

THE HISTORY AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE BIBLE

GENERAL OUTLINE:

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

As to reliability

As to revelation

As to results

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

The Old Testament

The New Testament

The Apocrypha

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The definition of inspiration

The difficulties of inspiration

THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

In terms of canonicity

In terms of manuscript evidence

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

(12 principles)

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS STUDY

AS TO RELIABILITY

How ACCURATE are its statements?
cf. Mat. 5:18; Rev. 19:9; 21:5; 22:6

How AUTHORITATIVE is its message?
‘thus saith the Lord’ – 415 times

“saith the Lord” – 854 times

“saith the Lord God” – 257 times

“the word of the Lord” – 258 times

“the Lord hath spoken” – 30 times

“it is written” – 80 times

AS TO REVELATION

God speaks through what He has made – Psa. 19:1-4

God speaks through supernatural acts – Exo. 7:5; Num. 14:11; Deu. 4:35; John 20:30-31

God has spoken directly to certain individuals in the past (by direct revelation):

cf. the book of Genesis

cf. Mat. 5:17-18; 24:34; Luke 24:44-45; John 10:35; Heb. 1:1-2; Rev. 22:18-19

God speaks to us through His Son, Jesus Christ – John 1:14, 18; 14:8-9; Heb. 1:2

God speaks to us today through the Bible – cf. Psa. 119

Question: How do we know if a person is speaking from God’s revelation or not?

- (1) If it doesn’t happen, then God didn’t tell them it would! – cf. Deu. 18:21-22
- (2) If the gospel that is preached is not the gospel of Jesus Christ found in the Bible, then God did not speak to them! – cf. Gal. 1:6-10

- (3) If what they say does not agree with the Bible, then God did not speak to them! – cf. Isa. 8:19-20; 2 Pet. 3:2
- (4) If they add any additional truth to what the Bible says, then God did not speak to them! – cf. Rev. 22:18-19

AS TO RESULTS

The experience of salvation - 2 Tim. 3:14-15

The exercise of the senses to discern right from wrong – Heb. 5:11-14

The effectiveness for prayer – John 15:7; 1 John 5:14

The enablement for victorious living – Psa. 119:11; John 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:2-3

The equipment of the believer for every good work – 2 Tim. 3:16-17

THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE BIBLE

Writing and Language

Alphabetical writing – 1800 b.c.

Earliest – did not divide words

Written in Hebrew (Aramaic in Ezra & Daniel 2:4-7:28) – court language of Babylon

Textual History

Earliest copy before Dead Sea Scrolls – 900 A.D.

Massoretic text (“tradition” – ones who put a “hedge” around the Scripture)

Vowel markings – between 6th & 8th centuries A.D.

Marginal notes on the tradition of the text – scribes changed the text in only 11 places, according to one tradition, and only 18 places according to another tradition (all 18 avoid extreme anthropomorphisms)

Summary notes at end of every book – revealing number of verses, words, consonants in the book

Ancient Versions of the Old Testament

Aramaic Targums – “translation” or “interpretation” – cf. Ezra 4:18; Neh. 8:8
Synagogues translate orally into Aramaic – like “paraphrasing” (Living Bible)

Jews conducted business in Aramaic – the trade language

Returned to the land as bi-lingual

Aramaic because the language of Israel (Jesus spoke it – Mark 5:41; 7:34
– and Paul used it – 1 Cor. 16:22)

Aramaic used until time of Mohammed

Strong tendency against anthropomorphisms

Used “word of God” 179 times in place of “God”

Substituted “Shekinah” for “God”

Substituted “glory” for “God”

Highly interpretative and strong on paraphrasing – use with extreme caution!

Greek Versions

The Septuagint (LXX)

Background: A letter of Aristeas says it was dated 100 b.c. Supposedly, scholars came from Israel, six from each tribe (72), went to Alexandria, housed separately, and translated separately. When they came together, their translations were miraculously alike!

Consider these facts:

- (1) Jewish groups in Egypt as early as Nebuchadnezzar – a growing colony around Alexandria
- (2) Alexandria became the predominant place of Greek language and culture after the conquests of Alexander the Great
- (3) Translators probably Egyptian, acquainted with Greek, not Hebrew
- (4) Quotations from the Greek Pentateuch are found in other Greek literature before 200 B.C.

