

Early Church – The Word Collected (Establishment of the Biblical Canon)

- Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures, 24/39* books written 2000-ish BC to 350 BC)
 - Originally written primarily in Hebrew, but some written in Aramaic (ex. Daniel)
 - Translated from Hebrew and Aramaic to Greek around 130 BC for the Jewish Diaspora or “Hellenized” Jews. Greek translation known as the Septuagint (from the 70 Jew scholars completing the translation)
 - The primary translation quoted by Jesus and the Apostles
 - First Christian scriptures prior to the letters of the New Testament being written

* The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are the same in content, but do differ in order and division
- New Testament (27 books/letters written 48 AD to 100AD)
 - Written or witnessed by the Apostles
 - Written originally in Koine Greek
 - Copies of these letters originally circulated individually, generally not as a complete collection
 - Other writings, which are not now recognized as part of the Bible (extra canonical writings), were at times in use by the early church to varying degrees (Ex. Didache, Shepherd of Hermes, Epistle of Barnabas, 1 Clement, etc.), but these were also regarded as secondary and not apostolic (not having the authority of the Apostles)
 - Early church councils recognized the authority of the apostolic letters as divinely inspired (council of Hippo in 393, council of Carthage in 397)
- First Complete Translation – Latin Vulgate (Jerome, 347-420)
 - Commissioned by the pope to revise the common Latin translations of the four synoptic Gospels in 382 from older Greek manuscripts.
 - Encouraged by Augustine and others to continue translation of the New Testament
 - Taught himself Hebrew to help with translation of the Old Testament (he is the first Christian to translate the Old Testament from Hebrew instead of the Greek Septuagint)
 - Produced a complete translation of the Bible by 405
 - “ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ”

Medieval Era– The Word Restrained, but not Chained

- Western Church and the Latin Vulgate (500 AD to 1500 AD)
 - Latin was no longer a commonly spoken language by
 - Increasing restriction of scriptural literacy outside of the Clergy
 - Various laws and restrictions in place throughout Europe that prevented the reading of scriptures by commoners (including peasants and professionals)
 - Translation of the Vulgate into common languages forbidden and punishable by death
- Cyril and Methodius (815 – 885)
 - Missionary brothers to Moravia (present day Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Ukraine)
 - Created the Cyrillic alphabet to translate the scriptures into Slavic language
- Peter Waldo (1140 – 1205)
 - French lay church leader that started the Waldensian Movement
 - Translated parts of the Vulgate into French and promoted the common reading and teaching of the scriptures
 - Much of Waldo’s teaching acted as early glimpses of what was to come in the Reformation

- John Wycliffe (1328 – 1384)
 - Taught a necessity of Scriptural reading by and for common Christians (not clergy)

The Protestant Reformation – Light out of Darkness

- Gutenberg printing press (1440)
 - First movable type reproduction print press, allowing books, letters, and tracts to be quickly reproduced at an affordable price (mostly among professionals)
- Fall of Constantinople (1453)
 - Many Eastern Christians flee to the Western church, bringing with them their Greek and Hebrew manuscripts
- Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536)
 - Humanist Scholar, particularly interested in classical Greek writings
 - Compiled and edited the first critical edition of the Greek New Testament in 1516 (from manuscripts brought out of the eastern orthodox church after the fall of Constantinople)
- Martin Luther (1483 – 1546)
 - Used the Greek Bible produced by Erasmus to develop the theological underpinnings of the reformation of the Church.
 - While in hiding in Wartburg Castle (after having been condemned at Worms), Luther translates the both the Hebrew Bible and Greek New Testament into the German vernacular language.
 - Promoted the doctrine that Scripture alone is the final authority on life and godliness.
- William Tyndale (1494 – 1536)
 - Asked the Catholic church in England for permission to translate the bible into common English language in 1523 but was rejected.
 - Fled from England to Germany in 1524
 - Translated the Greek edition of the New Testament into English while in Worms and most of the Old Testament while in Antwerp (both in secret).
 - Betrayed while in Antwerp and executed in 1536.
 - “I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!”
- Geneva Bible (1560)
 - A continuation of Tyndale’s translation, and the first English Translation based entirely on the original Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic Texts
- King James Version (1611)

Missionary Movements – The Natural Marriage of Translation with Gospel Mission

- William Carey (English, 1761 – 1834)
 - Translated all or portions of the bible into 40 languages while performing missionary work in India
- Adoniram Judson (American, 1788 – 1850)
 - Translated the bible into the Burmese language while in Burma

Translation in a Modern World

- Today there are 700+ complete translations of the bible in distinct languages and 1000+ partial translations into distinct languages
- American Progression of Bible translations
 - American Standard Version (update of KJV to modern language)
 - New American Standard Version (word for word or literal translation from the original languages)
 - New International Version (phrase for phrase or functional translation from the original languages)
 - English Standard Version (“essentially literal” translation from the original languages)