

Introduction

When we begin to study the Bible, starting in Genesis 1:1, we read, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” and this is written in Hebrew. However, the important question before us is, “When was it written and by whom?” As born-again believers in Jesus Christ, we quite often take for granted the transmission of the Bible, but as we move into the 21st century, as believers in Christ, we can no longer afford to take such a cavalier attitude about biblical transmission because such transmission is going to be challenged on “every corner,” both metaphorically and literally. As born-again believers in Jesus, we call the Bible the Word of God, but why do we do so? Paul writes in II Timothy 3:16-17 about “inspiration of Scripture,” and just what is meant by his statement? It is important, therefore, to comprehend the language that is used in this incredibly important passage: “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷ that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (II Timothy 3:16-17). We will be looking at this passage in minute detail in later chapters, but let it be said at this point that as one does a thorough, legitimate, and as comprehensive a study as possible about “inspiration” in the transmission of Scripture (which is what we are going to do), which includes a comparative analysis of other religious and philosophical literature from a non-biblical perspective, a significant difference will be seen beyond the surface similarities that exist in all such writings.

We will begin, therefore, by looking first of all at the beginning of written history that began with ancient Sumer, and in doing so, we will examine how that ancient culture perhaps impacted the beginning history of the Old Testament, and especially the first 22 chapters of Genesis. From there we will move into the Akkadian culture and discover what appears to be some direct linkage with the Akkadian language and the Old Testament, biblical text. During the time of what is described as the “Israelite bondage” in Egypt and the Israelites ultimate deliverance and departure from Egypt, we will analyze the actual development of the Hebrew language, as well as the Ugaritic language, which many feel played a major role in the development of classical Hebrew as we know it today.¹ Then, we will explore the formation of Hebrew and Aramaic,

¹ William M. Schniedewind and Joel H. Hunt, *A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 27-30.

with the Hebrew being postulated as an amalgamated development of the Phoenician language already being spoken in Palestine before the “arrival of the Israelites” coming out of Egypt,² and Aramaic which ultimately replaced Hebrew as the spoken language in Palestine subsequent to Ezra and Nehemiah.³ After the fall of Samaria in 722 BC to the Assyrians⁴ under Shalmaneser V (726-722 BC),⁵ his brother, Sargon II (721-705 BC),⁶ actually carried out the deportation of northern Israelites from Samaria to Assyria, as well as importing other ethnic peoples into Samaria.⁷ There is much more that we will discuss about the Samaritans and the utter disdain the Judean Jews had for them, but what is most significant at this point is that the Samaritan Jews ultimately developed their own Pentateuch (i.e., the first five books of the Bible – Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, & Deuteronomy). There are differences between the Jewish Masoretic text and the text of the Samaritans, which is most likely because the Samaritan Pentateuch was taken from a different, Pentateuchal text in circulation from what the Judean Jews used. One big difference is that in the Samaritan Pentateuch, Mount Gerazim is the place that is to be the center of worship for the Jews, versus Jerusalem,⁸ and this was the discussion that Jesus was having with the “woman at the well” in Samaria. Therefore, I want to quote that entire passage at this point so that you will see the unquestioned significance of the Samaritan Pentateuch with regard to the focus of those to whom Jesus was reaching out to, as well as those who were responding to Him with regard to the Eternal Truth He was communicating:

When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John ² (although Jesus Himself was not baptizing, but His disciples were), ³ He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. ⁴ And He had to pass through Samaria. ⁵ So He came to a city of Samaria, called Sychar, near the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph; ⁶ and Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, was sitting thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁷ There came a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." ⁸ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. ⁹ The Samaritan woman therefore said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask me for a drink since I am a

² Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed., trans. Takamitsu Muraoka (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 4th reprint, 2003), 5-6.

³ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁴ Carrie Sinclair Walcott and John D. Barry, “Exile, Assyrian,” in *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*, ed. John D. Barry (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

⁵ Bryant Wood, “Assyrian Kings in the Bible,” *Bible and Spade* 8 (3-4, 1979): 87.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁷ Kenneth L. Barker and Waylon Bailey, *The New American Commentary: Volume 20 – Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999), 24-25.

⁸ Lee Martin McDonald, *The Biblical Canon: Its Origin, Transmission, and Authority* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 136-138.

Samaritan woman?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)¹⁰ Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."¹¹ She said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with and the well is deep; where then do You get that living water?"¹² "You are not greater than our father Jacob, are You, who gave us the well, and drank of it himself, and his sons, and his cattle?"¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water shall thirst again;¹⁴ but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."¹⁵ The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, so I will not be thirsty, nor come all the way here to draw."¹⁶ He said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."¹⁷ The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband';¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."¹⁹ The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet."²⁰ **"Our fathers worshiped in this mountain** (i.e., Mount Gerazim – *my note*⁹), **and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.**"²¹ Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall you worship the Father."²² "You worship that which you do not know; we worship that which we know, for salvation is from the Jews."²³ **"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.**"²⁴ **"God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."**²⁵ The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us."²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am *He*."²⁷ And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why do You speak with her?"²⁸ So the woman left her waterpot, and went into the city, and said to the men,²⁹ "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I *have* done; this is not the Christ, is it?"³⁰ They went out of the city, and were coming to Him.³¹ In the meanwhile the disciples were requesting Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."³² But He said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about."³³ The disciples therefore were saying to one another, "No one brought Him *anything* to eat, did he?"³⁴ Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work."³⁵ "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and *then* comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest."³⁶ "Already he who reaps is receiving wages, and is gathering fruit for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."³⁷ "For in this *case* the saying is true, 'One sows, and another reaps.'³⁸ "I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."³⁹ And from that city many of the Samaritans believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I *have* done."⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to Him, they were asking Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.⁴¹ And many more believed because of His word;⁴² and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world."⁴³ And after the two days He went forth from there into Galilee. (John 4:1-43)

⁹ J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to John, Volumes I & II*, ed. A. H. McNeil (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1928), 145-146.

