

Presented By Judah Byrams

How God gave Scripture—and how it came to us

July 21, 2026

DIVINE INSPIRATION BIBLE TRANSLATIONS



The Game Plan Tonight

Divine Inspiration
& Bible
Translations

Two parts. One goal: confidence in Scripture.

Part 1 (short): Why Christians call Scripture "God-breathed"

Part 2 (main): How the Bible was copied, preserved, and translated across centuries and languages

Goal: Build confidence and discernment in Scripture — not to win arguments, but to deepen trust in God's Word



What "Inspiration" Means

The Bible is described as "God-breathed," meaning God communicated His message through human authors. This process combined divine origin with human expression, ensuring the message's authenticity and authority.

Not "inspiring" like a song
or speech

God-Breathed and
Human-Written



All Scripture is
God-breathed
and profitable

2 Timothy 3:16–17

Four Purposes
of Scripture

"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

Teaching — doctrine and foundational truth

Reproof — exposing what is wrong

Correction — setting things right

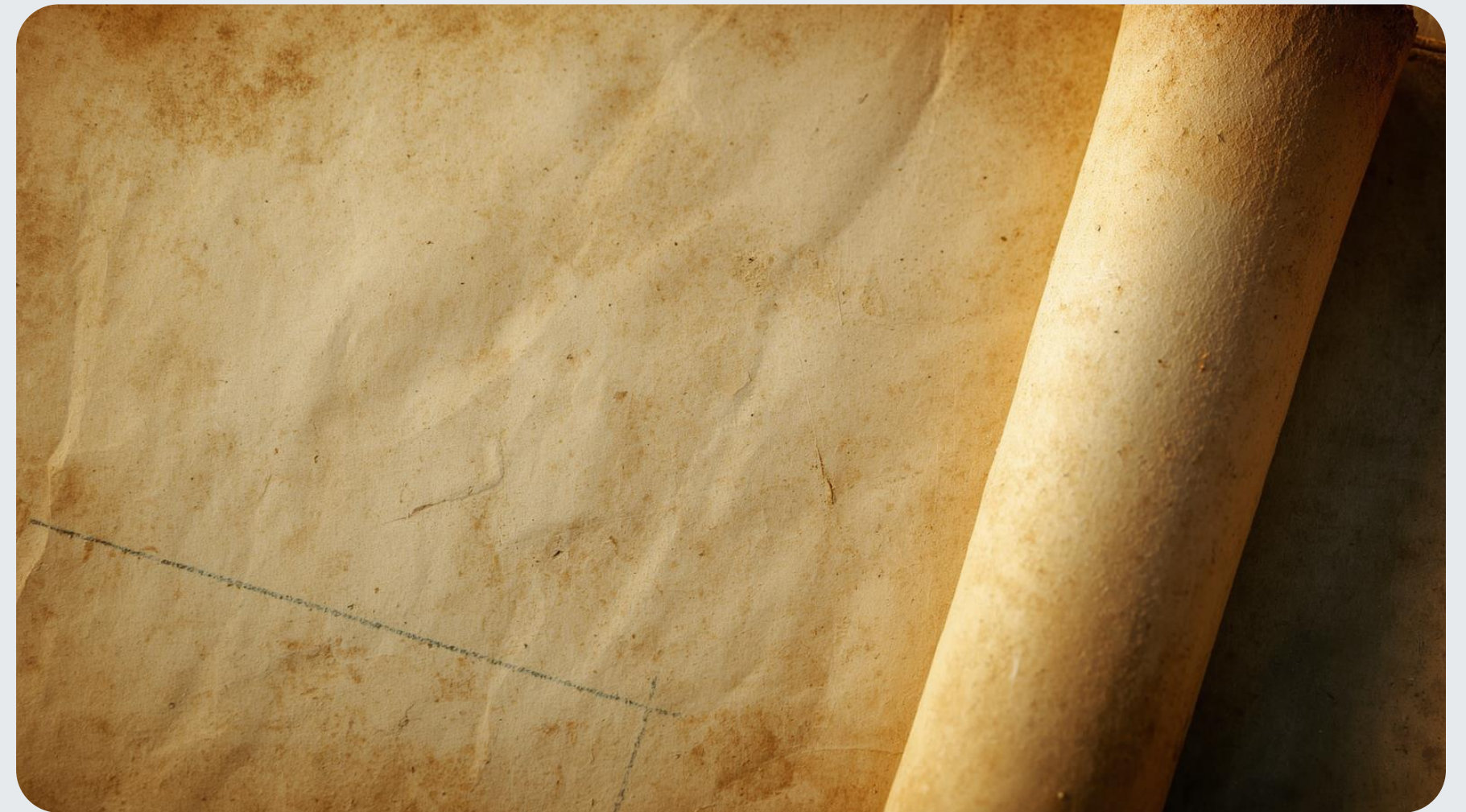
Training in righteousness — shaping godly character



