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# Translations of the Bible



*Weeks 1 & 2: How the Bible Came to Us*  
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# Introductions

- What would you like to learn in this class? What questions do you have?
- Artificial intelligence in translation
- How the Bible came us today.

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# The Importance of Scripture

- Scripture is God's Word – 1 Thess. 2:13
- Scripture is the truth of salvation – Romans 1:16-17, 10:17
- Scripture is living and powerful – Heb. 4:12
- Scripture brings a blessing to those who read, hear, and keep it – Rev. 1:3
  
- William Tyndale died by being burned to death on October 6, 1536, because he translated the Bible into English.

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# How the Bible Came to Us

- Prerequisite: writing systems
- Revelation – general and special, with the latter our focus
- Inspiration – God ensures His truth is passed accurately through the human author to the text.
  - Hebrew/Aramaic (OT) and Greek (NT) original manuscripts
- Preservation – The Bible books are protected through many copies
  - Hebrew, Greek, other ancient languages, including Latin
- Canonization – Books are officially recognized and accepted as belonging to the Bible
- Translation – Books are converted from a source language to a target / receptor language
- Publication and Distribution – This is not often included, but is an important step (print, digital)
- Illumination and Interpretation – Intake by the target language reader
- Proclamation – God has ordained preaching and teaching of His word

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# Writing Systems: The Alphabet is an Invention!

- Pictographs or ideograms or logograms, where a picture represents an object or idea/concept. Thousands of symbols.
- Word-syllabic and syllabic. Each symbol represents a whole syllable (consonant + vowel)
- Hieroglyphics are not technically pictographs. They are phonetic signs (sounds), logographs, and symbols that define the meaning.
- Chinese contains logographs, symbols that represent words or morphemes (a small unit of grammatic or semantic meaning). Its characters represent sound and meaning. You need to know 2,000 to 3,000 characters for core literacy. Over 10,000 exist.
- Alphabetic. Each symbol (grapheme) represents a sound (phoneme) including consonants and vowels.
  - The alphabetic system was devised by Syro-Palestinian Semites 1,600-1,700 B.C.
- To be able to learn 26 (or 22—Hebrew or 24—Greek) characters and then be able to write all of the language is a huge advancement. Hebrew's 24 letters are all consonants. Greek has vowels within its alphabet.

# Earliest Books

- The earliest literature that survives to this day was written in cuneiform (logographic and syllabic or logo-syllabic). The *Epic of Gilgamesh* was written this way.
- The earliest large text written in an alphabetic script is the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament).



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# Writing Systems: Paper and Codex Books are Another Invention

- Writing materials
  - Stone – 10 commandments
  - Clay tablets – no Biblical examples
  - Wooden tablets – Perhaps Hab. 2:2, Ezek. 37:16.
  - Papyrus – reed-like plant in Egypt, from 2400 B.C. Few manuscripts survive to today (127 in number) but probably these were how the original MSS were written.
  - Parchment: prepared animal skins. Most Dead Sea Scrolls and 5,000 NT MSS are on parchment. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD forward, this was the most common.

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# Writing Systems: Paper and Codex Books are Another Invention

- Book Format
  - Scroll, Luke 4:17, the original format of the NT.
  - The *codex* is the bound book we are accustomed to. Came out in the end of the first century. Almost all NT MSS are this sort.

# Revelation

- General Revelation– to all people in general and gives a general knowledge of God
  - Sufficient for condemnation, but not for salvation, Romans 1:18-20
  - Through nature – Psalm 19:1-4
  - Through providence – Matt. 5:45; Acts 14:15-17, 17:25
  - Through conscience – Romans 2:14-15
- Special Revelation – God communicates to specific people at various times
  - Miracles – for example, God plagued Egypt so that they would know the true God (Exodus 14:18)
  - Direct speech – many places throughout the Bible
  - Dreams – Gen. 20:3, Matt. 1:20
  - Incarnation – Heb. 1:2
  - Scripture – see next. Note: not all special revelation is in the Bible. See Rev. 10:4; 2 Cor. 12:2-4.

# Inspiration

- The term is a bit unfortunate, but we are stuck with it. It comes from Greek **theopneustos**, which is not IN-spired but EX-pired, that is, God-breathed.
- 2 Tim. 3:16-17 (NIV) <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
- It is the Word of God, that comes forth from God, that originates from God.
- **Definition:** Inspiration is the miracle by which God superintended the writers of Scripture so that they wrote exactly what God wished.
  - No errors, omissions, additions. It is entirely truthful and cannot fail in what it says = inerrant and infallible.
  - Organically using the personality and background of the author.
  - Dynamically using the circumstances of the time.

