

# Bible Translations



## **Establishment of the Cannon**

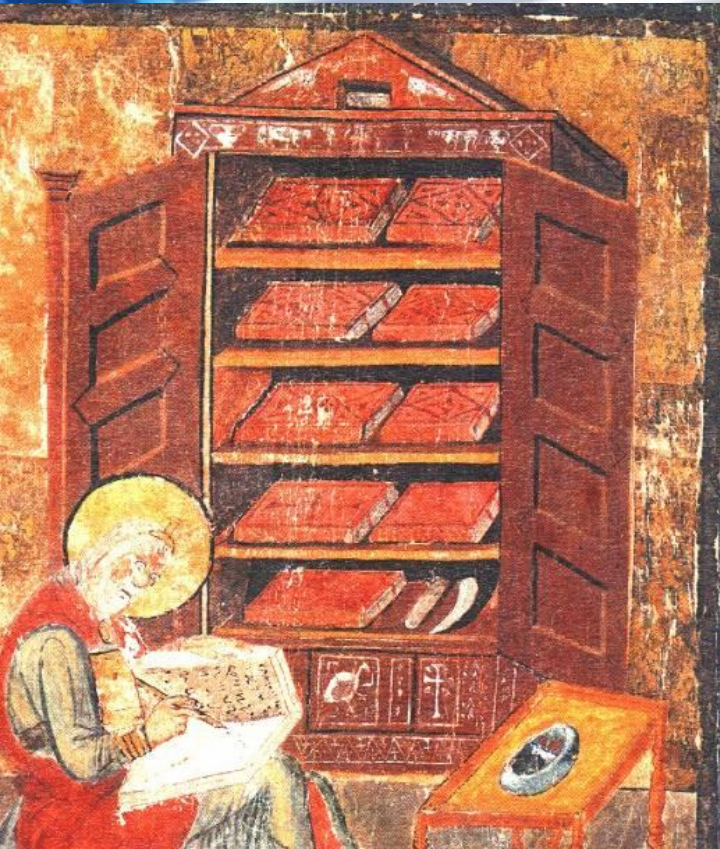
Affirming what was already the common practice among Christians a brief summary of the acts of the **Synod of Hippo Regius in North Africa (393 CE)** were made public being read at and accepted by the third **Synod of Carthage (397 CE)**.

- **Canon 24:** “Besides the canonical Scriptures, nothing shall be read in church under the name of divine Scriptures. Moreover, the canonical Scriptures are these: [then follows a list of the Old & New Testament books].”



*Bible  
Manuscripts*





The manuscripts written by the original authors of each book of the Bible are termed the “autographs”. None of these original documents exist today.

The manuscripts that we do possess are therefore copies of copies of copies, and date to a much later time period. These manuscripts are not identical to each other.



## Old Testament Manuscripts

- ❖ The originals were probably written over the period 1400-400 BCE.
- ❖ The earliest fragments discovered to date are among the Dead Sea Scrolls: parts of Exodus and Samuel from c250 BCE.
- ❖ The earliest complete book (Isaiah) comes from the same find, dating to c125 BCE.
- ❖ The earliest **complete copy** of the **whole OT**, surprisingly, is a Greek translation, from c**350** CE.
- ❖ The earliest complete Hebrew manuscript only goes back to c950 CE.

## **Old Testament Manuscripts**

A fragment of  
Exodus from the  
Dead Sea Scrolls,  
dating to c250 BCE.







## Old Testament Manuscripts

1QIsaiah<sup>a</sup> – the earliest complete book manuscript from the Old Testament, dating to c125 BCE, found in cave 1 at Qumran.



## Old Testament Manuscripts

Codex Vaticanus (released 1859) – from the **Vatican** about **350 CE**, contains all of the Old Testament in **Greek** except for a large part of Genesis and the Psalms added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.



בְּרַעְתִּי וַיְהוּדָה בְּיָדָא  
לְאַתְּסֵדְרָכֶוּ לְאַלְאִישׁ  
הַלְךְ וַיְהִי אֶת צִעְרוֹ  
וַיִּסְרְעוּ וַיְהוּדָה אֶתְכִּי שִׁפְטֵ  
אֵלֶיךָ אֶתְכִּי פֹתֵמֵעֵטֵנִי  
שִׁפְךָ חֲמַתְךָ עַל חַיִּים  
אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִדְעֶנְךָ וְעַל  
מִשְׁפָּחֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּשִׁמְךָ  
לֹא יִקְרְאוּ מִכֹּל אֶת  
יַעֲקֹב וְאֵלֶיךָ וְיִכְלְלוּ  
וְאֶתְעַוְוִה שְׁמִי

## Old Testament Manuscripts

A portion of Codex Aleppo, the oldest known surviving complete manuscript of the Old Testament in **Hebrew**, from c950 CE.