Key Text:
Scripture's Divine
Origin

2 Peter 1:21

Divine Guidance Through Human Writers



"For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit..."

This verse emphasizes that Scripture is not a human invention. The Holy Spirit superintended the writers, ensuring God's message was faithfully communicated through their own words, styles, and personalities.



3 Elements of Inspiration



Divine Causality: God initiates the message—He is the ultimate source of Scripture, not human invention or cultural development alone.

Prophetic Agency: humans write consciously and intentionally—God uses real authors with their own voices, styles, and personalities, not mechanical dictation.

Written Authority: the text carries God's authority



Important Clarifications

Understanding Inspiration Correctly

Three key distinctions every reader should know

1. REVELATION
2. ILLUMINATION
3. INSPIRATION

- There's a Difference!

"ALL
SCRIPTURE"
Not all Authors

Originals vs.
Copies



Why This Matters for Translations

If Scripture is God's Word, then
we care about:

Inspiration →
Transmission →
Translation

When we affirm that Scripture is God-breathed, the logical next step is to value every stage that brings that Word to us—from the original manuscripts to the translation in your hands.

**The SCRIPTURE is the
Final Authority for
Christian Life and
Thought**



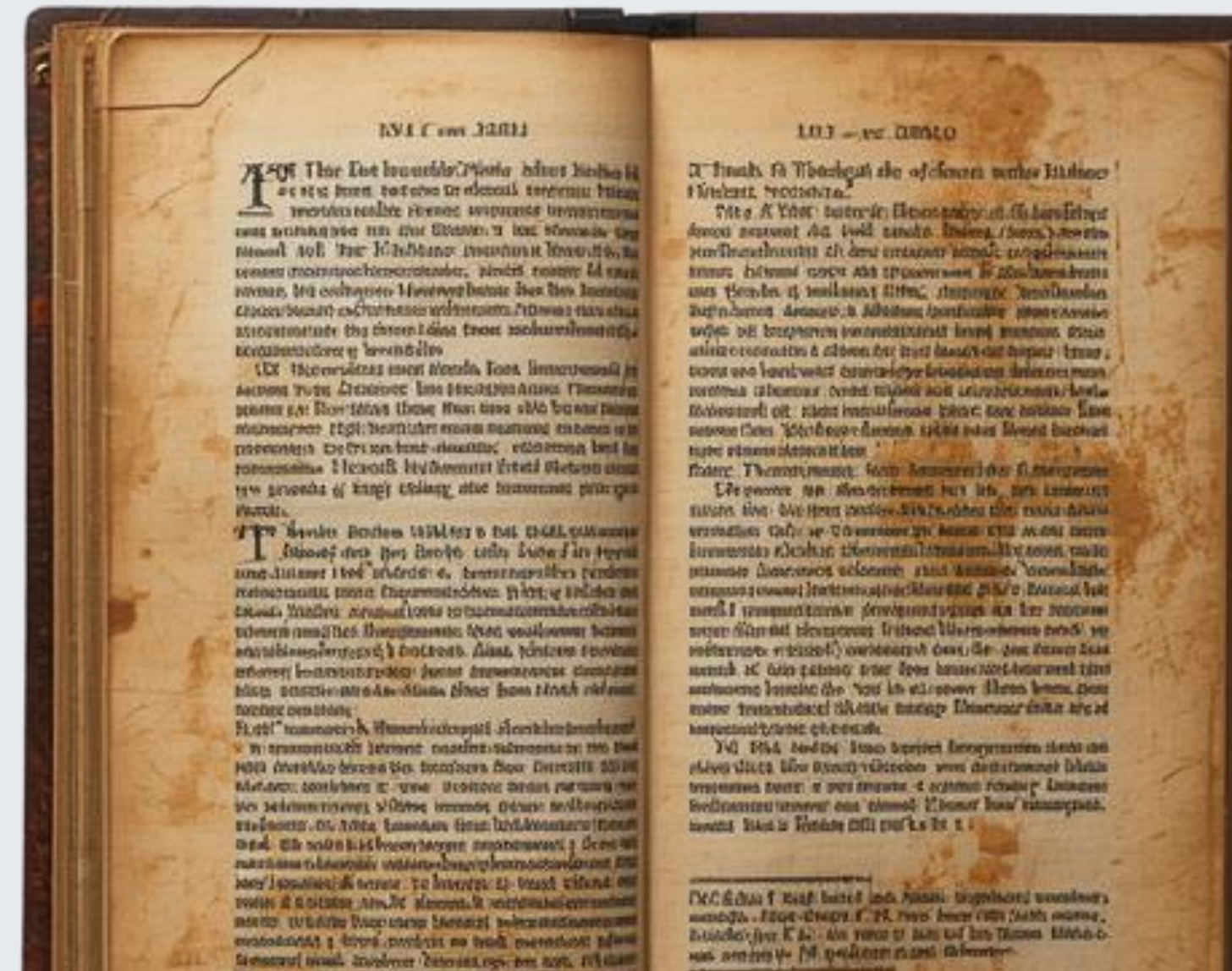
The Big Story in 3 Stages

A timeline of preservation

Discovering Writing 3000 BC

Transmission to other
Languages before 200 BC

And the development of
Printing in AD 1600



What Is a "Translation," Really?

Defining translation in
the context

- From ancient scroll to modern reader

At its heart, a Bible translation is the careful transfer of meaning from the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into a language people can understand today.



Two Main Translation Approaches

Formal Equivalence ("Word-for-Word")

Functional Equivalence ("Thought-for-Thought")



A Helpful Warning

Set realistic expectations
about translation styles

What does this
translation try to
do well?

"More literal" doesn't automatically mean "more accurate" in every verse. "More readable" doesn't automatically mean "less faithful."

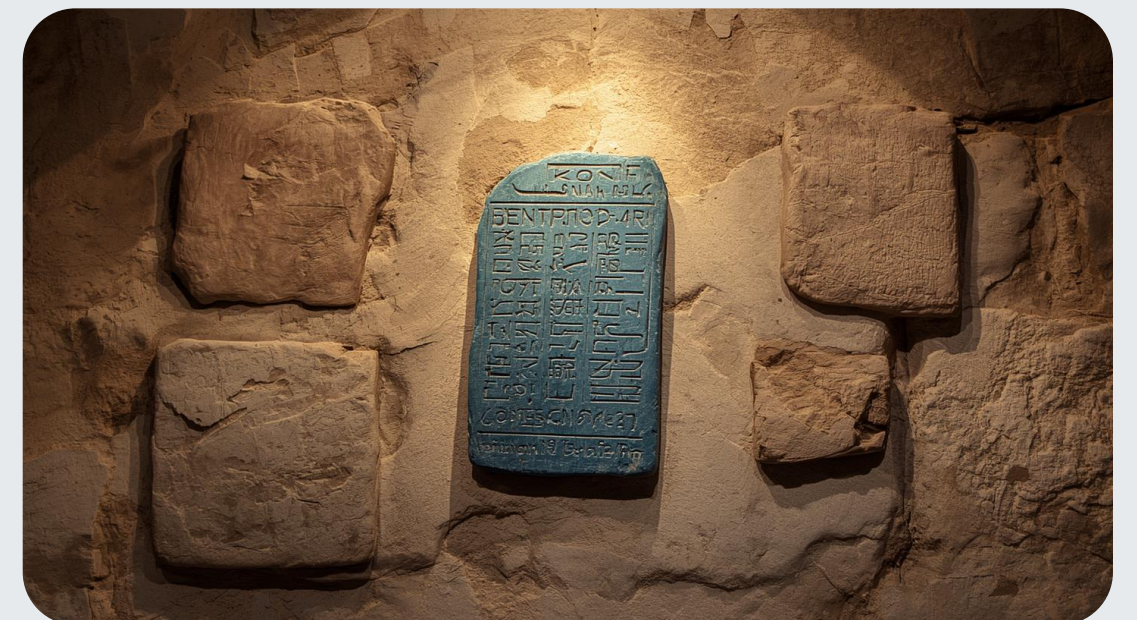


How Scripture
traveled across
languages long
before modern
printing

Ancient Translations (Overview)

A Very Old Practice

The concept of translating sacred texts is ancient,
predating 200 BC.