With the Aramaic Targums (ܐܪܡܝܐ – *targûm* – which simply means, “interpretation, translation, version”¹⁰), translations were made of the Hebrew text into Aramaic with somewhat of a paraphrastic manner, and tradition maintains that this occurred at the end of the 6th century BC, going into the 5th and 4th centuries BC, as the Jews were returning from Babylon to Jerusalem and began restoring Jerusalem and Jewish culture.¹¹

Toward the end of the 4th century BC, the Bible of the Jews went from a Semitic focus in the Middle East to a Greek focus throughout the those areas that Alexander the Great had conquered from Greece eastward to India, including the whole of the Middle East, minus Saudi Arabia, but including Egypt.¹² Therefore, after his death in 323, his Hellenistic Empire created by him infused both Greek culture and language throughout their areas of conquest, and in turn, Greek became the *lingua franca* throughout those countries, which obviously included Egypt. This in turn led to the initial translation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible into Greek in Alexandria, Egypt by the middle of the 3rd century BC,¹³ and ultimately, to the rest of the Hebrew Old Testament by the end of the 2nd century BC.¹⁴ And as one goes through the study of the Old Testament quotes in the New Testament, it is obvious that “It can therefore be concluded that the LXX is the main source for quotations by the New Testament writers.”¹⁵ In fact, it is estimated that the LXX “was cited more than 90 percent of the time by the NT writers when quoting the OT, . . .”¹⁶

However, for believers in Jesus Christ, as well as for Jews who are either orthodox or conservative, one of the most powerful and illuminating discoveries that has been made with regard to foundational, biblical research and understanding was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in Qumran, which is located on the northwest quadrant of the Dead Sea. The map below gives an excellent perspective of where Qumran is located with respect to Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea:

¹⁰ Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Brooklyn: Traditional Press, Inc., 1903), 1695.

¹¹ McDonald, 185-186.

¹² Michael Grant, *The Rise of the Greeks* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 284.

¹³ McDonald, 115.

¹⁴ Gleason L. Archer and Gregory Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2005), ix.

¹⁵ Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 324.

¹⁶ McDonald, 123.



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Now when we get to the Dead Sea Scrolls, we are going to spend a significant amount of time, reading, and research material in the analysis of the Scrolls and the incredible significance they have for biblical study, teaching, and preaching, but I do want to provide for you an expanded, but comparatively brief overview of their discovery and publication in the quote below:

Although we probably shall never learn the full story of the discovery of the Qumran Scrolls, certain details about it are known from the year 1947, when the scrolls came to light for the first time. At that time, the British Mandate of Palestine controlled the area from the Mediterranean Sea to the western shore of the Dead Sea. The State of Israel did not yet exist; it came into being on 14 May 1948, when the Jews living there declared their independence. The first Arab–Jewish War broke out on 15 May and lasted until the cease-fire and truce of 7 January 1949. The Arabs who had been living in the British Mandate then began to occupy the area that came to be known as the West Bank (i.e., of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea), which was controlled by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the time subsequent to the first Arab–Jewish War. It was in the area of the British Mandate

¹⁷ Barry J. Beitzel, *The Moody Atlas of the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2009), 101.

of Palestine that the discovery of scrolls first took place in 1947. Subsequent discoveries were made in the Arab territory of the West Bank.

During 1947, some Bedouin herdsmen of the tribe of Ta'âmireh found the scrolls in what came to be known as Qumran Cave 1, a cave situated about a mile north of Khirbet Qumran, a site that lies about half a mile in from the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. That site had often been regarded as the ruins of a construction dating from Roman times in Palestine, with tombs of a cemetery thought at times to have been related to a Muslim sect.

A Bedouin boy, subsequently identified as Jum'a Muhammad Khalil, had been tending goats, when one of them went astray. As he went in search of it, he idly tossed a stone through a hole in a cliff and heard it break something. Out of curiosity, he and some companions returned two days later, enlarged the hole, and crept into a small cave. There one of the companions, Muhammad ed-Di'b, discovered eight jars, in two of which he found seven scrolls, some wrapped in ancient linen, along with many fragments. In March 1947, he and his companions brought the scrolls and fragments to an antiquities dealer in Bethlehem, known as Kando (Khalil Iskander Shahin).

Kando happened to be a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church, and he told the Metropolitan, Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, the superior of St. Mark's Monastery in the Old City of Jerusalem, about the discovery. Without understanding the value of the scrolls, the Metropolitan bought five of them, which turned out to be four scrolls: a complete copy of Isaiah (1QIsa), the *Pesher* (commentary) on Habakkuk (1QpHab), the Manual of Discipline (1QS)[in two parts]), and the Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen). Story has it that those four scrolls cost the Metropolitan the equivalent of only £24 (then equal to about \$100).

On 29 November 1947, the date on which the United Nations had resolved to create the State of Israel, Eleazar Lipa Sukenik, a professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, returned from a visit to the United States and learned about the discovery of the scrolls in Cave 1 from an antiquities dealer. Just about the time that the British Mandate was coming to an end, Sukenik managed to get to Bethlehem and secured from the dealer six rolls, which turned out to be three scrolls: an incomplete copy of Isaiah (1QIsa), the *Hodayot* (Thanksgiving Psalms [in four parts]), and the War Scroll (1QM). Subsequently Sukenik learned about the purchase of the four scrolls by the Metropolitan and tried to visit St. Mark's Monastery, unsuccessfully, because of the unsettled political situation in Jerusalem at that time. Toward the end of January 1948, however, Sukenik managed to visit the Metropolitan in a certain military zone and to borrow the scrolls from him for three days. He then copied out several columns of the first Isaiah scroll before he returned the scrolls to the Metropolitan on 6 February 1948. Later he published what he had copied without the knowledge and consent of the Metropolitan.

In the same February, the Metropolitan contacted the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem (as it was then named; later it became the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research). Eventually, the Metropolitan sent the scrolls there. A Fellow of the School, John C. Trever, during the absence of its director, obtained permission from the Metropolitan to photograph three of the scrolls; the fourth was too difficult to unroll. Trever subsequently sent photographs of some of the scrolls to Prof. William F. Albright, of the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, who confirmed Trever's judgment about the antiquity and value of the scrolls and wrote to Trever about them. Millar Burrows, a professor from Yale University and director of the American School, had been absent (in Iraq) when all of this took place. On his return, he too confirmed the authenticity and antiquity of the scrolls. The Metropolitan then sent the valuable scrolls to a place of safekeeping outside of Palestine, because of the developing unsafe political situation there.