## New Testament Manuscripts

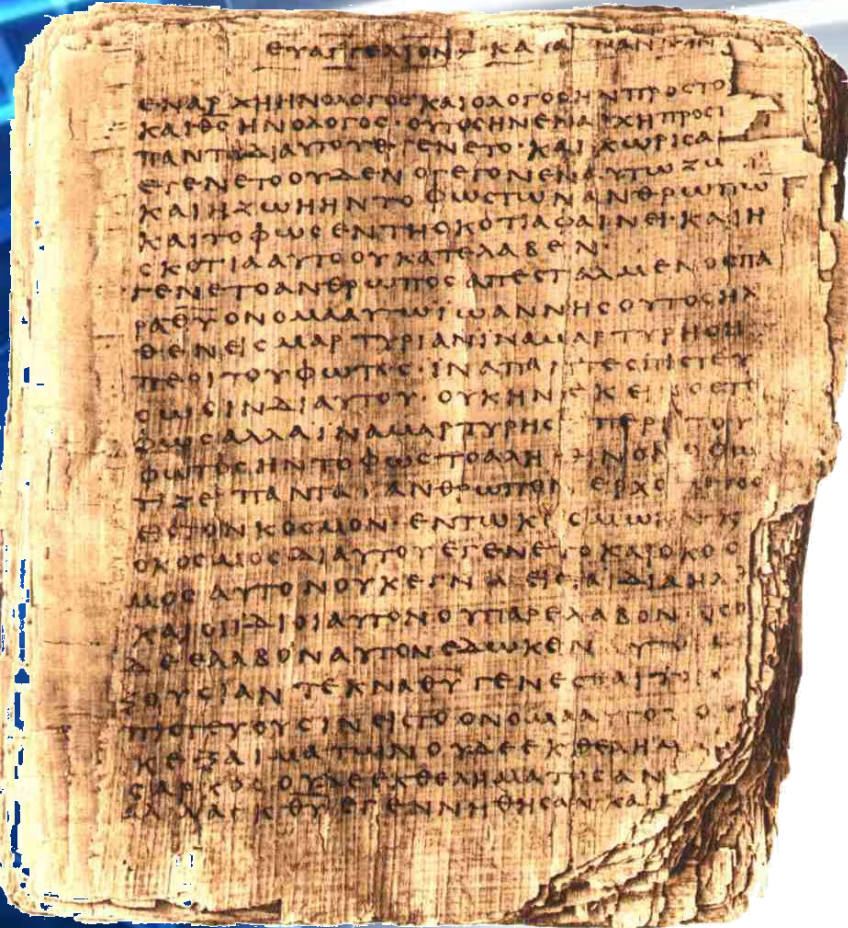
- The originals were probably written over the period 50 to 100 CE.
- Our earliest fragment is from the Gospel of John, copied c125 CE, less than a generation after John wrote.
- The oldest nearly complete copy of a whole book (also John) comes from c200 CE.
- The oldest remaining complete copy of the **whole NT** dates from **c350 CE**.





