primary criteria – The rule of Faith, Apostolicity, and Catholicity.

#1 – Rule of Faith = Did the book conform to orthodoxy/Christian truth that was recognized as

normative within the Churches?

#2 – Apostolicity = Was the writer of the book an apostle? Or, have immediate contact with an apostle? --sidenote: All but a few of the NT writers were eyewitness accounts.

#3 – Catholicity – Did the book have widespread and continuous acceptance/usage by Churches everywhere?

The skinny is... that from the very earliest days, the Church knew which books were God's inspired word for them. They read them, studied them, communicated them, obeyed them, lived them, passed them on – and we should do the same without adding anything to them.

FURTHER VALIDITY + ACCURACY ON THE BIBLE - A key point to remember is that self-testimony is valid and strong when that testimony is validated by sufficient evidence. The remarkable accuracy of the Bible in areas that we can check gives us confidence it is true in all areas. *see **Multiple attestation below** for further study into how. Also it's important to note that Jesus Himself taught from and validated the Old Testament scriptures.

Some people say, “**You can't trust the Bible because you don't have all of the original copies.**”

Perspective1: Plato, Sophocles, Homer, and Caesar Augustus – There are fewer than 10 copies of each book, and each of those were made at least 1000 years after the author wrote the original. And until the mid 20th century we were in a similar situation w/Hebrew OT. Our oldest copies dated from about AD 900 aka – “**Autographa**”. But then, in 1947 the **Dead Sea Scrolls** were discovered in Qumran (**1947-1956**). Qumran is located between Jerusalem and the beaches of the Dead Sea (Israel).

Perspective2: For the NT, we have over 14,000 ancient copies with fragments no later than 100 years after the original books and letters...this is nuts because it was written on fragile papyrus, it wasn't stored or protected, yet in God's providence they survived! It's because of these manuscripts we are certain that over **99%** of the Bible is faithful to the original transcripts. --sidenote: When you communicate this, everyone always wants to know, "Well, what's the 1% then?" Easy, the **1%** is either in word order or spelling, and has no discrepancy **AT ALL** with context.

TRANSLATIONS

WHY ARE THERE DIFFERENT TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE? For centuries the Eastern Church only had the Bible in Greek, and the Western Church only had the Bible in Latin. Most people weren't fluent in either, so they couldn't read the Bible for themselves.

REFORMATION (1517-1648) – The return. To return the Bible to the people of the Church the Reformers wanted people to have the Bible in their own language and opposed Catholic Europe's current practices. -**Martin Luther (“95 Theses”)** & **John Wycliffe** are just 2 of the dudes who risked their lives to translate the Bible into German & English. *You can check this out for further study: **Remonstrance 1610 (Arminianism)** and **Synod of Dort 1618-1619 (Calvinism response)** for more in depth on 5 key points of separation.

A man named **William Tyndale** was charged with heresy and condemned to death because he **translated the Bible into English**. He was tied to a stake, hung by a noose, and then set on

fire....simply because he wanted people to be able to read the Bible.

Today there are many translations available. At least part of the Bible has been translated into 3589 languages. The NT and portions of other scripture exist in 3589 languages. The full Bible has been translated into 724 languages - That's 97% of all peoples, 7.14 Billion that have portions of the Bible in their language (These stats are from Oct.2022) according to [Wycliffe Bible statistics](#).

TRANSLATION CATEGORIES

"Translations," fall into **3 basic categories**: Word for word, Thought for Thought, and Paraphrase.

#1 – Word for Word Translations = Aka “**formal equivalence**” translations. These translations are about literal precision and emphasize the patterns of the words and seek as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. This type of translation is compatible to legal documents, marriage vows, and contracts. WFW translations have an advantage in studying the Bible because of their closeness to the original language ...sometimes this can be confusing when reading WFW because stylistically biblical grammar/word order/patterns are different than modern English. (Think how sentence structure between English and Spanish differ).

The KJV is also a WFW translation; it remains the best-selling Bible, but it is difficult to read because it's written in Old English. Other WFW translations would be: NASB, NKJV. ---sidenote (in my opinion): The NKJV is one of the worst WFW translations, because they removed a lot of the Old English poetry from the KJV which is really what helps make the KJV worth reading at all.

#2 – Thought for Thought Translations = Aka “**dynamic equivalence**”, aka “**functional equivalence**” translations. These TFT's are built for readability and attempt to convey the full nuance of each passage by interpreting the scriptures entire meaning and not just the individual words. TFT's try to find the best modern cultural equivalent that will have the same effect the original message had in ancient cultures. My fav. TFT's are = NLT & NIV, in that order. CEV is also a TFT translation.

*With any translation at certain points, there's always a "trade off," between literal precision and readability.

#3 – Paraphrase Translations. The paraphrase emphasizes the readability in English. Paraphrase pays even less attention than TFT does when it comes to word patterns and etymology. This is an attempt to capture a poetic nature of the text. Examples of Paraphrase include: The MSG, The Living Bible, The Amplified Bible, Word on the Street (Yes, I have a copy of this if you would like to borrow it).

What about the ESV? The best translation (in my opinion) is the ESV. ESV stands for, the "Extra Spiritual Version," just kidding on that - - but it would be cool if it did stand for that lol. We use the ESV at rest because we believe it to be the best of both worlds (formal + dynamic equivalence). 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. Therefore, it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original. You can read more about the translation philosophy of the ESV [here](#), if you

want.

There is a historical accuracy to the Bible, but another point to consider is that God the Holy Spirit inspired the whole Bible (verbally - God spoke and man wrote like the big 10) and (dynamically - God spoke to man and man's background, culture, setting, and style played part in the writings, like Romans). So, we should also understand that GHSpirit doesn't make mistakes and He's big enough to control canon and translation.

TRANSLATION SUMMARY

A faithful translation tries to achieve a balance of 4 basic things:

#1 – Accuracy to the original text

#2 – The beauty of language

#3 – The clarity of meaning

#4 – The distinguishing of style

While some translations are "better," than others, each has its own strength and weaknesses, that a student of the Bible can benefit from by enjoying multiple translations. Instead of fighting over translations, Christians should praise God for every good translation and trust God the Holy Spirit to use them to transform their lives as we enjoy Him. I'd encourage you to use the ESV as a primary study tool, while others are good for secondary resources... The ESV is imo the best version for accurate Bible teaching/preaching/studying and reading.

*Also, you should be aware (beware) of **corrupt translations**: Such as the Jehovah's Witness = New World Translation, which eliminates the deity of Jesus. This is NOT a translation but a corruption of scripture.

Last thing: Christians don't worship the Bible, we worship the God of the Bible. But, the Bible informs us of who God is and how God is supposed to be worshipped and it's therefore essential to us. The Words of God and God are one in the same ([John 1:1](#)) Remember, "When the Scriptures speak, God speaks." – Luther....so every time you read your Bible out loud, you get to hear God speak through your vocal cords. Pretty cool.