Samaritan Pentateuch



Medieval Translations

Preserving Scripture Through the Middle Ages

350–1400 AD · Church authority and liturgical use





A Medieval Turning Point

Jerome's Latin Vulgate



How printing, scholarship,
and structured review
transformed Bible
translation

Modern Era (1400–Present): What Changes?

The invention of the printing press
revolutionized access to Scripture,
making Bibles available far beyond
monasteries and elite scholars.

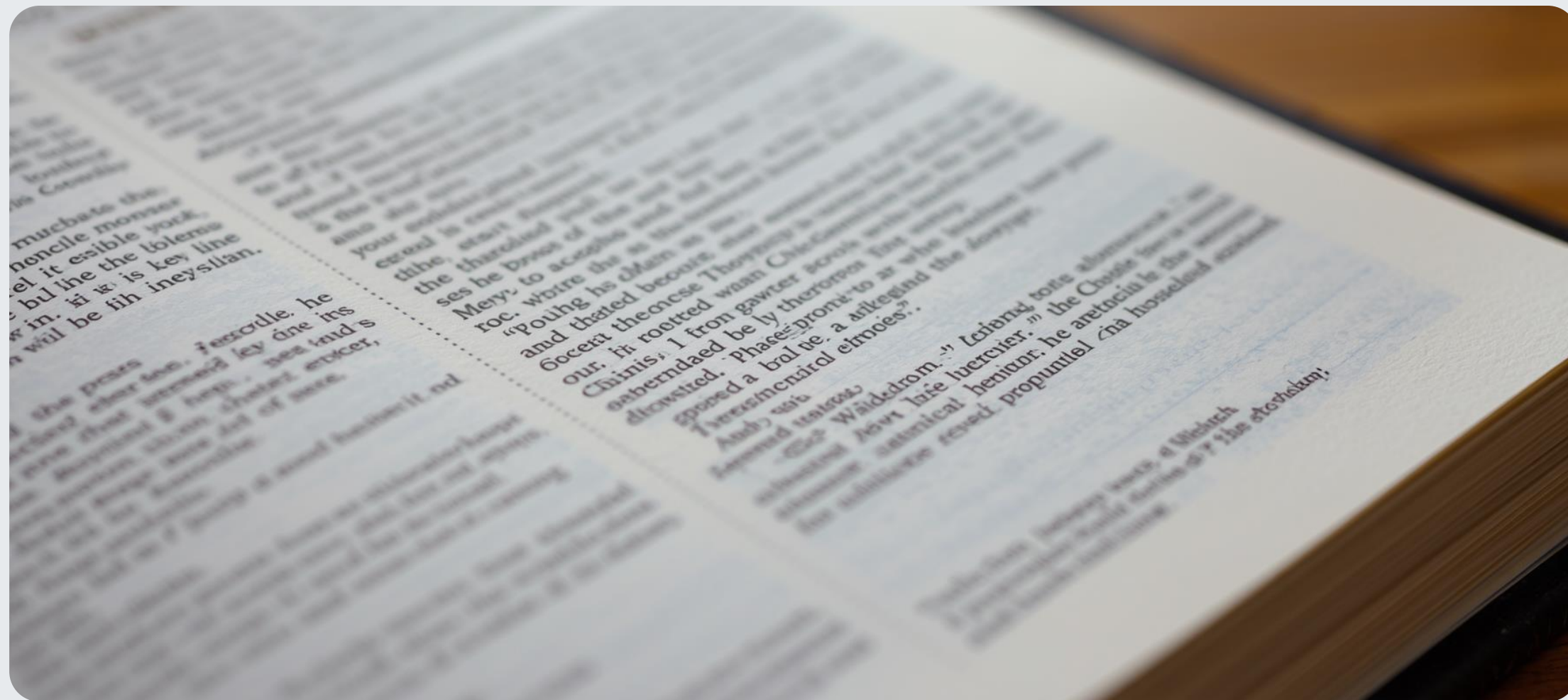
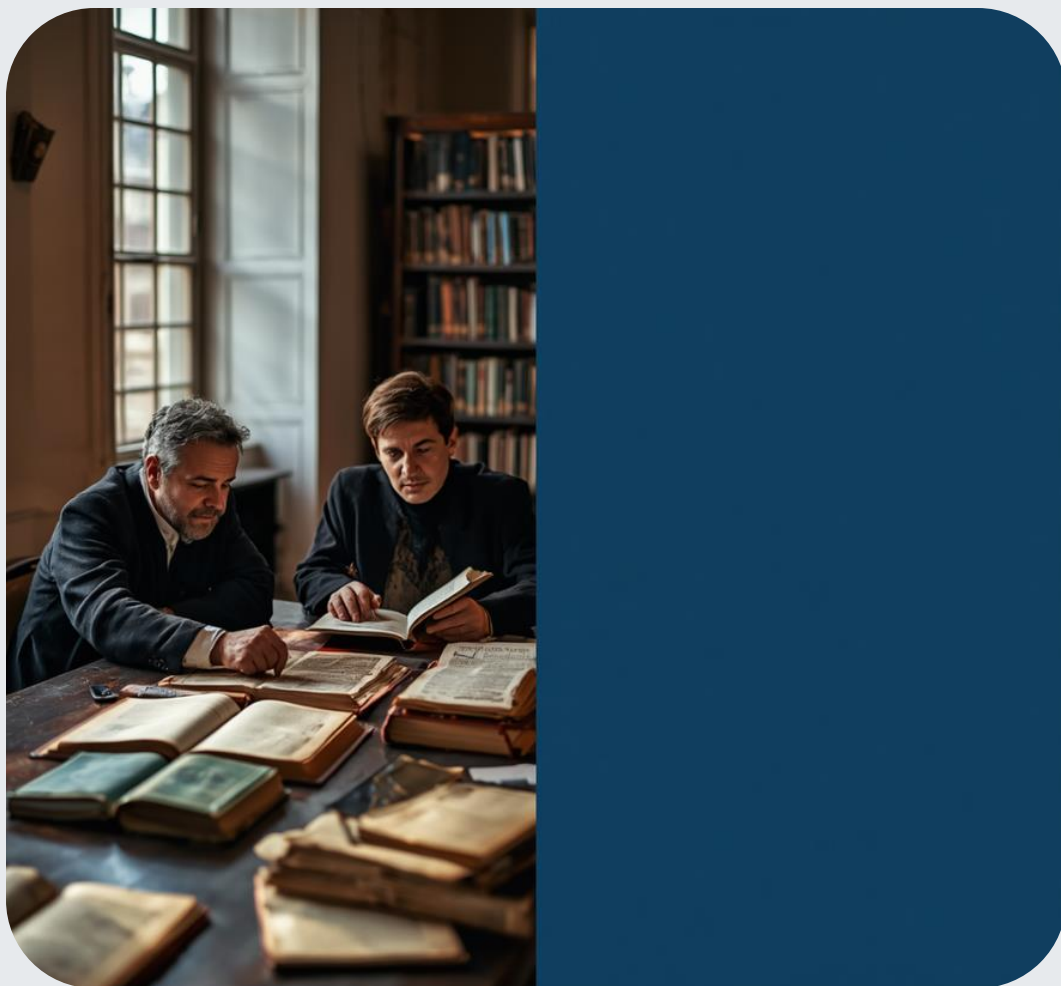