# New Testament Manuscripts

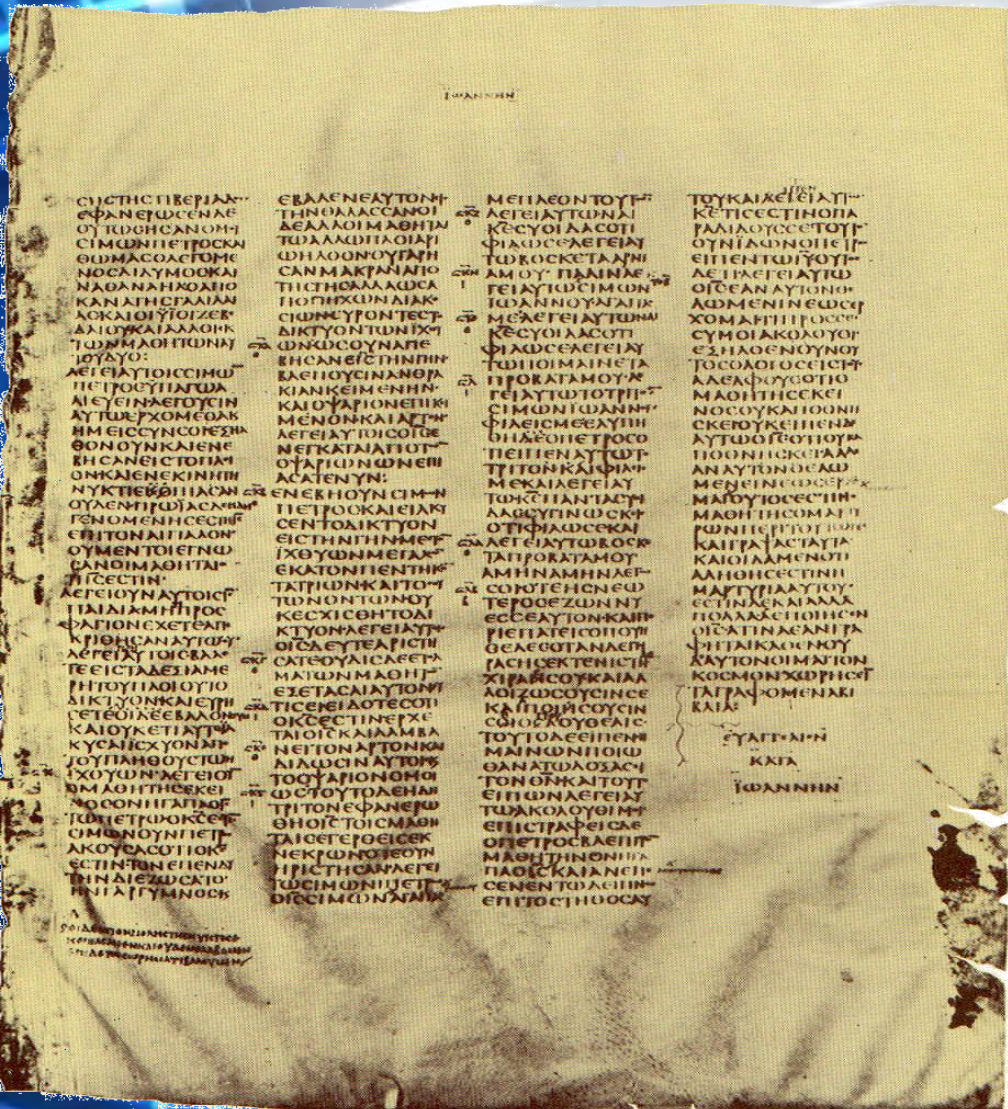
P<sup>52</sup> – John Rylands papyrus of the Gospel of John, chapter 18, from the first third of the second century (c100-135 CE).



## New Testament Manuscripts

P<sup>66</sup> – Papyrus Bodmer II, an almost complete copy of the Gospel of John, from c 200 CE.