After the British Mandate came to an end (14 May 1948) and the State of Israel came into existence, Sukenik published some of his scrolls in *Megillot Genuzot I* in September 1948.

In January 1949, a Belgian soldier, Capt. Philippe Lippens, who was an observer for the United Nations in the area, made his way with a captain of the Jordanian Arab Legion to Qumran, and they soon found where the cave was located. Lippens alerted the Jordanian antiquities authority about the location of the cave. Père Roland de Vaux, O.P., director and archaeologist of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française in Jerusalem, along with G. Lankester Harding, the head of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan, investigated the cave, and then excavated it from 15 February to 5 March 1949. They found further fragments of the scrolls and other artifacts, thus confirming that the scrolls had indeed come from that cave. Subsequently, de Vaux and Lankester Harding, realizing that Cave 1 was not far from Khirbet Qumran, wondered whether the two might be related. They decided to excavate that site as well. De Vaux began the excavation of Khirbet Qumran on 24 November and continued until 12 December 1951. When he found pottery of the same kind as that from Cave 1 and a jar of the same sort, he realized that Cave 1 and Khirbet Qumran were related indeed. The excavations at Khirbet Qumran continued for four annual seasons thereafter.

In the meantime, the Metropolitan Athanasius Yeshue Samuel traveled to the United States in January of 1949, taking with him the four scrolls that he had acquired. While there, he negotiated with the American School of Oriental Research, based in New Haven, Connecticut, for the publication of the photographs and transcribed texts of those scrolls. The scrolls were put on exhibition in museums in Washington, DC; Baltimore, Maryland; Worcester, Massachusetts; and at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. In January of 1950, volume 1 of *The Dead Sea Scrolls of St Mark's Monastery* was published. It contained the Isaiah Manuscript (1QIsa) and the Commentary of Habakkuk (1QpHab). In February of 1951, the second fascicle of volume 2 was published, containing the Manual of Discipline (or Rule Book of the Community, 1QS). The first fascicle of volume 2 was reserved for the Aramaic Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen), which had proved difficult to unroll because it was so poorly preserved.

While the Metropolitan was engaged in all these transactions in the United States, the Ta'âmireh Bedouin of the West Bank, who had realized that they could profit financially from other written material and artifacts, began looking for other possible caves that might contain such material. They discovered in October of 1951 some documents in caves of the Wadi Murabba'at, which lies about 12 miles southwest of Qumran, and which de Vaux and Lankester Harding later excavated (21 January to 3 March 1952). These caves yielded interesting documents: from the time of the Second Jewish Revolt against Roman domination (A.D. 132–135), letters of Simon ben Kosiba (Bar Kokhba), and so forth. In February of 1952, the Bedouin found Qumran Cave 2, not far removed from Cave 1, from which they removed all the fragments. There were 33 small texts, nothing so important as those of the first cave.

These discoveries moved the archaeologists to conduct a thorough investigation of the cliffs of the whole region from 10 to 29 March 1952. During this time, they surveyed roughly eight kilometers of the cliffs north and south of Khirbet Qumran, from Hajar al-'Aşba' (or in Hebrew, *'Eben habbohen* [Josh 15:6]) to Ras Feshkha. They explored about 50 caves and holes, in 25 of which they found artifacts and pottery of the same sort as in Cave 1 and Khirbet Qumran. More importantly, though, they discovered Qumran Cave 3 on 20 March, with its so-called Copper Scroll and 14 fragmentary texts—a discovery made by archaeologists, and not by Bedouin! The latter were still searching, and in July of 1952 they came upon nearly a hundred writings in different languages (Arabic, Greek, Christian Palestinian Syriac) at Khirbet Mird (Castellion, Marda). This site was not near the Wadis Qumran or Murabba'at, but above the cliffs and in the desert, about 15 km southeast of

Jerusalem. The site was explored eventually (February to April 1953) by the Belgian Capt. P. Lippens and R. de Langhe, a professor at the University of Louvain in Belgium.

While de Vaux was excavating the plateau at Khirbet Qumran in 1952, the Bedouin opened up another cave a few hundred feet away from the buildings being uncovered at Khirbet Qumran. This was Qumran Cave 4, and it turned out to be the most important of all the caves, not only of those already found but also those yet to be found. It yielded about 582 fragmentary documents, but not one of them was whole or complete. It is often called “the Cave of the Partridge,” because one of the elderly men of the tribe remembered that, when he was young, he was hunting and saw a partridge fly into a hole on top of the plateau. So younger Bedouin tribesmen went looking for the hole in 1952, found it, and opened it up to discover a two-room cave that had been artificially hollowed out in the marly surface of the south edge of the plateau, which overlooked the Wadi Qumran itself. About 15,000 fragments were retrieved, many of them by the Bedouin, from whom authorities of the Jordanian government in Jerusalem and various foreign institutions eventually bought them, at a sum of 15,000 Jordanian dinars (about \$42,000). The archaeologists de Vaux and Lankester Harding, along with J. T. Milik, soon learned about the discovery, put an end to the Bedouin activity there, and then cleaned out the rest of the cave (22 to 29 September 1952).

In the meantime, while de Vaux and others were working on Cave 4, Milik and other archaeologists came upon another cave nearby, which Milik himself excavated (25–29 September) and from which he retrieved 25 fragmentary texts, biblical and nonbiblical, and many artifacts and pottery types. This was Qumran Cave 5. About the same time, the Bedouin uncovered still another cave nearby, Qumran Cave 6, which yielded 31 fragmentary documents.

In 1954, the three scrolls from Cave 1 (1QIsa, 1QH, 1QM) that Sukenik had acquired were finally published posthumously.

The excavations at Khirbet Qumran continued in the following years, as already indicated above. During the fourth season of excavation (1955), the archaeologists discovered the remains of Caves 7–10 at the southern end of the plateau, also overlooking the Wadi Qumran. These caves had eroded and tumbled into the Wadi below in the course of the centuries, but enough of them remained from which fragmentary texts were retrieved: from Cave 7, 19 texts (all in Greek!); from Cave 8, five texts; from Caves 9 and 10, one text each.