William Tyndale

A Turning Point in Modern English
Scripture

First English Translation
from Original Languages



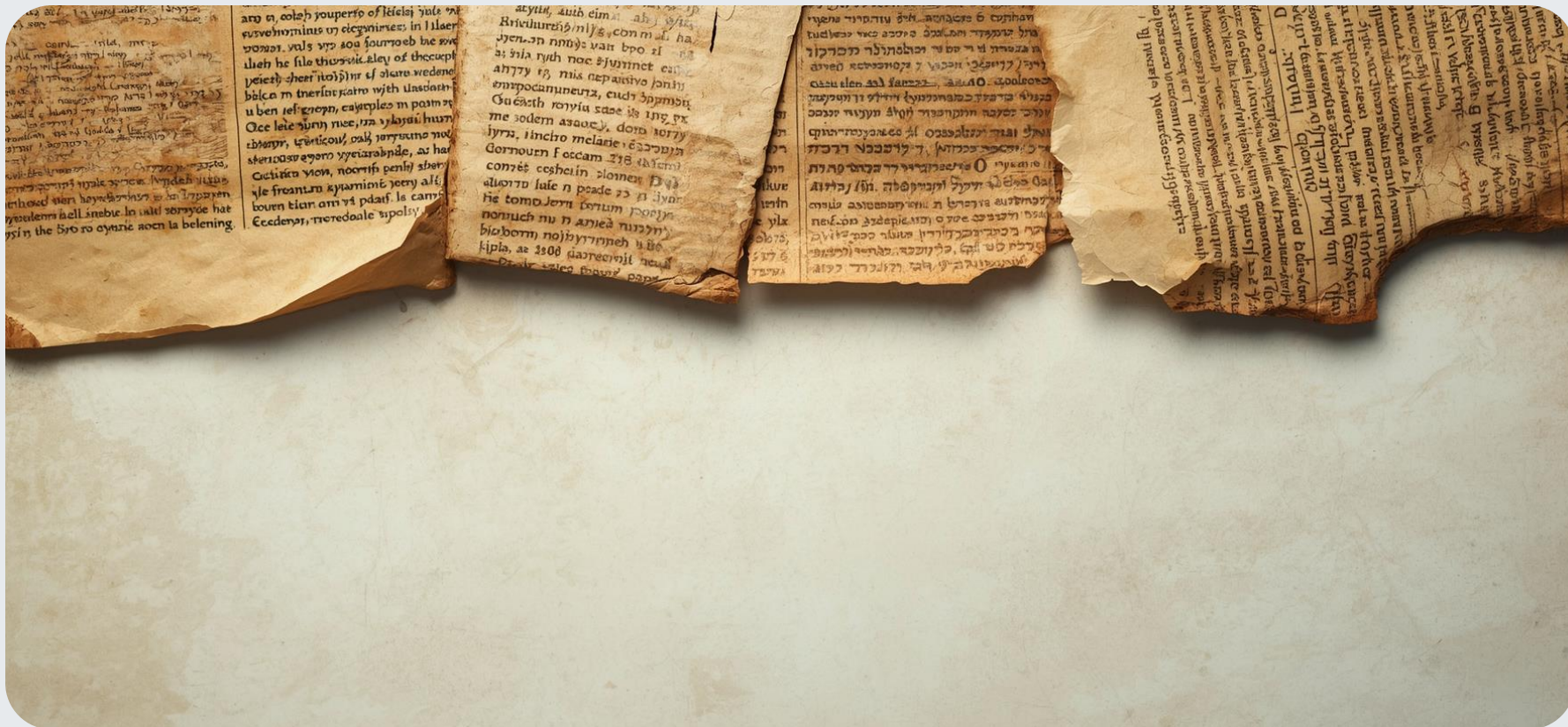
Modern Translation Committees

Confidence in Scripture

How today's translators ensure accuracy and faithfulness

Committees now access earlier manuscripts than ever before, including discoveries from the 20th century.

Translation is careful, not random or haphazard. Teams of scholars with expertise in Greek, Hebrew, and historical context work together with built-in peer review. The result is trustworthy Scripture in our languages.