- (5) LXX probably the completion of other attempts
- (6) Associated with Origen and Alexandrian school of text criticism
- (7) Associated with Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus
- (8) Early evidence of Greek translation of Hebrew
- (9) Jew rejected the LXX when the Christians began to use it

Aquila's Translation – a word for word translation in 2nd cent. A.D. to make OT acceptable to anti-Christian Jews

Theodotian's Translation – tried to bring Greek text into harmony with Hebrew – revision of older, pre-Christian Greek texts – completed in 2nd cent. A.D.

Symmachus' Translation – tried to make a smooth reading, but did not revise old works with Hebrew idioms

Origen's Hexapla – six columns, including the above four Greek translations, with his own transliteration in Greek, along with the Hebrew text

Note: Today's Greek OT's date from 4th cent. A.D. – rely primarily on two MSS, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, and the work of Origen. Due to Dead Sea Scrolls, respect for Hebrew is greater!

Latin Versions

Old Latin - around 200 A.D. - North Africa - appears to be a translation from a Greek text, rather than Hebrew.

Latin Vulgate - 390-404 A.D. by Jerome – he translated from Hebrew, included the Apocryphal books, but questioned their canonicity. Council of Trent (1540 A.D.) did an update on the Vulgate – Sixtine edition appeared in 1590 A.D. – Clementine amended it in 1592 A.D.

Syriac Versions

Peshitta (Old Syriac) - 3rd century A.D. –quoted often in 4th century A.D. - did not include apocryphal books – translated from Hebrew, not Greek (left out the book of Chronicles originally)

Svriac Hexapla - translation of Origen's 5th column (LXX) - published in 616 A.D.

Patristic Quotations - the church fathers (leaders) wrote voluminously and quoted extensively from the Scriptures - Cyprian (died 258 A.D.), bishop of Carthage, for example, has over 740 O.T. quotations in his writings.

Other Versions - manuscripts from the 4th century onward include Coptic, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian versions.

Hebrew Translations - the first five were used to reconstruct the original text before the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls

The Cairo Codex of the Prophets - 895 A.D.

The Leningrad Manuscript - 916 A.D. (contains only the latter prophets)

The Aleppo Manuscript - 10th century A.D.

The British Museum OR 4445 (Gen. 39:20 –Deuteronomy 1:33 only)

The Leningrad MS B-19 A - 1008 A.D.

The Dead Sea Scrolls - discovered in 1947 A.D. Fragments from every book, except Esther - dated from 100-250 B.C.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

List of Books

Athanasius of Alexandria (367 A.D.) gives us the earliest list - 27 books

Jerome and Augustine - 27 books

Synod of Hippo (393 A.D.) - confirms 27 books

4th Synod of Carthage (397 A.D.) - 27 books

Writing Materials

PAPYRUS - (plant/paper) - used in Egypt 3000 years before Christ - used up to the 4th century A.D.

NOTE: In 1912, Kenyon lists 19 Biblical papyri; in 1925, A.T. Robertson lists

34 fragments; in 1945, Henry Thiessen lists 53; in 1955, Bruce Metzker lists 63; in 1958, Driver lists 68; today, some 92 have been catalogued. Written in uncial script using large, upper-case letters with no separation between words.

LEATHER - Leather scrolls did not wear out as fast as papyrus - only these two (papyrus and leather) were used in a scroll format.

PARCHMENT - skins of sheep and goats – used up until the 10th century A.D. - main material for books from 4th century

VELLUM - calf skins - used to the invention of printing

Types of Writing

UNCIAL - capital letters (Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus) - used from 4th century A.D. to the 9th century A.D.

NOTE: In 1912, we had 168 uncial MSS; in 1943, we had 212; in 1956, we had 232; in 1958, 252; today, we have about 270 of these MSS that are catalogued.

MINUSCULE - cursive or script writing, using smaller letters - the majority of Greek MSS –about 2800

Age of Manuscripts (How it is determined)

Writing materials

Letter size and form

Punctuation

Text Divisions

Ornamentation

Color of ink

Texture and color of parchment

Languages

GREEK VERSIONS - over 5500

PRIMARY VERSIONS - made directly from Greek

Syriac

Coptic

Latin

Gothic

SECONDARY VERSIONS - made off other versions than Greek

Vulgate (from Old Latin)

Persian (from Peshitta)

Armenian

Georgian

Ethiopic

Arabic

Patristic Quotations (church fathers / leaders)

Problem - determining the accuracy of the text which the church father quotes

Value - fixing the time of a certain text type and its geographical location

Categories:

Apostolic Fathers (up to 125 A.D.)