In January 1956, the Bedouin discovered in the cliffs well north of Khirbet Qumran—ironically enough, in the very cliffs that the archaeologists had explored in early 1952—yet another cave, which yielded 31 texts, some of them nearly complete. This was Qumran Cave 11. The news of its discovery made the archaeologists undertake another expedition there from 18 February to 28 March 1956.

Finally, de Vaux and his team of archaeologists turned their attention to ‘Ain Feshkha, a site about a mile and a half south of Khirbet Qumran, where there was a spring gushing with slightly brackish water, to which the Bedouins often led their flocks. There the excavations, carried out from 25 January to 21 March 1958, uncovered the remains of a storage barn, several pools, a shed where dates were hung to be dried, and an enclosure in which flocks were kept.

In March and April 1960, an exploration was undertaken to the valleys between En Gedi and Masada. At Naḥal Še’elim, biblical fragments and Hebrew and Greek papyrus texts were discovered in what came to be called the “Cave of the Scrolls.” In Naḥal Ḥever, fifteen letters of Simon ben Kosiba (Bar Kokhba) were uncovered in the “Cave of Letters.” In the following year in the same valley, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Nabatean deeds were retrieved from the “Cave of Horror,” and the Archive of Babatha in the “Cave of Letters.”

In 1963–1965, archaeologists explored Masada itself, where they found fragments of OT texts, a fragmentary copy of Ben Sira, and fragments of the *Book of Jubilees*, and the so-called Angelic Liturgy.

Because so many texts had been retrieved from Qumran caves 2–10, especially from Cave 4, a decision was made to set up an international and interconfessional team of scholars who would work on them. The fragmentary texts had been brought to what was then called the Palestine Archaeological Museum in east Jerusalem (since 1967 renamed the Rockefeller Museum). The scholars were chosen from different European and American universities but related to various archaeological institutions in Jordanian-controlled Jerusalem, for example, the École Biblique, the American School of Oriental Research (now known as the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research), and British and German archaeological institutions based in Jerusalem. Two were Americans: Frank M. Cross, a Presbyterian, then professor at the McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago (later at Harvard University), and Patrick W. Skehan, a Catholic, professor at the Catholic University of America in Washington, DC; two were British: John Strugnell, a Presbyterian (later a convert to Catholicism), a recent graduate of Jesus College, University of Oxford, and John M. Allegro, an agnostic, lecturer at the University of Manchester; one was French: Jean Starcky, a Catholic priest, attached to the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique; one was Polish: Jozef T. Milik, a Catholic priest (a recent student at the Biblical Institute in Rome); and one was German: Claus-Hunno Hunzinger, a Lutheran, from the University of Göttingen; after a short time, he retired from the team, and his place was taken by a Frenchman, Maurice Baillet, a Catholic priest, from Toulouse. Père Roland de Vaux was appointed director of the team by G. Lankester Harding, the head of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan. The team was appointed to work on all the fragments of Caves 2–10, but mainly on the 15,000 fragments from Cave 4, which constituted a giant jigsaw puzzle that had to be pieced together. In addition, there were the 72 fragments of Cave 1 that the archaeologists had retrieved in their excavation, and also the texts from Cave 11, which would be discovered in 1956.

Despite the fact that competent Israeli scholars lived nearby, even in west Jerusalem, none of them became members of that team. The reason for this exclusion was the political situation of Jerusalem at that time. Although Cave 1 had been discovered in 1947 in territory then controlled by the British Mandate of Palestine, the rest of the Qumran caves were found in the West Bank, then under Jordanian control, as was east Jerusalem, where the Palestine Archaeological Museum was found and where the scrolls and fragments were being worked on. East and west Jerusalem were divided from each other by a high stone wall and a mined no-man's-land. So no Jewish scholar was able to cross over into east Jerusalem and become part of the team. It was not owing to any prejudice against Jewish scholars, as has been said at times, but simply to the political situation of the city of Jerusalem.

The story of the discovery of the scrolls moved in a different direction in 1954. The four scrolls that the Metropolitan, Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, had brought to the United States remained in his possession, although he had tried to sell them. He did not succeed at first, because no one wanted to put up a considerable amount of money for documents, valuable though they were, the ownership of which was still in doubt. Then, however, an advertisement appeared in the *Wall Street Journal* of 1 June 1954: “‘THE FOUR DEAD SEA SCROLLS’ Biblical Manuscripts dating back to at least 200 B.C. are for sale. This would be an ideal gift to an educational or religious institution by an individual or group. Box F 206.” The advertisement came to the attention of Yigael Yadin, the son of Prof. Sukenik who had acquired the three other manuscripts of Cave 1. Yadin, a former officer in the Israeli Army during the first Arab–Jewish War and subsequently

Deputy Prime Minister of Israel, was in the United States at that time, and he arranged to purchase, on 1 July of that year, the four manuscripts through a New York banker as middleman for \$250,000. The next day the scrolls were taken to the Israeli Consulate in New York and eventually were sent, one by one, to Jerusalem. Yadin presented them to the State of Israel, where they joined the other three. All seven scrolls are housed today in the Shrine of the Book, part of the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The fourth scroll was subsequently unrolled and named the “Genesis Apocryphon.” The best part of it was published by Israeli scholars in 1956, and another part of it in 1992. The official publication of this scroll in its entirety is still awaited (In 2012, Daniel A. Machiela published a new, updated translation of the “Genesis Apocryphon” – *my note*).¹⁸

As mentioned above about the significance of Cave 4, below is a picture of that cave:



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From the Dead Sea Scrolls, we will look and examine another important linguistic translation of the Scripture, which is Syriac, and it is called the *Peshitta*. The following two quotes give an

¹⁸ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2009), 2-10.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

overview of the Syriac translation of the Bible, and why studying the *Peshitta* is significantly important for serious, biblical research through which the Gospel is proclaimed:

Syriac, the native Aram. dialect of Edessa and its surrounding region, was the recipient of numerous Bible translation projects. The OT was translated into Syriac in the 1st or 2nd cent. CE from a Hebrew source. Its earliest manuscripts date from the 5th cent., and the earliest complete manuscript comes from around the 7th cent. In 615–17 CE Paul of Tella produced the Syrohexapla, a Syriac translation based on the Greek Hexapla. Toward the end of his life Jacob of Edessa (ca. 640–708 CE) produced his own scholarly revision of the OT Peshitta on the basis of Greek texts, aiming to include material from both Syriac and Greek traditions. The earliest Syriac version of part of the NT is probably the DIATESSARON produced by Tatian ca. 167–175 CE. The Old Syriac Gospels, a relatively free translation that originated some time between the 2nd and 4th cent., are represented by two manuscripts: Codex Curetonianus (5th cent.) and Codex Sinaiticus (a palimpsest of the late 4th or early 5th cent.). The Peshitta NT, which lacked 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude, and Revelation, originated at the end of the 4th or the beginning of the 5th cent. and became the ecclesiastically accepted NT text. The five NT books not represented in the Peshitta appear in a later translation, probably the Philoxenian version, produced in 507/8 CE. In 616 CE, in conjunction with the creation of the Syrohexapla, Thomas of Harkel produced the Harclean version, a literalistic scholarly translation covering the whole NT and including a critical apparatus. The tendency from the 5th through the early 8th cent. was to revise previous translations in order to follow authoritative sources more literally, even if this meant abandoning native Syriac idiom.²⁰

The Peshitta is an indispensable source for the text-critical and text-historical study of the Hebrew Bible, and this study will certainly benefit from the possibility to investigate the Peshitta in parallel alignment with other textual witnesses.

The Peshitta is also a most valuable source of information about early Judaism and Christianity and the history of biblical interpretation. The debate about the background of the Peshitta ('Jewish and/or Christian?'), even though it has not arrived at scholarly consensus, has revealed many interesting aspects of the complex Jewish-Christian spectrum and its plurality of movements in the first centuries of the Common Era.

However, the Peshitta is more than a textual witness to the Old Testament or a source of information about the history of religion at the time of its origin, it is also the most important document of Syriac Christianity, in which it played an exceedingly important role. It is impossible to describe in a few lines the way in which the Peshitta served as the basis for scholarship, from scrutinized grammatical studies to encyclopedic treatises in the form of a commentary to the Six Days of Creation, the way in which it constituted the basis for religious practices in the liturgy, or the way in which it shaped the Classical Syriac standard language.²¹

The next step will be to look at the Canonization of both the Old Testament texts by the Jews, as well as New Testament texts by the Church. The process by which the Jewish Canon of Old Testament Scripture came about, like the Christian process of choosing the New Testament

²⁰ P. J. Williams, "Versions, Ancient" in *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. Katherine Doob Sakenfield (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2006-2009), 733.

²¹ Wido van Peursen, *The Peshitta: Introduction to the Electronic Peshitta Text* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008), 1.

Canon of Scripture, was not a “one, two, three” process over a short period of time, but rather, for both, it was quite a lengthy process over centuries (for the Jews, from ca. 450 BC – 90 AD, and for the Church, from the end of the 1st century AD to 400 AD [rounding off the time – *my note*]²²). In the following two quotes, the first from the Gospel of Matthew, and the second with reference to Jewish adherence to the total minutia of Scripture being essential in following the Lord, we see a historical confirmation of biblical truth enunciated by Jesus:

Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill. ¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished. ¹⁹ Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and so teaches others, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:17-19)

All of this evidence suggests a considerable amount of fluidity throughout the process that resulted in the emergence of a biblical canon among Jews at the end of the first century C.E. . . . By the third century C.E., rabbis warned against using uncorrected biblical texts for more than thirty days (*b. Ketubbot* 19b [Babylonian Talmud – *my note*]), which fits with Josephus’s note about Jews having a “permanent record of the past” (*AG. AP.* 1.8 [Against Apion – *my note*]). Although the Hebrew biblical text was still in a state of fluidity, there was a move toward stabilization in the first century, as seen in the text-critical activity in Jerusalem in the first century (*m. Sotah* 5:1 [Mishnah – *my note*] reports that **a temple priest based legal decisions on the presence of the conjunction waw [“and”]. To Rabbi Akiba “not a word of Torah, nor even a syllable or letter, was superfluous”** (*b. Sanhedrin* 29b [Babylonian Talmud – *my note*]). Akiba also warned against teaching from uncorrected books (*b. Pesahim* 112a [Babylonian Talmud – *my note*]) and emphasized the importance of protective devices or “fences” (*massorot*) around the Torah text (*m. Avot* 3:13 {Mishnah – *my note*} [3:14 in some editions]). **Finally, one rabbi advised another rabbi to be “extraordinarily meticulous in his work of transcribing sacred texts lest he omit or add a single letter”** (*b. Eruvin* 13a [Babylonian Talmud – *my note*]). Assuming that these talmudic reports reflect actual first-century practice, it is likely that some form of stabilization was taking place then, but the final fixing of the Hebrew biblical text occurred in the second century C.E.²³

With reference to the canonization process of the Early Church, here too we will go into much greater detail, but for now, it is important for you to know that the ultimate canonization of the New Testament actually came in three stages: the Councils of Hippo (393); the third Council of Carthage (397); and finally, the sixth Council of Carthage in 419.²⁴ The actual list below is from

²² McDonald, 165, 169.

²³ Ibid., 168.

²⁴ F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 97.

the sixth Council of Carthage in 419, and it interestingly included some of the Apocryphal books:

CANON XXIV. (Greek xxvii.)

That nothing be read in church besides the Canonical Scripture.

ITEM, that besides the Canonical Scriptures nothing be read in church under the name of divine Scripture.

But the Canonical Scriptures are as follows:

Genesis.	The Five Books of Solomon.
Exodus.	The Twelve Books of the Prophets.
Leviticus.	Isaiah.
Numbers.	Jeremiah.
Deuteronomy.	Ezekiel.
Joshua the Son of Nun.	Daniel.
The Judges.	Tobit.
Ruth.	Judith.
The Kings, iv. books.	Esther.
The Chronicles, ii. books.	Ezra, ii books.
Job.	Macchabees, ii books.
The Psalter.	

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels, iv. books.
The Acts of the Apostles, i. book.
The Epistles of Paul, xiv.
The Epistles of Peter, the Apostle, ii.
The Epistles of John the Apostle, iii.
The Epistles of James the Apostle, i.
The Epistle of Jude the Apostle, i.
The Revelation of John, i. book.