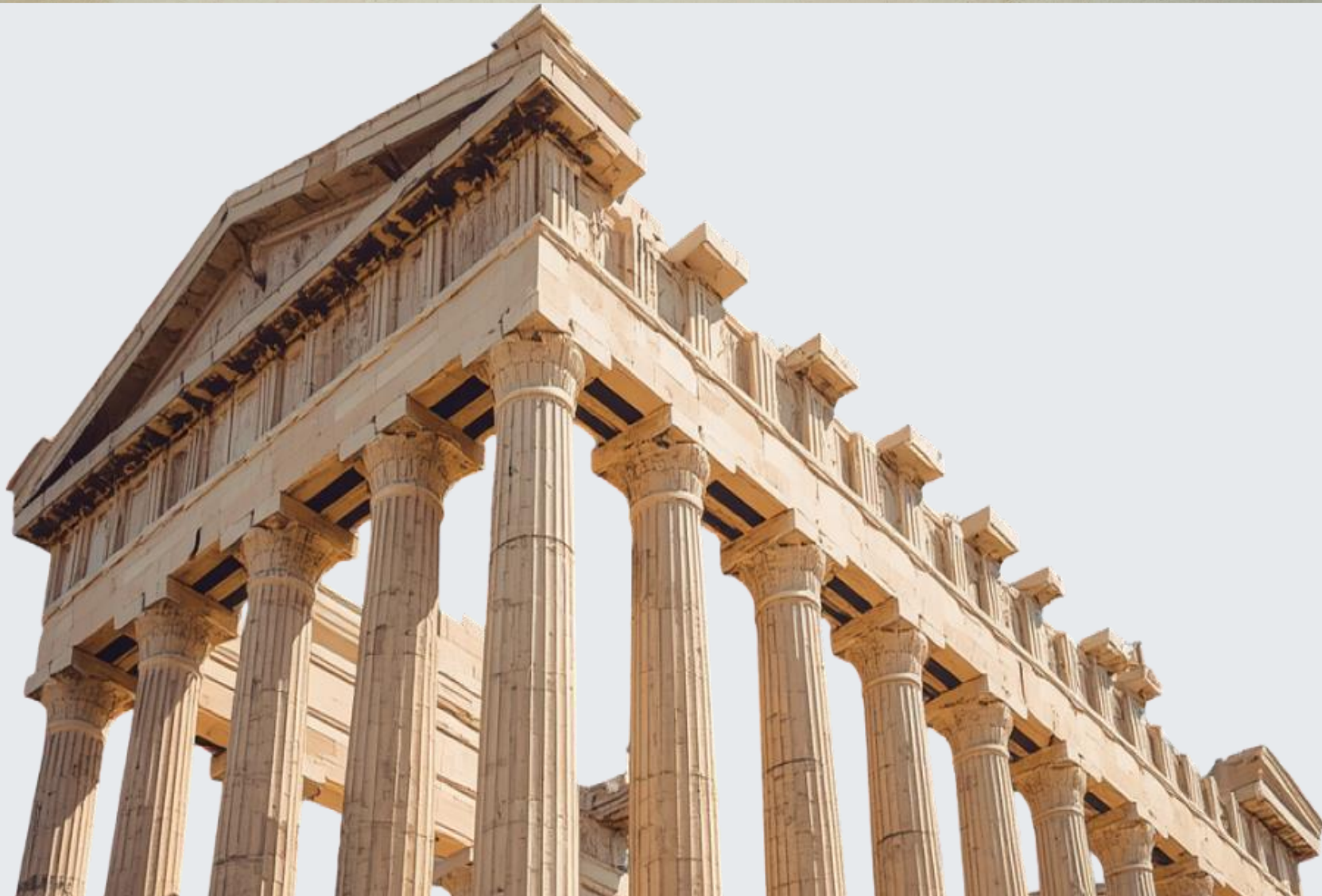


Manuscript traditions in
New Testament studies.
Differences are mostly
technical, not doctrinal.