Ante-Nicene Fathers (125-325 A.D.)

Post-Nicene Fathers (325-600 A.D.)

Eastern Fathers (Syriac)

Western Fathers (Greek or Latin)

Lectionaries - selected portions of Scripture to be read in the churches (like responsive readings) - vary from a few verses to 3 or 4 chapters; average length = 10 verses - they appear from the 6th century onward, although Chrysostom used it and called it the

“lesson for today” - most begin with the phrase, “On a certain occasion” - in 1958, there were 1838 of these in both Uncial and Minuscule MSS; today, there are about 2200 lectionary MSS

NOTE: Out of the 5500 Greek MSS of the New Testament, only about 200 are complete; another 50 contain all but the gospels, and about 1500 contain all or part of the gospels only. MSS evidence in Latin numbers close to 10,000; and the total number of manuscripts reaches above 20,000. Before the 4th century A.D., quotations of the New Testament in the writings of the church fathers number over 86,000 separate references!

THE APOCRYPHA

The Apocrypha is a collection of ancient Jewish writings written between 300 b.c. and 100 A.D. - means “hidden” –regarded as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Trent (1540-46 A.D.), but rejected by the Protestants.

List of Books - refers to 15 books (14 if “Letter of Jeremiah” is put with Baruch) - 11 of the 14 books are considered to be “Holy Scripture” by the Roman Catholic Church

The First Book of Esdras

The Second Book of Esdras

The Book of Tobit

The Book of Judith

The Additions to the Book of Esther

The Wisdom of Solomon

Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Sirach

The Book of Baruch

The Story of Susanna

The Song of the Three Children

The Story of Bel and the Dragon

The Prayer of Manasseh

The First Book of Maccabees

The Second Book of Maccabees

Acceptance by the Church

Contained in the LXX

A separate section in Jerome's Latin Vulgate

In Luther's German Bible of 1534 – separate section at end of the Old Testament

Separate sections in Coverdale's English Bible, the Bishop's Bible, and in the King James Bible of 1611 A.D.

Not found in Hebrew translations

Puritans rejected them - demanded they be dropped from King James Bible as early as 1629 A.D.

Reasons for rejecting them as "canonical":

Not a part of the Bible of Jesus and the early church

Never quoted in the Bible

Church fathers separated them from "canon"

Not included as "Scripture" until Council of Trent

Historical and geographical inaccuracies

Lack of prophetic spirit

Lower level of writing

NOTE: New Testament refers to Apocrypha in Jude 14 and Hebrews 11:35 but does not cite it as Holy Scripture. It cites it the same way Paul referred to heathen poets (Acts 17:28).

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

THE DEFINITION OF INSPIRATION

“The act of God by which His revelation is communicated in written form”

II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21

Inspiration refers to the writings, not the writers -“every writing God-breathed” (the universe and humanity are also the product of the creative breath of God)

Inspiration refers to the control of the Holy Spirit over the writers so that what was written was exactly what God intended - John 14:26; 16:13; 2 Peter 1:20-21

2 Samuel 23:2 - “The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue”

Mark 12:36 - “For David himself said, by the Holy Spirit”

Acts 1:16 - “which the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David spoke before concerning Judas”

Acts 28:25 - “Well spoke the Holy Spirit by Isaiah, the prophet, unto our fathers”

Inspiration is the work of God, using prophets and apostles as human channels of His revelation to us – Ephesians 3:3-5; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:3-4

cf. Matthew 1:22; 2:5, 15, 17,23; 3:3; 4:14; 12:17; 13:14, 35; 15:7; 21:4; 24:15; 27:9; Gal. 1:12; 2 Pet. 3:15-16

Inspiration guarantees the accuracy and reliability of the Bible.

