



### 3: What are the **RECOGNIZED WRITINGS** & **TRUSTWORTHY TRANSLATIONS**?

*How did we get the 66 recognized writings in the Bible today, and what about the other writings that got left out? How are English Bible translations developed, what are the differences between them, and which translations are trustworthy?*

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VISUAL NOTES

**CANON** = collection of writings we recognize as the Old and New Testament

*Canon* is derived from the Greek *kanon*, originally referring to a *reed* used to test for straightness or length. By the 4th century, *canon* evolved to mean "standard", "rule", or "norm"<sup>1</sup>, the common word to describe the collection of writings we recognize as the Old and New Testament.

#### Old Testament Canon

The Old Testament canon was most often referred to as the **Law, Prophets, & the Writings** [Hebrew: TaNaKh = *Torah* (Hebrew for Teaching), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), & *Ketuvim* (Writings)].<sup>2</sup> Jesus quotes almost all of these writings as authoritative.

The **Apocrypha** (*Deuterocanonical* by Roman Catholics) dated to time between the Old Testament and New Testament. They contain some strange stories and good Jewish history, yet Jewish people didn't consider these writings to be Scriptural.

\*Jesus & disciples quoted the Old Testament extensively, but they never quoted these writings as authoritative words from God.

#### New Testament Canon

**How did those 27 separate writings get compiled? What about the other writings that didn't make the cut?**

The New Testament hand-written 1st century manuscripts were being copied & distributed around the known world as separate writings. We have no evidence that the 27 separate New Testament writings put together in book form by the end of the 1st century. Without an approved canonical list, different churches valued certain Gospels and Epistles over others.

#### Marcion's Canon

**Marcion** listed 11 of our 27 NT writings as trustworthy (A.D. 140) - kind of. Marcion believed the God of the Old Testament & the God of the New Testament were not the same.<sup>3</sup> He thought the God of the Jews was manipulative, angry, fickle, & cruel while the God of the New Testament was the God of love. Marcion rejected the Old Testament writings that he claimed had been corrupted by Jewish scribes. He recognized 11 of the New Testament writings including the Gospel of Luke & 10 of Paul's writings (total of 11).

Marcion excluded Matthew, Mark, & John because of their Jewish flavor & affirmations. He kept Luke (written to a Gentile audience), but he mutilated much of it.

- **Luke:** Marcion didn't believe Jesus was born as a human Jewish child so he removed all references to Jesus' birth, genealogy, or Jewishness, which he attributed to manipulating editors (i.e. Jewish scribes).
- **Paul:** Marcion cut out much of the Jewish flavor of Paul's writings, believing Jews had corrupted some of what he wrote.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Thomas D. Lea and David Alan Black, *The New Testament: Its Background and Message*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 70.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Allan Powell, "Tanakh," ed. Mark Allan Powell, *The HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* (Revised and Updated) (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 1010.

<sup>3</sup> R.E. Webber, "Marcion," ed. J.D. Douglas and Philip W. Comfort, *Who's Who in Christian History* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1992), 452.

<sup>4</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture*, 137.

## Need for a New Testament Canon

Without a clear canon of recognized writings, future heretical claims to go unchecked. Marcion's list required a response.

- The writings were officially collected because false teaching needed to be officially corrected. Roman persecution of Christians meant they had to know which teachings they were willing to die for.
- A gradual consensus began to develop among orthodox Christians,<sup>5</sup> and by the end of the second century the core of the New Testament canon was established with the recognition of the four Gospels, Acts, and the thirteen letters of Paul (not including Hebrews that some think was written by Paul).<sup>6</sup>

**Muratorian Fragment** (A.D. 170-180) contains 22 of the 27 NT writings we recognize today. The list includes the 4 Gospels, Acts, the 13 writings of Paul, 1&2 John, Jude, & Revelation. These believers were aware of other writings as well.

*There are also in circulation one to the Laodiceans, and another to the Alexandrians, forged under the name of Paul, and addressed against the heresy of Marcion; and there are also several others which cannot be received into the Catholic Church [meaning "universal"], for it is not suitable for gall<sup>7</sup> to be mingled with honey.<sup>8</sup>*

## Criteria for Canonized Writings

- ✓ **Authors Apostles & Associates?** It must have been an apostle (i.e. Matthew, John, Peter, & Paul) or someone closely connected with an apostle (e.g. Luke, John Mark, James, Jude). Eyewitness testimony is essential to authenticate the incredible claims made by Jesus and his followers in the New Testament.
- ✓ **Content Orthodox Teaching?** The church was to trust the Gospel as taught by the apostles of Jesus, and oppose the teachers & teachings teaching something different.

