

Bibliology: How we got the Bible

ATCO Wednesdays Teaching Series 11/5/25

Lesson Eight

BIBLE TRANSLATION

EARLY BIBLE TRANSLATION – Prior to the Middle Ages

I. Original Languages

- The Bible was written in languages common to God’s people as God spoke
 - OT = Hebrew
 - NT = Greek
- In order for other people groups to be able to read the Bible, the Bible had to be translated into other languages

II. Earliest OT Translations (*From Hebrew*)

- ***The Greek Septuagint***
 - Septuagint = LXX
 - Latin for “Seventy”
 - a. 2nd Century BC (250 – 100 BC)
 - b. Legend: 72 Jewish translators (6 from each tribe of Israel)
- ***Greek Revisions to the Septuagint***
 - Three Jewish revisers: Theodotion, Aquila, Symmachus
 - Referred to in antiquity as “The Three”

- **Aramaic Targums**

- Targum means: “translation”
- Paraphrase of the Hebrew text

III. Early Translations of the Whole Bible (Latin, Syriac, and Other Languages) – From Greek

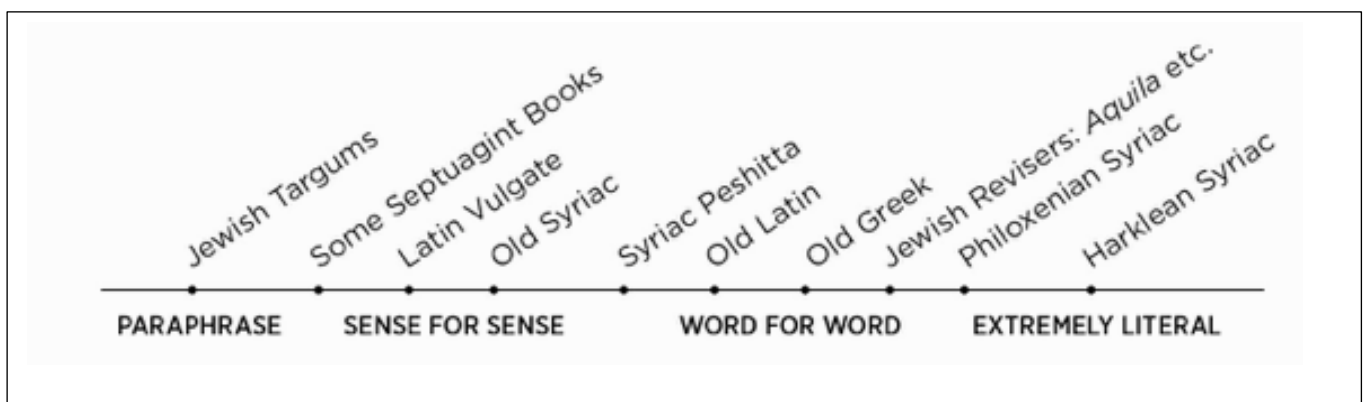
- **200 – 300 AD**

- After Christianity exploded, Bible translation progressed into more languages
 - a. Greek and Aramaic translations primarily served the Jewish community dispersed abroad
 - b. The writers of the NT wrote in Greek because this was the language of the Roman Empire
- **The need to translate the whole Bible into more languages arose for two reasons:**
 - a. Christianity’s spread and missional surge
 - b. The inclusion of Gentiles into the church

- **Latin:** Old Latin and Latin Vulgate

- **Syriac [A dialect of Aramaic]**

- Four distinct versions: Old Syriac, Peshitta, Philoxenian, and Harklean



EARLY BIBLE TRANSLATION – During the Middle Ages (700 – 1500)

I. The Wycliffe Bible

- First translation of the Bible into English (1328-1384)
- John Wycliffe
 - Oxford Theologian (England)
 - Described as “morning star of the Reformation”
 - Wanted the common people to have a Bible in their language
 - The Bible was banned and burned in England in England

II. Other Translations from the Middle Ages

- Italian, French, and German
- Roman Catholic opposition
- Set the stage for the Reformation Period

III. The Printing Press (1450)

- Johannes Gutenberg
- Germany
- Single most important event to influence the spread of the Bible

IV. Translations from the Original Languages

- Martin Luther translated a German Bible

- William Tyndale translated an English Bible
 - Strangled and burned at the stake in 1536

 - Last words – *“Lord, open the King of England’s eyes.”*

 - “Father of the English Bible”