Let this be sent to our brother and fellow bishop, Boniface, and to the other bishops of those parts, that they may confirm this canon, for these are the things which we have received from our fathers to be read in church.²⁵

Once again, what is fascinating to see and observe is that with the New Testament Canon as already stated above, is that it was not a “one, two, three” process over a short period of time, decided by a few men, but rather, it took approximately 400 years to complete:

While Paul’s epistles and the four Gospels had probably won general acceptance by ca. 200, the great church historian Eusebius (ca. 260–340) could still list Christian Scriptures

²⁵ Philip Schaff & Henry Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Volume XIV* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprinted 1983), 453-454.

under three categories: books that were accepted in his day, others that were definitely not accepted, and a third category of “disputed” books on which opinions still differed (*Historia ecclesiastica* 3.25; Williamson 1965: 134). As is well known, the precise twenty-seven books that eventually constituted the canon of the NT are first listed in the Easter Letter of Athanasius in 367. The synods of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397) recognized the twenty-seven-book list, but their decisions were binding only in North Africa. By the fifth century a general consensus had developed, though doubts about individual books lingered on in certain localities for some time. Significantly, no ecumenical council made a ruling on the canon. This underlines the fact that the church did not *choose* the canon (that would have made the canon subordinate to the church); the church, over an extended period of time, *recognized* the canon that was already in existence.²⁶

From the canonization of the New Testament, we move to the writing of the Latin Vulgate. Jerome was commissioned in 383 by Pope Damasus to write an entirely new Bible translation. His goal for the New Testament was to create a new Latin text from the Greek, and in 384 he completed the four Gospels. He then began to translate the Old Testament from the LXX (Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew), and the first book he chose was the Psalms. However, as time went by, he realized that for a truly new and original translation, he needed to translate directly from the Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament, versus from the LXX. It was then that he began to meet opposition from many, including Augustine, who objected to his using the Hebrew as his basis for translation, versus the LXX, which many at that time viewed the LXX as the inspired, Word of God, seeing that it was quoted throughout the New Testament. The following quote gives a good summary of the conflict:

Jerome’s version met with difficulties also among learned circles. The arguments developed into a controversy, as can be seen in Jerome’s *Apologia contra Rufinum* ii.24–35, where he answered the objections brought against his version. The most frequent charge was the version’s unlawful innovation, even sacrilege, in daring to degrade the LXX. Augustine expressed what was troubling many: that Jerome, by choosing the Hebrew OT as the basis of the version, cast doubts upon the divine inspiration of the LXX, which had been the accepted Bible of Christendom from the beginning and which was also used in the NT, being quoted there (*Ep.* 71.4f.; 82.35). Augustine gradually changed his position (*De doctrina christiana* iv.15; *Civ. Dei* xviii.43), but many remained adamant. The short-tempered author of the version, who showed no patience with the critics and treated their charges and accusations with biting sarcasm, did little to help his own cause.²⁷

²⁶ Charles Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), 55-56.

²⁷ A. Vööbus, “Versions,” in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Volume 4*, Revised, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979-1988), 973.

There was also an Old Latin Version that many preferred simply because that was what they were accustomed to, but as time went by for several centuries, the Vulgate eventually became the accepted version:

By the rule of Pope Gregory (d 604) the Vulgate had won rights equal to those of the Old Latin; Gregory himself quoted both text-types. The same state of affairs is reflected in the MSS. Each text made inroads into the other, thus causing their intermixture; some codices contain in part the Vulgate and in part the Old Latin text. The Old Latin version gradually was forced to give way, but not until the 9th cent. did the Vulgate attain the predominance that made its position henceforth assured. Near the end of the Middle Ages it was finally able to inherit the cherished title “vulgata (versio),” i.e., the common version—the term previously given to the LXX and then to the Old Latin version.²⁸

There are a plethora of events that took place in Church History from the writing of the Vulgate to the Reformation, and we will go over the most significant in detail, but there is one with regard to the Hebrew Bible that we now read that is foundationally important as we begin our overall study, and that is the vocalizing of the Hebrew text by the Masoretes. Below is an excellent summation of their work, that makes it possible for us today to accurately read, understand, and do critical analysis of the Hebrew Bible:

Between 600 and 1000 C.E. schools consisting of families of Jewish scholars arose in Babylon, in Palestine, and notably at Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee to safeguard the consonantal text and to record—through diacritical notations added to the consonantal text—the vowels, liturgical cantillations, and other features of the text. Until these efforts such features had orally accompanied the text. These scholars are known as Masoretes or Massoretes, possibly from the (post-biblical) root *msr* ‘to hand down.’ In their endeavor to conserve the text, they hedged it in by placing observations regarding its external form in the margins. In the side margins they used abbreviations (*Masorah parvum*), in the top and bottom margins they gave more detailed and continuous explanations (*Masorah magnum*), and at the end (*Masorah finalis*) provided alphabetical classification of the whole Masoretic material. In addition to these annotations made directly in the text, they compiled separate manuals. When the traditions they inherited differed, they preserved the relatively few variants within the consonantal tradition by inserting one reading in the text, called *Kethiv*, and the other in the margin, called *Qere*. Other alternative readings are indicated in the margin by *Səbir*, an Aramaic word meaning ‘supposed.’ . . .

Of the three competing Masoretic schools, one in the East and two in the West, each with its own system of diacritical notations, the Tiberian school prevailed. The school’s most important work is a model codex prepared by Aaron ben Asher around 1000 C.E.; this codex was preserved in the old synagogue of Aleppo until shortly after the Second World War, when it was removed to Jerusalem. Contemporary study of the MT (i.e., Masoretic Text – *my note*) is based on a variety of texts slightly later than and similar to the Aleppo Codex, notably the Leningrad Codex. Earlier modern study was based on late medieval manuscripts and early printed Bibles. A photographic reprint of the Aleppo Codex is available, and an edition of the Bible based on it is in preparation in Jerusalem.

²⁸ Ibid.

The commonly available editions of the MT (i.e., Masoretic Text – *my note*) differ from it only in certain minor phonological materials, involving some accents and some reduced vowels, and in the pointing of a few eccentric forms. . . .