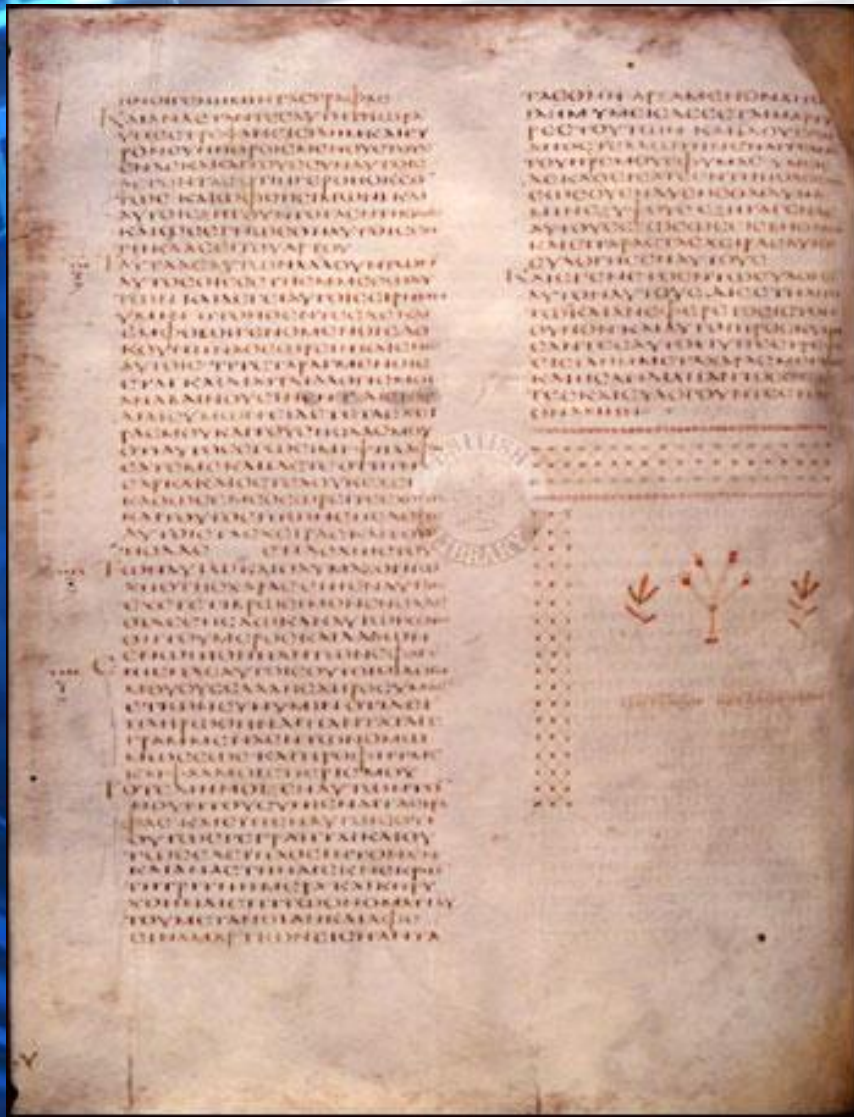




# New Testament Manuscripts

Codex Sinaiticus (1859) – another from the Vatican c350 CE in **Greek** and is the oldest complete manuscript of the New Testament.





## Old & New Testament Manuscripts

Codex Alexandrinus (1909) – From **Alexandria, Egypt** via **Constantinople** c440 CE in **Greek** and is the most complete manuscript of the entire Bible.



Scholars who are compiling a standardized Hebrew & Greek biblical text must evaluate and make judgements as to which manuscript version of the text is closest to the original autographs.

**Non-Vatican** manuscripts differ in only minor ways:  
Spelling, Grammar, or  
Word choice

**Vatican** manuscripts do have  
greater variation:

- Sentences (verses)
- Paragraphs
- Passages (chapters)



## What is a Translation?

- ❖ Interpretation of the meaning of the Bible from original languages into another (modern) language
- ❖ Examples: King James Version, New English Version, Revised Standard Version, New American Bible, etc.
- ❖ Over 500 different English translations of the Bible exist—as well as translations into over two thousand other languages or dialects.





## Textual Basis for Bible Translations

### The Modern Critical Text

- ❖ The text of the OT and NT as reconstructed from all presently-known manuscripts, giving greater weight to those Vatican manuscripts which are either earlier or APPEAR TO BE more reliable.
- ❖ This is used in most modern versions. Variant readings (i.e. KJV) are generally listed in the margin or in footnotes.



## No Perfect Translation Exists

- ❖ *Important recent discoveries of older manuscripts:*
  - ❖ Codex Sinaiticus (written 350-400 BCE, found 1859).
  - ❖ Dead Sea Scrolls (written pre-100 CE, found 1947-1956).
- ❖ *Meanings of some biblical texts remain unknown/uncertain.*
- ❖ *Every “translation” is an “interpretation”.*
- ❖ *Cultural developments require new sensitivities in language:*
  - ❖ inclusive language alternatives.





**Literal Translation**  
**(Word-for-word)**

**Dynamic Translation**  
**(Thought-for-thought)**

**Free Translation**  
**(Paraphrase)**

## **Literal Translations**

A literal translation (also referred to as a “word-for-word” translation) seeks to represent the original text in a more word-for-word manner.

- ❖ King James Version
- ❖ New King James Version
- ❖ American Standard Version of 1901
- ❖ New American Standard Version
- ❖ Revised Standard Version
- ❖ New Revised Standard Version
- ❖ Young’s Literal Translation

**Literal Translation**  
**(Word-for-word)**

**Dynamic Translation**  
**(Thought-for-thought)**

**Free Translation**  
**(Paraphrase)**

## **Free Translations (Paraphrases)**

A paraphrase (also referred to as a “free” translation) is one which is not as concerned with original word order or sentence structure as it is the idea of the passage. This type of translation seeks to render the ideas in the original text as accurately as possible in the target language (like English).

- ❖ The Clear Word
- ❖ The Living Bible
- ❖ The Message



**Literal Translation**  
**(Word-for-word)**

**Dynamic Translation**  
**(Thought-for-thought)**

**Free Translation**  
**(Paraphrase)**

## **Dynamic Translations**

A dynamic equivalent is a translation that seeks to strike a balance between the two mentioned above. The goal of this type of translation is to render the idea conveyed by the original language into that of the target language (like English).

- ❖ New International Version
- ❖ New English Bible
- ❖ Revised English Bible
- ❖ Good News Bible
- ❖ Contemporary English Version



## But What About the King James Version?

Any Bible version's accuracy depends on more than its translators' skill. Accuracy also depends on the translators' choice of the original Bible text. Significant advances in textual studies have been made since the 1611 King James Version.

“The King James translators had seven Greek manuscripts of the New Testament available to them,” says Ken Barker. “Today, we have more than 5,000 manuscripts and papyri discovered since 1611.”



me, euen thine owne selfe besides:  
20 Hea, brother, let mee haue toy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowles in the Lord.  
21 Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote vnto thee, knowing that thou wilt also doe more then I say.  
22 But withall prepare mee also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be giuen vnto you.