"Text Types" Note

Byzantine / Received /
Majority: later, many copies

Alexandrian / Critical: earlier,
fewer copies





Word-for-Word Examples What They're Trying to Do

Formal Equivalence
Approach

Closer to original wording and
structure for detailed study



KJV
NKJV
NRSV
ESV
More Literal “Word For
Word” Translations



Thought- for-Thought Translations

Clarity for Today's
Reader

Functional equivalence: meaning
first, natural phrasing second

NIV

NLT

More Thought for thought

The Message Bible

Use with
Discernment

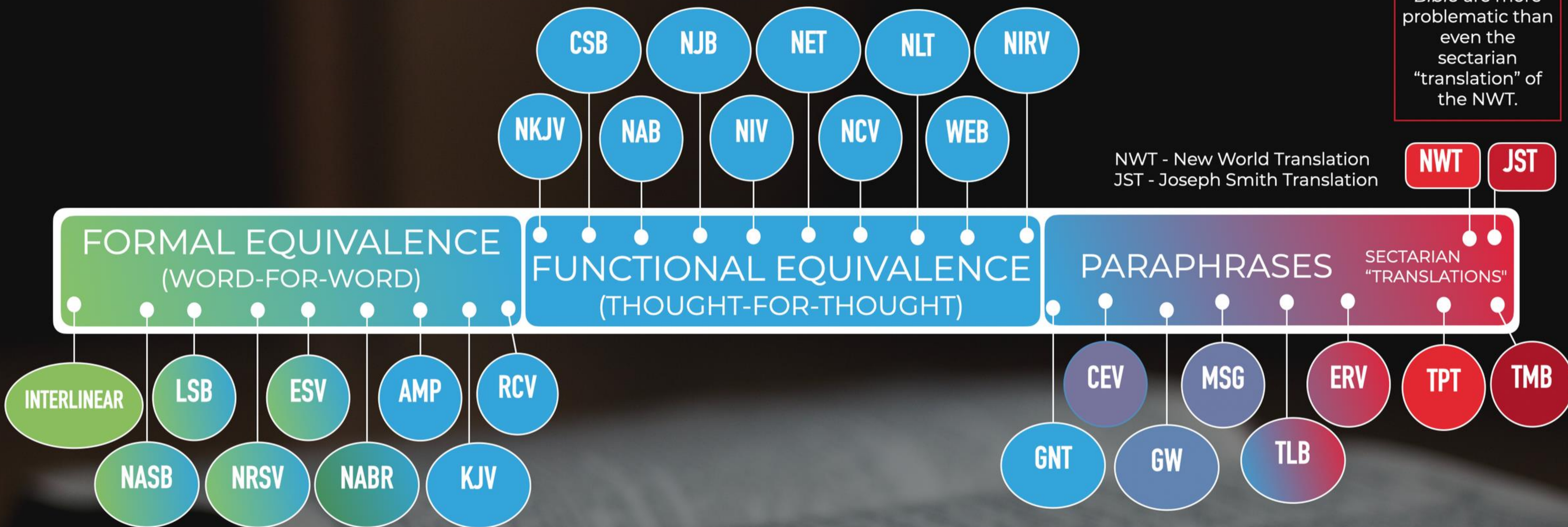
The Message by Eugene Peterson: a conversational paraphrase, not a direct translation. Best used as a supplement for fresh perspectives, not for settling doctrine.



BIBLE TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHIES



In many ways "translations" like TPT or the *Mirror Bible* are more problematic than even the sectarian "translation" of the NWT.



NASB - New American Standard Bible
 AMP - Amplified Bible
 NRSV - New Revised Standard Version
 KJV - King James Version
 NABR - New American Bible Revised Edition
 LSB - Legacy Standard Bible
 ESV - English Standard Version
 RCV - Recovery Version

NKJV - New King James Version
 HCSB/CSB - (Holeman)Christian Standard Bible
 NAB - New American Bible
 NJB - New Jerusalem Bible
 NET - New English Translation
 NIV - New International Version
 NCV - New Century Version
 NLT - New Living Translation
 WEB - Word English Bible
 NIRV - New International Reader's Version

GNT - Good News Translation
 (Good News Bible)
 CEV - Contemporary English Version
 TLB - The Living Bible
 TPT - The Passion Translation
 ERV - Easy to Read Version
 GW - God's Word
 MSG - The Message
 TMB - The Mirror Bible

Practical advice for
confident Scripture
reading and study

Putting It Together: How to Choose a Bible

For in-depth study: choose more
literal translations and compare
multiple versions. For reading aloud
or new believers: choose clear,
readable translations.



Best practice: use more than one
translation sometimes. Ask, "What
did the original author mean?" rather
than "Which English sounds best?"



THANK YOU FOR JOINING

Thank you for joining us tonight! We'd love to hear from you: What Bible translation do you use most, and why? Let's open the floor for questions, reflections, and discussion.