By the time of the Qumran community, Biblical Hebrew was no longer a spoken language; Mishnaic Hebrew and Aramaic were the vernaculars of Palestine. The scribes were dealing with linguistic material they understood well but could use with no more spontaneity than we can speak English of the Tudor-Stuart period.²⁹

With reference to Aramaic becoming the conversational and business language of the Jews after their return from the Babylonian bondage, we have already alluded to that (page ii above), and thus, the best example of the non-vocalized text that the Masoretes were initially working with is an English sentence without any vowels – d nt rprv scffr, lst h ht y, rprv ws mn, nd h wll lv y. Now, with the vowels put in place, we read, “do not reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you, reprove a wise man, and he will love you” (Proverbs 9:8). Consequently, by the time of the 7th to 11th centuries, the vast majority of Jews had very different forms of pronunciation of the Hebrew text, and some could not read the Hebrew Bible, but they simply repeated the Hebrew chants in much the same way Roman Catholics did with Latin chants without being able to actually read the Latin.³⁰ With regard to all of the above, the term “Second Temple Judaism”³¹ refers to the resumed worship of the Jews in Jerusalem after the Temple and walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt and worship was restored in the Temple under the direction of Nehemiah and Ezra. The estimated time frame of this restoration is debatable, but a good estimation would be late in the 5th century BC after the ministries of Nehemiah and Ezra³² to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 AD by the Roman General, Titus,³³ or shortly thereafter, perhaps even at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. At any rate, the work of the Masoretes cannot be overstated in any capacity with regard to their contribution of our retention of the Hebrew text of the Bible, as is seen for example from Qumran and its earliest extant resources of Isaiah in the Isaiah Scroll,

²⁹ Bruce K. Waltke and M. O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 21-27.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 28-29.

³¹ Archie T. Wright, “History of the Second Temple Period,” in *Early Jewish Literature: An Anthology, Vol. 1*, eds. Brad Embry, Ronald Herms, & Archie T. Wright (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 22-23, 30-31.

³² John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 379-402.

³³ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 4th ed., rev. R. L. Hatchett (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 24.

which was copied from a previous text some 1000 years before the Masoretes translated the Isaiah text.³⁴

Without question, two of the most monumental events that took place which we today in the 21st century are still living in are the rise of Islam in the 7th century AD and the Protestant Reformation that is given a somewhat official time of beginning on October 31, 1517, five hundred and two years ago. On that day, Martin Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the Castle Church door in Wittenburg, Germany, and by doing so, Luther was proclaiming that “salvation was by faith in Christ alone,” and “that the Scriptures, not popes or councils, are the standard for Christian faith and behavior.”³⁵ Thus, from both the rise of Islam in the 7th century AD and the action of Luther on October 31, 1517, there have been a multitudinous, plethora of events that have emerged, and are still emerging in our world today. And one very significant event that occurred in 1611 with regard to the Reformation was the publication of the King James version of the Bible:

In 1603 the long reign of Queen Elizabeth came to a close when she died without an heir. James VI of Scotland, the son of Mary Queen of Scots, became James I of England, uniting for the first time, the two kingdoms. Any Puritan hopes for James bringing Presbyterianism from Scotland to England were dashed early. He welcomed a chance to deal with bishops. Rule in Scotland had been a constant struggle with Presbyterian ministers. A Scottish presbytery, he said, “agrees with monarchy as well as God and the devil.”

At the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 some leading Puritans had a chance to present to the king their ideas for change in the Church of England. But James, who had an inflated view of his own intelligence, dismissed most of their opinions rather rudely. On only one point did he consent to the demands of the Puritans. He was willing to have a new translation of the Scriptures made. From this decision came what we call the King James version of the Bible.³⁶

The following is a brief, yet inclusive summary of the writing, publication, distribution of, and the widespread dominance of the King James Version for over three hundred and fifty years:

³⁴ Geza Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Qumran in Perspective* (Cleveland: Collins & World Publishing Company, 1978), 198-203; *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (New York: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1997), 15; James VanderKam and Peter Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 2002), 131-133.

³⁵ Bruce L. Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 4th ed., rev. R. L. Hatchett (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013), 250-251.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 307.

The King James Version developed as a result of a suggestion of need made at the Hampton Court Conference in 1604 by John Reynolds, a leader of the Puritans. Surprisingly, the suggestion was taken up by King James who was new in England at the time. King James at the same time derided the Puritans with derogatory remarks about the Geneva Bible which they preferred, and then he approved the making of a translation “so that the whole church to be bound unto it, and none other.” Richard Bancroft, Bishop of London, who had opposed Reynolds’ proposal promptly lined up with the king, but made the proposal that no notes be included in the Bible.

While a letter of the king states that fifty-four men were appointed to the task, the surviving list of participants has only forty-seven names. Paine (1977) and Opfell (1982) have made detailed studies of the personalities, qualifications, and careers of the men who did participate. Notably missing from the participants is Hugh Broughton who had argued persuasively for a new translation and who considered himself as the most qualified person to make one.

The king, unable to finance the project, suggested that the translators be given preferment in church positions. They seem to have received no remuneration but to have been cared for while at the task at the colleges where they worked. Two companies each were at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster. A list preserved by Burnett gives fourteen rules for their guidance, but at a report to the Synod of Dort (1618) only seven rules were mentioned. The revision was to be minimal. The Bishops’ Bible was to be followed where it agreed with the Hebrew and Greek, but “Tindall’s, Matthew’s, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s, Geneva” are next mentioned. Proper names were to be preserved as nearly as possible to the original. Ecclesiastical terms were to be preserved. Bancroft’s proposal that no marginal notes be included was accepted, except in the cases where Hebrew and Greek terms were to be explained.

From various sources it can be established that after 1604 the groups were at their tasks without fanfare. Replacements were made in the groups from time to time when deaths occurred, but it is not entirely clear who replaced whom. Seven of the translators were eventually elevated to the episcopate and seventeen or eighteen to other offices. Ward Allen (1969) has identified and published notes kept by John Bois during the work. Puritan and Anglican churchmen, linguists and theologians, laymen and divines, worked side by side. The aim was to produce a translation for the common man.