**Galatians 1:6-9** (NET) I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are **following a different gospel**— not that there really is another gospel, but there are some who are disturbing you and wanting to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we (or an angel from heaven) should preach a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be condemned to hell! As we have said before, and now I say again, if any one is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let him be condemned to hell!

- ✓ **Church Response Universal Acceptance?** The writing had to be "accepted by a broad geographic segment of the church."<sup>9</sup> Considering the cultural diversities within the churches, their agreement of which books belonged in the New Testament canon demonstrates that the Holy Spirit led people from different cultures to recognize the same writings as Scripture.

**What about "the Lost Books of the Bible"?** Here's one example:

### Gospel of Thomas

Eusebius (A.D. 260-340) called this a heretical writing. What about the tests for canonical Scriptures?

✗ **Apostles or Associates?** NOPE, not written until well after the apostles lived, in the mid-2nd century.

✗ **Orthodox Teaching?** NOPE. The **Gospel of Thomas** records the following conversation between Peter and Jesus:

*"Simon Peter said to them, 'Make Mary leave us, for females don't deserve life.' Jesus said, 'Look, I will guide her to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself male will enter the domain of Heaven.'"<sup>10</sup>*

✗ **Universal Acceptance of the Church?** NOPE.

Using this criteria, church leaders around the world were able to recognize the 27 NT writings we have today. These writings weren't determined by the church, but discovered by the church.

☛ **J.I. Packer** writes: *The Church no more gave us the New Testament canon than Sir Isaac Newton gave us the force of gravity. God gave us gravity, by His work of creation, and similarly He gave us the New Testament canon, by inspiring the individual books that make it up.*<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity. Volume I: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation.* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 1984), 62.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>7</sup> Some translate *poison* instead of *gall*.

<sup>8</sup> Presbyter of Rome Caius, "Fragments of Caius," in *Fathers of the Third Century: Hippolytus, Cyprian, Novatian*, Appendix, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, trans. S. D. F. Salmond, vol. 5, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1886), 603.

<sup>9</sup> Lea and Black, 71.

<sup>10</sup> Hank Hanegraaff. *The Apocalypse Code: Find Out What the Bible REALLY Says About the End Times... and Why It Matters Today*, 102-103.

<sup>11</sup> J.I. Packer, *God Speaks to Man*, (Westminster Press 1965), 81.

### Further Examples of the New Testament Canon being recognized over other writings.

- North Africa *The Cheltenham Manuscript* (A.D. 360) recognizes all New Testament writings except Hebrews, James, & Jude.<sup>12</sup>
- Alexandria, Egypt: *The Festal Letter of Athanasius* (A.D. 367), a prescribed canon to the Alexandrian church, is the first document that contains the complete twenty-seven writings of the New Testament alone.
- Laodicea, Asia Minor: *The Sixtieth Canon of the Council of Laodicea* (A.D. 363) includes all 27 books except *Revelation*.
- *The Codex Sinaiticus* (fourth century) contains the entire New Testament (including the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermas) and part of the Old Testament.
- A Church Council, *the Synod of Hippo* (A.D. 393), listed the 27 books of the New Testament, "it did not confer upon them any authority which they did not already possess, but simply recorded their previously established canonicity."<sup>13</sup>
- *The Third Council of Carthage* (A.D. 397), attended by Augustine, recognized the full New Testament that we recognize today, with little deviation from that time forward.<sup>14</sup> Of particular important is the fact that the New Testament canon was not determined by any one Church Council.

### **How are English Bible translations developed & what are the differences that matter?**

**Translation:** Biblical writings transferred from original languages into other languages so the audience can understand it.

**Septuagint:** Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), completed by 200 B.C. (well before the time of Jesus).

- This translation was quoted by Greek writers including Jesus' first disciples, Paul, & the writer of Hebrews.

🔑 **Key Insight:** NT writers believed this translation carried the same authority as the Hebrew writings it was translated from.