In terms of FULFILLMENT - Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-46

In terms of INTERPRETATION - John 10:34-36 (cf. Psalm 82:6-7) (cf. 2 Peter 1:20-21)

In terms of COMPLETENESS - Matthew 23:35 (Abel is the 1st martyr - book of Genesis; Zechariah is the last martyr - book of 2 Chronicles, the last book in the Hebrew Bible of 22 books - same as 37 books in English) - cf. Revelation 22:18-19

THE DIFFICULTIES OF INSPIRATION

In terms of various THEORIES:

ORDINARY - inspired like Shakespeare - level of mere human genius

DYNAMIC - thoughts of God; words of men

DEGREES - some parts more inspired than others

MORAL - moral and spiritual teachings inspired; history and science questionable

MECHANICAL – dictation

In terms of the TRANSMISSION of the text by those who copied it:

INEXACT QUOTATIONS - cf. Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3

Inspiration requires that the truth is told accurately, not that the quote be quoted verbatim.

It may only be an interpretation of an Old Testament quotation.

Translation from one language to another may be involved.

VARIANT REPORTS - same incidents in gospels

Different views by different writers can still be reported accurately by each.

Jesus Christ no doubt taught the same truth at different times and in different ways.

The superscription on the cross was in three languages (John 19:20)

Matthew 27:37 - "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews"

Mark 15:26 - "The King of the Jews"

Luke 23:38 - "This is the King of the Jews"

CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS

Is the passage in the original text, or confirmed by MSS evidence?

Is the translation absolutely correct?

Is the interpretation the only possible one?

Is our present knowledge final?

Is reconciliation impossible?

UNSCIENTIFIC EXPRESSIONS - like “ends of the earth” or “four corners of the earth”, “sun rising,” etc.

Common vocabulary uses such expressions.

The Bible was written for all peoples, and uses the language of appearance.

HUMAN ERRORS - by those who copied the text

Slip of the pen

Words similar in sound or appearance confused

Omission of words

Marginal notes treated as text

Errors of memory or repetition

In terms of the TRUTHFULNESS of Jesus Christ Himself - Matthew 5:17-18; Luke 24:44-46; John 10:34-36

In terms of the TESTIMONY of the writers themselves –

Joshua 1:8; 11:15; 24:26

1 Samuel 10:25; 2 Samuel 23:1-3

1 Kings 14:18-19, 29; 15:23, 31; 16:14, 20, 27,34; 22:39, 45

1 Chronicles 29:29-30

2 Chronicles 32:32; 33:18-19; 35:26-27; 36:21-22

Ezra 1:1; Nehemiah 8:8

Psalms 119:89; 138:2

THE INERRANCY OF THE BIBLE

DEFINITION: The Bible is without error in its original autographs, accurately reporting all matters which are written in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments.

IN TERMS OF CANONICITY

“canon - the rule or standard by which something is measured.”

cf. 2 Corinthians 10:13,15, 26; Galatians 6:16 (“rule” or “line of things”)

The term “canon” was used first by Athanasius in 367 A.D. to refer to the collection of authoritative and inspired writings. The Old Testament “canon” was evaluated strongly by the Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. Some books were disputed (such as Song of Solomon for its sensuality, Ecclesiastes for its secular emphasis, and Esther for its failure to mention the name of “God.”), but clearly established to be canonical on the basis of both external and internal evidences.

LANGUAGE - the Old Testament contains 22 books in the Hebrew Bible (called the “Tanach”) which contain the exact same content as the 39 books in the English Bible. Portions of Ezra and Daniel are written in Aramaic, a related language to Hebrew, and the court and trade language of ancient Babylon and Persia. The New Testament contains 27 books written in Greek, with frequent expressions from Aramaic, the language spoken in Israel during the first century A.D.

AUTHORSHIP - to be a part of the “canon” of the Bible, it was essential that a book be written by a recognized prophet or apostle - cf. Ephesians 2:20; 3:3-5

INSPIRATION - to be a part of the “canon” of the Bible, evidence of Divine inspiration must be proven by the testimony of the writers themselves, by Jesus Christ Himself, by eyewitnesses of what is recorded, by the witness of the Holy Spirit in the believers as they read the books, and by archaeological and historical accuracy.

ACCEPTANCE - to be a part of the “canon” of the Bible, the books needed to be circulated, read, and accepted without reservation as being divinely inspired by the believers in the churches.

NOTE: There are three major periods of history in which the issues of the canon were evaluated and discussed:

(1) CIRCULATION AND GRADUAL COLLECTION (70-170 A.D.) This includes the work of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Marcion, Papias, and the writings entitled the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, and the Shepherd of Hermes.