23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Iesus:  
24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellow labourers.  
25 The grace of our Lord Iesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.  
**W**ritten from Rome to Philemon, by Onesimus a servant.



THE EPISTLE OF PAUL the Apostle to the Hebrewes.

CHAP. I.

1 Christ in these last times coming to vs from the Father, 4 is preferred aboute the Angels, both in Person and Office.



**G**od who at sundry times, and in diuers manners, spake in time past vnto the Fathers by the Prophets.  
2 Hath in these last dayes spoken vnto vs by his Sonne, whom he hath appointed heire of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,  
3 \* who being the brightnesse of his glory, and the expresse image of his person, and vpholding all things by the word of his power, when hee had by himselfe purged our finnes, late down on y<sup>e</sup> right hand of the Maiestie on high,  
4 Being made so much better then the Angels, as hee hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name then they.  
5 For vnto which of the Angels said hee at any time, Thou art my sonne, this day haue I begotten thee: And againe, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Sonne.  
6 And againe, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, hee saith, And let all the Angels of God worship him.  
7 And of the Angels he saith: who

maketh his Angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.  
8 But vnto the Sonne, he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for euer and euer: a scepter of righteousnesse is the scepter of thy kingdome.  
9 Thou hast loued righteousnesse, and hated iniquitie, therefore God, euen thy God hath anointed thee with the oyle of gladnesse above thy fellowes.  
10 And, \* thou Lord in the beginning hast layed the foundation of the earth: and the heauens are the works of thine hands.  
11 They shall perish, but thou remainest: and they all that ware old as doth a garment.  
12 And as a vesture shalt thou fold them vp, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy yeeres shall not faile:  
13 But to which of the Angels said hee at any time, \* Sit on my right hand, butill I make thine enemies thy footstool:  
14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heires of saluation:

CHAP. II.

1 Wee ought to bee obedient to Christ Iesus, 5 and that because hee vouchsafed to take our nature vpon him, 14 as it was necessarie.  
**T**herefore we ought to giue the more earnest heede to the things which we haue heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.  
2 For

For rightnesse, or straightnes.

Pla. 102. 4. cl. 34-4

Psa. 110. 1. mat. 22. 44.

For, vpon our as looking vpon it.

\* Wis. 7. 26.

The King James Version also contains obsolete (no longer used) words like: champaign, churl, cieled, clouted, cockatrice, collops, cotes, daysman, goodlier, firstlings, damsel, wimples, wrought, wot, wist, froward, brigadine, amerce, blains, crookbact, descry, fanners, glede, habergeon, implead, neesing, nitre, rereward, tabret, tabering and wen.



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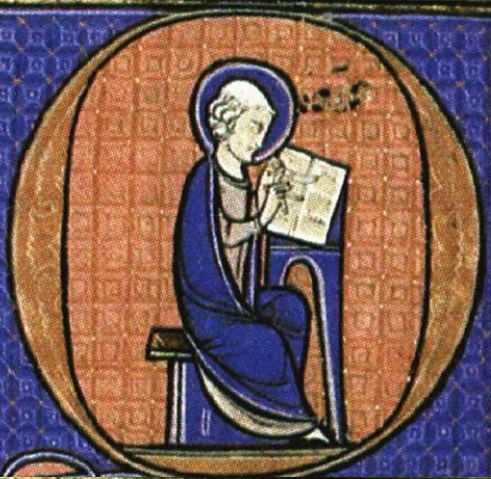
\*Pla. 110. 1. matt. 22. 44.

Toe. 120. 2. as speaking vnto.

The King James Version also uses words that have changed their meaning. In the seventeenth century:

- 'allege' was used for 'prove,'
- 'communicate' for 'share,'
- 'suffer' for 'allow,'
- 'allow' for 'approve,'
- 'let' for 'hinder,'
- 'prevent' for 'precede,'
- 'conversation' for 'conduct,'
- Etc.