Most of the 4 gospels are actually **translations** of what Jesus said. Jesus spoke the common language of Jewish people - *Aramaic*, but the gospel writers translated what Jesus said...in *Greek*. Here are a few examples that demonstrate this to be so:

#### **Mark 5:41** (NET)

Then, gently taking the child by the hand, he said to her, "**Talitha koum,**" which means, "**Little girl, I say to you, get up.**"

Mark notes the words of Jesus in *Aramaic*, then translates to his audience reading in *Greek*. YOUR translation takes the Greek and brings it to our language - *English*. Mark does the same thing later as Jesus is on the cross.

**Mark 15:34** (NET) Around three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "**Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?**" which means, "**My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**"

The writings we have are already a *TRANSLATION* of what Jesus said - *Aramaic* to *Greek*, then translated *from Greek to English*.

### **BIG TRUTH: Translations make the ancient message meaningful for today.**

From the Greek manuscripts came more translations, like Latin, Coptic, Syriac (and many more) - so that more people could understand the Scriptures in their own language.

🌟 **Miriam Adeney** writes:

*Everywhere Christians go, they translate the Bible. This has been noted by Lamin Sanneh, a Christian with a Muslim background who is Professor of History at Yale University. Muslims insist that people learn Arabic, because that is the language of God. But Christians say, "God speaks your language."<sup>15</sup>*

**Wycliff Bible Translators** note that the Bible has now been translated into more than 2,200 languages...for ONE reason:

**Translations make the ancient message meaningful for today.**

### **HOW IS THE BIBLE DIVIDED?**

**Divided by TYPES of writings, not by TIME:**

- **Law/Teaching:** Genesis, Exodus, Lev., Numbers, Deut.
- **History of Israel:** Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Sam, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chron., Ezra, Neh., Esther
- **Writings:** Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Song of Solomon
- **Prophets** (Isaiah, Jer., Lam, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obad., Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Hab., Zeph., Haggai, Zech, Mal.
- **Gospels:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- **Church History:** Acts
- **Letters** (Epistles): Paul's 13, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter; 1,2,3 John, Jude
- **Apocalyptic:** Revelation

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 734.

<sup>13</sup> F.F. Bruce, *The Books and The Parchments*, Rev. ed. (Westwood: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1963), 112-113.

<sup>14</sup> D.A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 735.

<sup>15</sup> Ralph D. Winter and Steven C. Hawthorne, *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement*, 418.

## Chapters and Verses

The current division of chapters and verses was introduced in 1551 in Greek and Latin NT. These were first used in an English translation in Geneva Bible of 1560.<sup>16</sup>

### 2 Warnings:

1. Verses weren't intended to be taken separately. Lifting text from its surrounding text usually blurs the context.
2. Beware mathematical calculations based on chapter & verse numbers since the current system didn't exist until 1500 years after the NT was written!

## HOW WERE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS DEVELOPED & WHAT DIFFERENCES MATTER?



The KJV is a great translation it certainly isn't perfect.

- ◆ Translators used the Greek text (1516) of a Catholic scholar named Erasmus. He used portions of only 8 late manuscripts (11-14 century) of the NT. Since that time, many earlier & more reliable manuscripts have been uncovered and are used for translating.<sup>17</sup>
- ◆ 1611 KJV version included *the Apocrypha* & had several mistakes, including: "Then cometh Judas" in Mat. 26:36. Today it is rendered in the KJV as, "Then cometh Jesus."
- ◆ 1613 printing omitted the word "not" from the 7th commandment, & read "*Thou SHALT commit adultery.*" This King James edition became known as the "Wicked Bible."<sup>18</sup>
- ◆ Since 1611 there have been many revisions of the KJV: 1613, 1629, 1638, 1729, 1762. But the 1769 is the edition that is still in use today. Why not stick with the 1611? Because **language changes over 158 years!**

**KJV translators never intended for this to be the last English version.** See the Preface to the 1611 King James Bible:

*...without a translation in the common language, most people are like the children at Jacob's well (which was deep) without a bucket or something to draw the water with; or like the person mentioned by Isaiah who was given a sealed book and told, "Please read this," and had to answer, "I can not, because it is sealed" (Isaiah 29.11).<sup>19</sup>*

**Translations make the ancient message meaningful for today. In order to OBEY it, we must UNDERSTAND it.**

Today's modern translations don't start with the KJV and change the words to modern terms. Translators use earlier manuscripts than the KJV translators knew about, & go straight from the manuscripts - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek - TO English.