(2) EXTENSIVE THEOLOGICAL WRITING (170-303 A.D.) Includes the work of Irenaeus, Clement, Tertullian, and Origen, and clearly indicates the existence of a “canon” of Holy Scripture.

(3) FORMAL COLLECTION AND ACCEPTANCE (303-397 A.D.) Involves the work of church councils, which basically tested what was already there and universally read and accepted by the churches.

COMPLETION - the reasons why the Bible was considered to be a complete and final revelation from God

Theological reason - nothing is omitted that believers need to know!

Logical reason - early church fathers / leaders were closer to the issue!

Factual reason - no attempt was made to change the canon until the Council of Trent (1540-46 A.D.), a reaction to objections by the reformers regarding church tradition being more important than the Bible itself, and the failure of many church teachings to be supported by Biblical authority!

Experiential reason - it has the proven power to save and change lives!

Biblical reason - God indicates that His written Word would be a complete and final revelation!

Exodus 20:1; Deuteronomy 4:2; 8:3; Psalm 19:7; 119:89,152,160;
Proverbs 30:5-6; Isaiah 40:8; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:31; John
10:35; 16:13; Romans 10:17; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 15:1; Galatians 1:9
Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:2-4; Jude 3; Revelation 1:1; 22:18-19

IN TERMS OF MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

THE OLD TESTAMENT - the greatest evidence for the authenticity of the Old Testament was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 A.D. Fragments were found in 14 caves, and included portions from every book of the Old Testament except Esther. There were numerous portions from Deuteronomy, as well as commentaries and manuals on communal life at Qumran.

The expression, “it is written,” appears frequently in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but clearly refers to authority of canonical Scriptures; no non-canonical writings are referred to in this manner.

A simple comparison of the Hebrew of Biblical writings found among the Dead Sea Scrolls with the various Hebrew texts of later history (gap of 1000 years), reveals a remarkable similarity and agreement. The Jews were extremely careful and amazingly accurate in their copying of Biblical writings.

THE NEW TESTAMENT - with 5500 Greek manuscripts and 10,000 Latin manuscripts and another 4000 in various other languages, plus over 86,000 separate references quoted in the writings of church fathers, we have a volume of evidence that is unparalleled in the history of ancient writings (before the invention of printing) that were simply copied by hand.

Classifications of manuscript evidence

BYZANTINE text - began with Chrysostom, and includes the majority of manuscripts, and was universally read and accepted by the church - often called Textus Receptus, or the "Received Text."

WESTERN text - most frequently quoted in the church fathers, and primarily based on the Latin manuscript evidence.

ALEXANDRIAN text - an Egyptian tradition, encouraged by Origen - promoted in modern times by Westcott and Hort's revision of the Greek text - based primarily upon two MSS, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus. This tradition has become the foundation of most modern English translations in the 20th century.

Greek Translations

COMPLUTENSIAN POLYGLOT - 1514 A.D. - first to be printed

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS - 1516-19 A.D. - first to be published (other editions in 1522, 1527, and 1533 A.D.)

ROBERT STEPHANUS - editions in 1546, 1549, and 1550 A.D., the latter being the primary text used by the King James translators

ELZEVIR PARTNERS - editions in 1624, 1633, and 1641 A.D. The 1633 A.D. edition gave the name "Textus Receptus" to the Greek text.

BRIAN WALTON - first to make a collection of variant readings - 1657 A.D. - using the text of Stephanus, and added Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Beza.

JOHN MILL - first editor to collect evidence of patristic quotations.

J. A. BENGEL - 1734 A.D. - first to classify the MSS authorities into two groups:

AFRICAN - fewest and oldest

ASIAN - majority of MSS

J. J. WETSTEIN - published editions of the Textus Receptus in 1751 and 1752 A.D. with a critical apparatus and a system of cataloging the MSS.

SEMIER & GREISBACH - classified MSS into three groups in 1767 A.D.

ALEXANDRIAN (Syriac, Coptic, and Ethiopian)

EASTERN (Antioch & Constantinople)

WESTERN (Latin & patristic quotations)

CONSTANTINE TISCHENDORF - found the Codex Sinaiticus in 1844 A.D. at St. Catherine's monastery at Mt. Sinai.

WESTCOTT & HORT - 1881 A.D. – published Greek text with no critical apparatus – based on two MSS: Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus.