Following the preliminary work, a further revision was done in a period of about nine months by a smaller group for which they were paid thirty shillings a week by the Stationer’s Company. Then Bishop Thomas Bilson and Miles Smith put the finishing touches on the project, supplying chapter summaries, page headings, a preface, and dedication to the king. From 1611 Robert Parker was given a monopoly on the printing, a monopoly later claimed by his son Matthew Parker in 1651.

In their preface, the revisers give as their aim the making of an already good translation even better, “or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against.” The translators are thought to have used Beza’s Greek text and probably the Hebrew text of the Complutensian Polyglot. They were influenced by Beza’s Latin, the Geneva, and the Rheims. They give a defense in the preface of their use of variety in rendering terms. The cadences and rhythms which improve on the original won among English readers a love for the style which has not yet died.

While the first edition carried the statement “Newly translated out of the originall tongues & with the former translations diligently compared and reuised by his Maiesties speciall comandement. Appointed to be read in Churches,” history has not preserved a record of endorsement by Convocation, Parliament, Privy Council, or the King himself. The Bishops’ Bible was not reprinted after 1602, but the Geneva continued until 1644 in

Holland. Churchmen like Andrews and Laud continued to use the Geneva in their sermons. However, by 1640 there had been forty editions of the KJV by Parker and his successors. There was no question that it was superior to its predecessors. Ecclesiastical recognition came in 1662 when the fifth Prayer Book was printed using citations from the Gospels and Epistles of the 1611 translation. Despite some very vocal criticisms by Catholics, Hugh Broughton (who said he had rather be tied between wild horses than to let it go forth among the people, and that the translators had put the errors in the text and the correct readings in the margins), William Kilbourne, Robert Gell, and some others, by the end of the 17th century it had become *the* Bible for all English speaking people. However, the Great Bible Psalms continued to be used in the liturgy.

As a specific example, debate has reigned over whether the 1611 folio edition which read “she” in Ruth 3:15 or that which had “he” is the earlier, with bibliographers favoring “he.” The Bible had an elaborate title page and many initial letters. That of the Gospel of Matthew shows Neptune taming the sea horses. Early printings were plagued by misprints one of which is “strain at a gnat” (Matt 23:24) for “strain out a gnat” which has never been corrected. Unnecessary variety in spelling proper names like Isaiah and Esaias, Jeremiah, Jeremy and Jeremias, Elijah and Elias complicates reading. Mythical animals like the unicorn, dragon, cockatrice, and arrowsnake appear. For other communication and translation problems, see Lewis (1981: 35–68). Butterworth estimated that (apart from the Apocrypha) thirty-nine percent of the wording and phraseology of the KJV first makes its appearance in this revision.

The KJV has not been static across the years. Changes made by unknown persons began in 1612 (Herbert 1968: nos. 313–18) and more were made in 1616 (no. 349). The Apocrypha was omitted in 1629 when the first printing at Cambridge (no. 424) was done. In 1633, the first printing was done in Scotland (no. 476). An edition corrected by Goad, Ward, Boyse, and Mead was issued in 1638 at Cambridge and remained the standard text until Paris’s edition of 1762 (no. 1142). Benjamin Blaney did a correction for the Oxford University Press in 1769 (no. 1194).

Facsimile reproductions of the 1611 folio were done by the Oxford University Press in 1833 and by World Publishing Company in 1965. A page reprint was done with an introduction by Alfred W. Palmer by Oxford University Press in 1911. The King James 1611 text was printed in Bagster’s *English Hexapla* in 1841 and in Weigle’s *The New Testament Octapla* in 1962; the text of Psalms in the *Hexaplar Psalter* of 1911 and the Genesis text in Weigle’s *Genesis Octapla* of 1965.

The KJV, called “the noblest monument of English prose,” has been the object of much praise. Its impact on English speech and literature is beyond measure. It has spawned countless proverbs and proverbial forms of speech. It is the source of quotations which English writers have worked into their productions. It has enriched their vocabulary and their images, and has contributed to their rhythms. For almost four centuries it has been without rival the Bible for the common reader who tends to forget that it is a translation. Despite its original merits and its contribution, however, with the secularization of the English speaking world and the normal change of language, numerous words of the KJV are no longer in use. Its message becomes less understandable to the common person for whom it was intended. In 1988 the KJV lost its dominance in sales on the American market to the NIV.³⁷

³⁷ Jack P. Lewis, “Versions, English: King James Version,” in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, Vol. 6, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 832-833.

After I became a Christian on October 1, 1965, a Southern Baptist Pastor told me to begin studying the Bible as though it was another course since I was at Mississippi State University, as I would not be getting any Bible courses at MSU. Then, a Presbyterian Pastor told me about Philippians 4:6-7, and that I should be bringing EVERYTHING to God in prayer: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). As my sophomore year began at MSU, I was selected to be the leader of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at MSU, and once a month, I would invite a Pastor to come and share with our FCA Huddle Group. A fellow teammate told me about a Pastor he knew from a Holiness Church, and so in the Spring of 1967 during my sophomore year, I invited him. I was a young believer, as were all of the others in our FCA Huddle Group, and I knew absolutely nothing about Holiness Doctrine. When the Holiness Pastor came, he taught from I John 3:9 out of the KJV, and it reads: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9). The Holiness Pastor went on to say that this is teaching us that as believers in Jesus Christ, we can have an experience that will enable us to “no longer sin!” We were all shocked and didn’t know what to say. After the meeting, we all had questions among ourselves, and a fellow teammate told me about a new, young pastor in Jackson who had recently finished at Dallas Seminary, and he was an excellent teacher. I called him and he came, and he won all of our hearts as he knew who we were and what sports and positions we played – that was very impressive. However, God ministered in and through him to us as he shared directly out of the Greek New Testament from I John 3:1-10, and in doing so, the Lord liberated us with His Eternal Truth! From that point forward, God placed in my heart the desire to thoroughly know the biblical languages in order that He could minister in and through me His Eternal Word of Truth to others. Thus, as we go through this study, the focus and aim will be for you, the reader, to diligently pursue the very best translations that accurately and thoroughly present God’s Eternal Truth in language that is both accurate and understandable, so that the Lord will accurately communicate His Truth in and through you to others: “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30).

God bless you,
Justin T. Alfred