**Is the King James Version perfect?  
NO.**

**Is it more accurate than all other  
versions in every regard?**

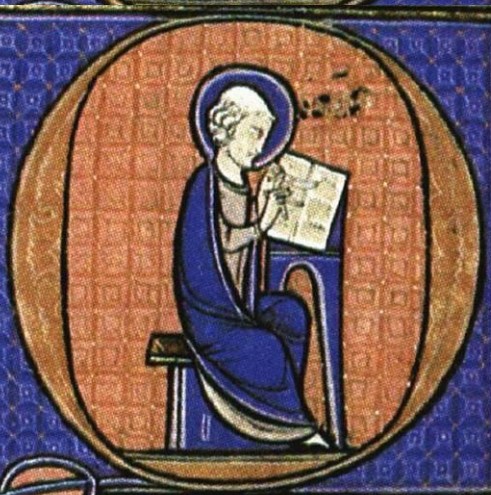
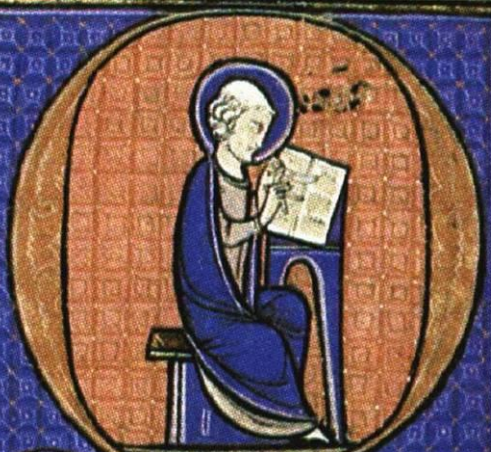
**NO.**

**Is it a bad version?**

**NO.**

The King James Version has been a favourite translation for nearly 400 years. However its Elizabethan style Old English is difficult for many modern readers.

**Why is it worth the added effort?**



**The theological outlook of a translator  
can also influence a translation.**

Example: (John 1:1 New World Translation,  
Jehovah's Witnesses) "In the beginning  
the Word was, and the Word was with  
God, and the Word was **a** god."



# Brooke Foss Westcott (1825-1903) & Fenton John Anthony Hort (1828-1892)

Highly controversial figures in biblical history.

1851 – Formed “Ghostly Guild” for paranormal study

1882 – Ghostly Guild → Society for Psychical Research (SPR)



Brooke Foss Westcott



Fenton John Anthony Hort

## Modern Mistranslations:

- **2 Samuel 21:19 (KJV)**

And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of Goliath the Gittite*, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

- **2 Samuel 21:19 (NIV)**

In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.



## Modern Mistranslations:

- **Isaiah 30:28 (KJV)**

And [the Lord's] breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity: and *there shall be* a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing *them* to err.

- **Isaiah 30:28 (NIV)**

His breath is like a rushing torrent, rising up to the neck. He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction; [the Lord] places in the jaws of the peoples a bit that leads them astray.

## Modern Mistranslations:

- **Hosea 11:12 (KJV)**

Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

- **Hosea 11:12 (NIV)**

Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, the house of Israel with deceit. And Judah is unruly against God, even against the faithful Holy One.



## Modern Mistranslations:

- **Matthew 24:36 (KJV)**

But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

- **Matthew 24:36 (NIV)**

"No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

- **John 10:30 (KJV)**

I and *my* Father are one.

## Modern Mistranslations:

- **Mark 7:19 (KJV)**

Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

- **Mark 7:19 (NIV)**

For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")



## Modern Mistranslations:

- **Luke 6:48 (KJV)**

He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

- **Luke 6:48 (NIV)**

He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built.

## Modern Mistranslations:

- **Revelation 22:14 (KJV)**

Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

- **Revelation 22:14 (NIV)**

"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.



# Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Matthew 5:44 (KJV)**

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

- **Matthew 5:44 (NIV)**

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Matthew 20:16 (KJV)**

So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

- **Matthew 20:16 (NIV)**

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last."



## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Mark 2:17 (KJV)**

When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

- **Mark 2:17 (NIV)**

On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Mark 6:11 (KJV)**

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

- **Mark 6:11 (NIV)**

And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, shake the dust off your feet when you leave, as a testimony against them."



## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Mark 10:21 (KJV)**

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.

- **Mark 10:21 (NIV)**

Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Mark 10:24 (KJV)**

And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

- **Mark 10:24 (NIV)**

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God!



## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Mark 13:14 (KJV)**

But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judaea flee to the mountains:

- **Mark 13:14 (NIV)**

"When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation' standing where it does not belong--let the reader understand--then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.

## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Luke 4:4 (KJV)**

And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

- **Luke 4:4 (NIV)**

Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone.'"



## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Luke 9:55-56 (KJV)**

<sup>55</sup> But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. <sup>56</sup> For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save *them*. And they went to another village.

- **Luke 9:55-56 (NIV)**

<sup>55</sup> But Jesus turned and rebuked them, <sup>56</sup> and they went to another village.

## **Modern Partial Omissions:**

- Acts 9:5, 6 – Lord is Jesus?
- Galatians 3:17 – in Christ?
- Galatians 4:7 – through Christ?
- Galatians 6:17 – Lord Jesus?
- Ephesians 3:9, 14 – Jesus Christ?
- Colossians 1:2 – Lord Jesus Christ?
- Colossians 1:14 – his blood?
- 1 Timothy 2:7 – in Christ?
- 1 Timothy 3:16 – God in flesh?
- 2 Timothy 4:22 – Jesus Christ?
- 1 Peter 1:22 - through the Spirit?