NOTE: Consider these facts about the WESTCOTT & HORT Greek text which has become the foundation behind many modern English translations.

(1) Codex Vaticanus - reported to be in the Vatican Library since 1481 A.D. - written on vellum with 3 columns and no ornamentation. It ends at Hebrews 9:14, and excludes the Pastoral Epistles and Revelation. It contains 7579 changes from the Textus Receptus, and also contains the Apocryphal books in the Old Testament.

(2) Codex Sinaiticus - over half of the leaves are missing; it contains the Epistle of Barnabas and the Shepherd of Hermes; it contains 9000 changes from the Textus Receptus.

(3) These MSS differ in the gospels over 3000 times with each other! Tischendorf changed his 8th edition of the Greek text in 3369 places when compared with his 7th edition, all on the basis of Codex Sinaiticus! In terms of English translations, over 36,000 changes have been made because of this "evidence"!

(4) The condition of these MSS (beautiful by comparison with others) makes them highly suspicious - they don't look used as they should have been!

(5) The evidence of the Papyri MSS of the 20th century A.D. was not available for the Greek text of Westcott & Hort. The Papyri evidence is much older than these two MSS and, by and large, supports the readings of the Textus Receptus.

(6) Because a given manuscript is older, does not mean that it is the best. P47 is the oldest MSS of Revelation, but definitely not the best, for we have only 10 out of 32 leaves!

English Translations

JOHN WYCLIFFE (1320-1384 A.D.) – translated from Jerome's Latin Vulgate, of which there are 8000 manuscripts.

WILLIAM TYNDALE - first to be printed from the Greek text of Erasmus - 1525 A.D.

MILES COVERDALE - first English Bible printed - 1535 A.D.

GENEVA BIBLE - first to use verse and chapter divisions - 1560 A.D.

KING JAMES VERSION - 1611 A.D.

NOTE: A committee of 54 men began work in 1607 A.D. and finished in 1610 A.D. They spent hours daily in prayer, expressing total loyalty to God's Word, and checking and re-checking with colleagues lest the slightest mistake would be made. The primary Greek text was the 3rd edition of Stephanus, published in 1550 A.D. It has dominated Bible translation in English for 385 years, in spite of many attempts to show its inadequacies and archaic expressions.

ENGLISH REVISED VERSION - 1881-85 A.D. - based on Greek text of Westcott & Hort

AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION - 1901 A.D. - based on Greek text of Westcott & Hort

WILLIAMS TRANSLATION – 1937 - completed by Charles B. Williams under the auspices of Moody Bible Institute, followed the Greek text of Westcott and Hart, attempting to translation the thought of the passage rather than a word-for-word translation

REVISED STANDARD VERSION - 1952 A.D. - generated a great deal of controversy over translation of Hebrew word, almak, in Isaiah 7:14, changed from "virgin" to "young woman"

PHILIPS TRANSLATION - 1958 A.D. - a paraphrase that received extensive promotion and usage for a number of years before the publication of the Living Bible.

GOOD NEWS FOR MODERN MAN - 1966 A.D. - promoted as an evangelistic tool - started to use more paraphrasing to communicate to the contemporary generation

THE LIVING BIBLE - 1971 A.D. - the most popular paraphrase ever - done by Kenneth Taylor, basically to communicate with his children

THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE - published by the Lockman Foundation in 1971 A.D. 54 Hebrew and Greek scholars of evangelical and fundamental persuasion were used in the project. It is an updated version of the 1901 American Standard Version.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION –1978 A.D. - promoted widely and proclaimed often as the finest text in English today – its desire is to present a readable text for today’s English-speaking world.

THE GOOD NEWS BIBLE - 1979 A.D. - the official title is “The Bible in Today’s English Version” - it was produced by the United Bible Societies for use throughout the world. Its stated goal is not to follow traditional vocabularies and styles in other versions, but to present the message of the Bible in everyday, natural English.

THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION - 1982 A.D. - it tries to maintain the beauty and language of the King James, and at the same time, remove the archaic expressions. The changes were far more extensive than originally promised, but it seems to have accomplished its stated goals in the light of its sales.