### Preface to the 1611 King James Bible:

*As the King's speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King's speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.<sup>20</sup>...Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures.<sup>21</sup>*



<sup>16</sup> F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd ed. rev. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 206.

<sup>17</sup> John Ankerberg; John Weldon, *Facts on King James Only Debate* (Kindle Locations 124-125).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, (Kindle 117-121).

<sup>19</sup> Erroll F Rhodes and Lianan Lupas, eds., *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface to the King James Version of 1611 Revisited* (New York: American Bible Society, 1997), 71-72.

<sup>20</sup> James R. White, *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations?* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2009), 120.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 122.

## Differences in Translations? (Dan Wallace: [bit.ly/WallaceTranslations](http://bit.ly/WallaceTranslations))

Formal Equivalent - **Word for Word**; studying languages (NET, ESV, NAS, KJV, NKJV, AMP)

Functional Equivalent - **Thought for Thought** (CSB, NIV, NLT, NCV, GW)

**Paraphrase**: The Message; The Living Bible (\*use with caution)

**Corrupt** (attempts to change meaning): New World Translation, KJV from Mormons (multiple notes from Joseph Smith), *The Passion Translation*

❓ Are the NIV and other Modern Translations CORRUPT? [bit.ly/KJVvsModern](http://bit.ly/KJVvsModern)



### KJV Compared to NIV

**Isaiah 14:12** (KJV) How art thou fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

**Isaiah 14:12** (NIV) How you have fallen from heaven, **morning star**, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!

The KJV translators borrowed this term - **Lucifer** - from the Latin Vulgate. **Lucifer** is *Latin* for "morning star" or "day star". They didn't translate it to English! \* Note: This is the *ONLY* place in the KJV Bible that uses 'Lucifer'.

🔗 The question is not how the NIV compares to the KJV, but how the translation compares to the oldest Hebrew, Aramaic, & Greek manuscripts.

### KJV Compared to ESV

**1 John 3:17** (KJV) But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and **shutteth up his bowels of compassion** from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

**1 John 3:17** (ESV) But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet **closes his heart** against him, how does God's love abide in him?

Which one is '*a translation in the common language*' (KJV Preface)? Which makes the ancient message meaningful for today?

### What's the best translation?

Choose from a 'word-for word' or 'thought-for-thought'. **The best translation is the one you READ & HEED.**

### Translations communicate the message of Jesus in a meaningful way.

If your translation *CONFUSES* you instead making things *CLEARER* for you, ask a mature Christian to help you find a Bible.



1. **READ IT** Take the 10-minute challenge: Read 1 chapter of Scripture each day. (choose 1 gospel)
2. **WRITE IT** Write down *INSIGHTS* you gain and the *QUESTIONS* you have.
3. **SHARE IT** *SHARE* what you *READ* with another *CHRISTIAN*.
4. **LIVE IT** *OBEY* what *GOD SAYS*.

## heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

\* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!

\* Or call our **deacons & wives**: Alan & Christy Androski (850-464-1428), Freddy & Joyce Howard (850-973-0047), Tim & Joni Hughey (850-464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (850-253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (850-464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (850-464-6188), or Tom & Martha Waddail (850-973-0011).

## discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. What challenged or encouraged you most from today's teaching? Look back in your notes to help explain your answer.
2. What does **CANON** refer to and why were some writings included while others were not? Spend some time talking about the significance of the 3 criteria for canonical writings. In other words, why does that really matter?
3. **Read Galatians 1:6-9**. What is Paul concerned/frustrated about and why does this matter so much to him? What should it matter *to us*? What are some examples of how a person might distort or be turned to 'a different gospel' (v.6)?
4. How did learning about how the New Testament canon was recognized help you or lead to more questions?
5. How significant was it to recognize that Jesus' disciples translated what He said and did into another language? Why do you think that is and what should it say about God's view of translations from the original language? Remember the quote from Miriam Adeney? "God speaks \_\_\_\_\_" (fill in the spaces) - what do you think about that?
6. **Remember our FEET2FAITH steps?** Read it. Write it. Share it. Live it. What have you been reading? Share your insights or questions. How have you *LIVED OUT* what you read this past week?
7. **Share prayer needs and pray for one another.**