## Modern Partial Omissions:

- **Hebrews 7:21 (KJV)**

(For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou *art* a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

- **Hebrews 7:21 (NIV)**

but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'"

# **NIV Total Omissions:**

**"Then cometh the devil and taketh away the word....." Luke 8:12**

**"If any man shall take away from the words..." Revelation 22:19**

- Matthew 17:21
- Matthew 18:11
- Matthew 23:14
- Mark 9:44, 46
- Mark 11:26
- Mark 15:28
- Acts 8:37
- Acts 15:34
- Romans 16:24



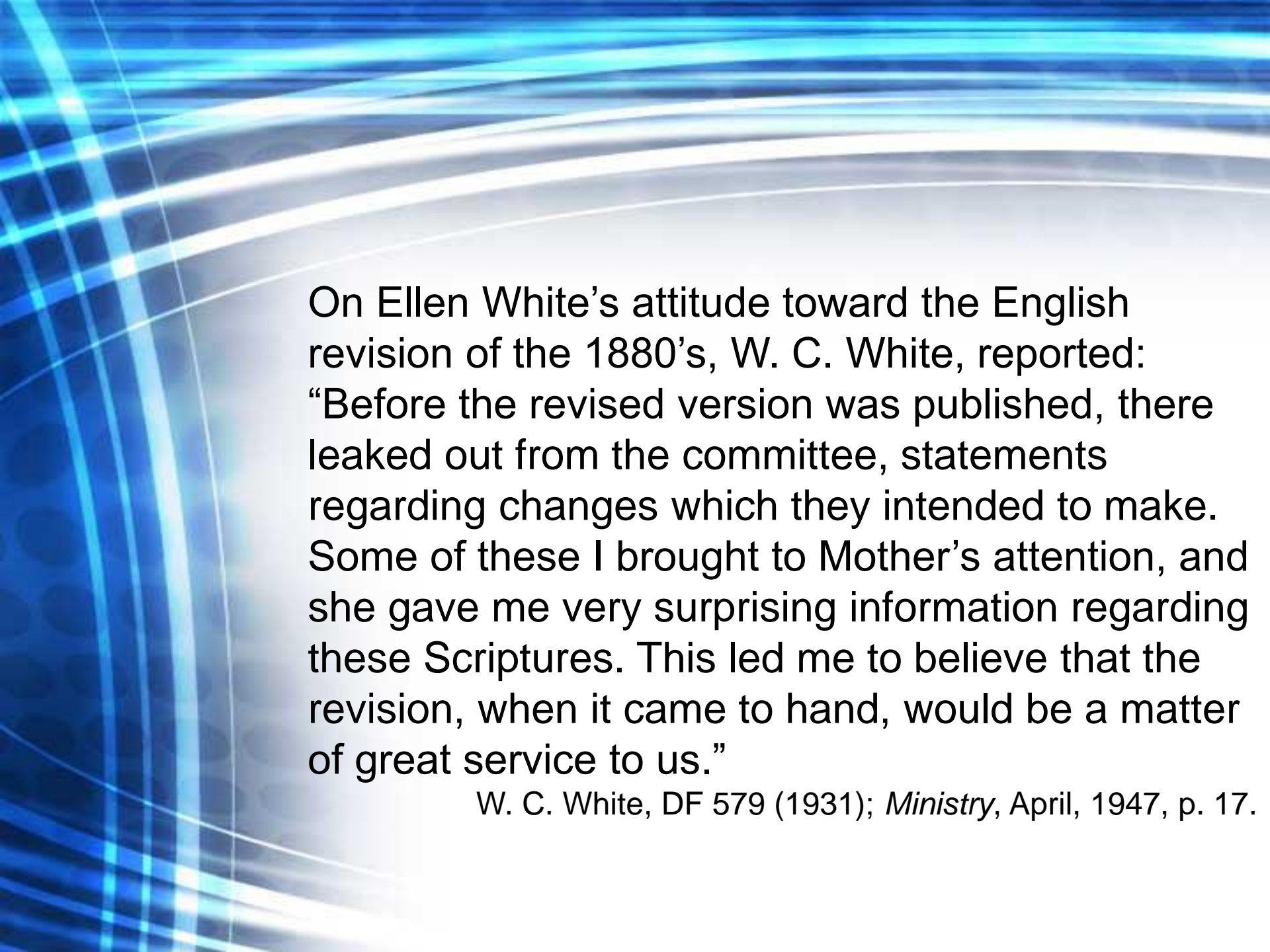


## **What did Ellen White have to say on the subject of Bible Translations?**

“In her writings of the Holy Scriptures Ellen White made use of the various English translations of the Holy Scriptures that were available in her day. She does not, however, comment directly on the relative merits of these versions, but it is clear from her practice that she recognized the desirability of making use of the best in all versions of the Bible.”