NOTE: In one sense, it is sad indeed to see the controversies over which English translation is the best when so many languages have yet to receive one verse of Scripture in their own tongue. To view English as being the best language to communicate the original languages of the Bible is not only ignorant and immature, but may reveal the pride and arrogance of those who speak it! The problem behind Bible translation is not “English,” but rather what Greek text (in the case of the N.T.) one is using for that particular translation. The changes that were made in the Greek text of Westcott and Hort in the late 1800’s from the majority of manuscripts that had given us a Greek text we know as the “Textus Receptus” - are too great to ignore. These changes were based on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, which are certainly not “the best” or “the oldest” or “the most accurate,” as so many

marginal notes in modern English translations have tried to promote. The truth is that the Greek text used for producing the King James Version of the Bible is still the most reliable and is based, by and large, upon the majority of manuscripts. May God give us all the wisdom we need to evaluate these matters, and the kindness of the Lord toward those who may disagree with us?

Consider these simple facts:

1. The KING James translation uses the fewest multi-syllabic words among the various modern English translations available today.

2. The KING James Version when compared with other English translations that have been widely circulated reveals a lower grade level of reading skill.

3. The King James Version is the only English version that clarifies the singular or plural use of the second person personal pronoun.

- "you" - found in modern English translations, referring to either one person or many persons
- "thee" and "ye" - used in the King James, clearly distinguishing between the singular and plural

4. The archaic expressions (words that have either changed their meaning or are no longer being used by English-speaking people) are fewer than most people realize, and are usually clarified in the margin or notes of most copies of this translation. They are also changed in the text of the New King James Version of the Bible.

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

The word "hermeneutics" refers to the science of interpretation. While this study is not intended to be exhaustive in terms of the subject, it needs some attention in this course because it is such a vital part in the understanding of the Bible.

Consider the following basic principles:

FAITH - the matter of dependency and prayer (cf. Psalm 119:18, 26-27, 33-34, 68, 73, 169; Hebrews 11:6)

HOLINESS - a clean life and pure motives (cf. Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9, 13; Matthew 25:41; 2 Corinthians 2:17; Hebrews 12:14; 1 Peter 2:1-3)

OBEDIENCE - doing what God commands and pleases Him (cf. Psalm 119:100; John 7:17; James 1:22-25)

HOLY SPIRIT - the one Who inspires and illuminates (cf. John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

JESUS CHRIST - the central Person in its message (cf. Luke 24:44-45; John 16:13-14; Acts 8:26-36)

SPIRITUAL MATURITY - our growth in grace and knowledge (cf. 1 Corinthians 2:6; 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Peter 3:16-18)

DILIGENT STUDY - examining and comparing Scriptures (cf. Psalm 119:99; Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15)

SIMPLICITY - seeing the text as it is and for whom it was written (cf. Psalm 119:130; Matthew 11:25-26; 2 Corinthians 11:3, 6)

CONTEXT - observing the passages surrounding a given word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, topic, or book

LANGUAGE - finding the root meaning of a given word, noting its Biblical and historical usage, understanding how the various clauses and phrases are connected together in a given passage, and making sure of the grammatical form of the words

CULTURE - the ways, methods, manners, tools, literary productions and institutions of any people

Four basic factors of cultural understanding:

Geography

Politics

Customs

Religion

Four basic facts about interpreting a given culture:

Don't treat cultural factors as moral absolutes!

Don't allow cultural factors alone to determine the interpretation!

Don't confuse cultural factors with the application of Biblical principles!

Don't ignore cultural factors in your understanding!

SYMBOLIC LANGUAGE - making a literal fact or truth more graphic or visual

Examples:

SIMILE - comparison of two unlike things, using words such as "like" or "as"

METAPHOR - comparison without connecting words

PARABLE - extended simile, comparing unlike things that are easily understood to reveal truth that is difficult to comprehend

PERSONIFICATION - making inanimate objects animated

HYPERBOLE - exaggeration for effect

PARADOX - a truth that seems absurd

RIDDLE - statement designed to puzzle or hide

ANTHROPOMORPHISM - attributing physical characteristics to God

Explanation:

- (1) If literal sense makes sense, seek no other sense!
- (2) Examine the context carefully!
- (3) Distinguish carefully between the literal and the figurative!
- (4) Discern accurately the spiritual truth by inductive study, asking three basic questions:
 - (a) Are there parallel passages to consider?
 - (b) Does the truth conflict with any details of the passage?
 - (c) Does it agree with other Scriptures?