Arthur L. White, “The E. G. White Counsel on Versions of the Bible” Available at:

<http://www.whiteestate.org/issues/Versions.html>



On Ellen White's attitude toward the English revision of the 1880's, W. C. White, reported: "Before the revised version was published, there leaked out from the committee, statements regarding changes which they intended to make. Some of these I brought to Mother's attention, and she gave me very surprising information regarding these Scriptures. This led me to believe that the revision, when it came to hand, would be a matter of great service to us."

W. C. White, DF 579 (1931); *Ministry*, April, 1947, p. 17.



Ellen White occasionally used the **Revised Version** renderings, also the **marginal** reading of texts, in nearly all of her books **published after 1885**, which was the year of the appearance of the complete **English Revised Version**.

In ***The Great Controversy***, published in 1888, **seven texts** from the newly issued revision were employed, and she also used the **marginal** rendering of **eight other texts**....In 1901 the **American Revised Version** came from the press, and from that time forward we find that Ellen White occasionally employed both the English Revised and the American Revised versions.

In 1911, when *The Great Controversy* was reset, Ellen White retained **six of the seven texts** previously quoted from the **English Revised Version**. For the one text altered she substituted the **American Revised** rendering. She also retained **eight marginal renderings** used as in the earlier edition.

In the publication of *The Ministry of Healing* (1905) Ellen White employed:

- **8 texts English Revised Version,**
- **55 texts American Revised Version,**
- **2 texts Leeser,**
- **4 texts Noyes, and**
- **7 texts marginal renderings.**



Other books in which **Revised Version** texts frequently appear are:

- *Patriarchs and Prophets* (1890);
- *Steps to Christ* (1892);
- *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing* (1896);
- *The Desire of Ages* (1898);
- *Education* (1903); and
- *Testimonies for the Church*, 8 (1904).

Other books using a few

**Revised Version or marginal renderings** are:

- *Christ's Object Lessons* (1900);
- *Testimonies for the Church*, 7 (1902) & 9 (1909);
- *The Acts of the Apostles* (1911); and
- *Prophets and Kings* (1917).

W. C. White wrote in 1931:

“I do not know of anything in the E. G. White writings, nor can I remember of anything in Sister White’s conversations, that would intimate that she felt that there was any evil in the use of the Revised Version....She referred to it occasionally, but never used it in her preaching....We cannot find in any of Sister White’s writings, nor do I find in my memory, any condemnation of the American Revised Version of the Holy Scriptures.”

White Estate DF 579; *Ministry*, April, 1947, pp. 17, 18.



## Which Version Should I Choose?

### *Accuracy:*

- ❖ Group translations are generally less subject to bias than individual translations. (Message, The Clear Word, The Living Bible)
- ❖ Interdenominational translations are generally less subject to bias than denominational translations. (The Clear Word, The New World Translation—Jehovah's Witnesses)
- ❖ Modern translations have the advantage of access to recent archaeological discoveries, technology, & research; but also come with the modern theological biases.



## Which Version Should I Choose?

### *Intended Purpose:*

- ❖ Paraphrases often have a natural, easy-to-read flow. They enable you to easily read a book of the Bible in a few sittings to get an overview of what is discussed. These translations can also be quite thought-provoking. They often convey an emotion that may be lost in more rigid translations.
- ❖ A literal translation may take more time to read due to awkward wordings. However, if you are doing serious *study* of the Bible, including grammar and vocabulary as in prophetic study, you will want a more literal translation.



# Which Version Should I Choose?

## *Personal Preference:*

- ❖ Which version are you used to?
- ❖ Are you comfortable with the level & style of language used?

## *Intended Audience:*

- ❖ If you plan to read the Bible with children or young people, the CEV, the NLT, or the GNT are very good choices. The language in these tends to be more readable and modern. These translations also avoid some of the difficult phrases and words you often find in other translations. This also makes them excellent choices for anyone not familiar with the Bible.





## Which Version Should I Choose?

- ❖ Don't be afraid to try a new or unfamiliar version. Only be careful when allowing a NEW version to alter your doctrinal understanding.
- ❖ Don't rely on any single version. Every translation reflects the biases of its translators. A good technique is to refer to at least three Bible versions—the King James Version, comparing it with another similar literal translation (example: ASV) and yet another which is a more free translation, i.e. thought-for-thought (example: NLT).





An anecdote about Billy Graham contains perhaps the best advice about Bible versions. According to the story, Billy Graham was once asked which Bible version is the best. "The one you read," he replied.