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# Inspiration, cont.

- Inspiration allows for dictation, but does not demand it.
- The miracle concerns the original manuscripts or *autographs*.
- It has to do with the “reduction” of the revelation of God to writing and ensures it adequately represents what God wants. It is not predicated of spoken (prophetic) revelation, although that is a debated point.
- The miracle of inspiration means that the very words of the original languages Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic were carefully chosen by God. See 1 Cor. 2:13 – “words taught by the Spirit.”
- But inspiration extends to more than words—it includes the grammar, context, sentences, relationship between sentences, paragraphs, and propositions. It is all encompassing.

# Inspiration, cont.

- 2 Peter 1:19-21 (NIV) <sup>19</sup>We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. <sup>20</sup>Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. <sup>21</sup>For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were **carried along by the Holy Spirit**.
- The Bible has divine authorship and human authorship at one at the same time. It cannot be explained by merely natural means.
- The Bible thus has divine authority. It is not merely “another religious book written by men.”
- Inspiration—the miracle—does not apply to copies or translations. Copies and translations have a derivative inerrancy/infallibility/authority to the extent that they accurately represent the original.
- Good copies and translations can be called the Word of God.

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# Preservation

- Above, we defined inspiration as a miracle.
- Preservation is *not* a miracle.
  - There is no promise of a *miracle* to preserve the Bible. There *is* instruction that the Bible is originally God-breathed, which is clearly a miracle.
  - KJV-only advocates insist that a miracle is involved in preserving, or even re-inspiring, the KJV Bible. There are many problems with this view, not the least of which is “which manuscript is the one that was miraculously preserved?”
- It is debated among evangelicals if there is a promise of preservation (of any sort) in the Bible (Daniel B. Wallace and W. Edward Glenny), much less a miracle. I believe that there is such a promise, although some commonly used texts may not be as direct as some have suggested.

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# Preservation, cont.

- The Bible does teach its own preservation. We have two supports for this:
  - **Direct statements:** Psalm 119:152 Long ago I learned from your statutes that you established them to last forever. And Psalm 119:160 All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.
  - **Theological necessity:** without preservation, Christians would not have everything needed for a godly life, but 2 Peter 1:3 promises that very thing. Christians must have God's Word! Preservation is thus a corollary of inspiration. If inspired, it must be preserved too. If not preserved, there is no point in inspiring it. Inspiration purposed to produce a written record, and that record was meant to be preserved.
  - **More theological necessity:** Inspiration also conveys authority to the words of Scripture. If not preserved, there is no authority. On authority, see Matt. 5:18. Continuing authority implies preservation. Also, John 10:35.

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# Preservation, cont.

- If preservation is not a miracle, what is it? It is providential. God has chosen to use *normal means* to preserve the Bible, not *miraculous means*.
- What is involved? Hard work! The Word of God is preserved in the multitude of manuscripts.
- It is a plain fact that God has not perfectly (miraculously) preserved His word. We cannot be sure that one particular manuscript has no errors in it. God has judged this to be sufficient for us.\* It appears that we do not have any *original manuscripts*. But we are certain that we have the *original text* of the original manuscript, as it is preserved in many manuscripts.
- The work of preservation continues today. I can illustrate that with my own work with Bibles International/Baptist Mid-Missions with the Wampis and the Makusi translations, among others.
- The Bible does not promise continuous and universal availability. See 2 Kings 22:8-13. Availability is dependent in some measure on human obedience and care.

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# Hebrew Scribal Rules for Preservation

- About AD 100, Jews produced a standard text, but with consonants only (“consonantal text”).
- Here are some rules they followed:
  - Only parchment from *clean* animal was allowed.
  - Each written column was to have no fewer than 48 and not more than 60 lines.
  - Pages were to be lined first and then letters suspended from these lines.
  - Only black ink was to be used, prepared according to a specific recipe.
  - No word or letter was to be written from memory.
  - The new copy was to be revised within 30 days of completion.
  - A scroll was to be rejected that had more than three errors on any single sheet.
  - Every word and letter was counted.
  - Special rules governed the form of the letters and the spaces between them.
- The Dead Sea Scrolls show that they were successful in preserving the text for over 1000 years.





# What is the Result?

- **Bible** – “book” from Greek *biblos*.
  - A book could be a scroll or multiple scrolls.
  - It could be loose-leaf papyri or parchment. Parchment was more durable than papyri, made of treated animal skins.
  - It could be a codex, which is a stack of paper bound on one edge, like we are accustomed to today. (We should be thankful for the invention of the codex!)
- **Scripture** – the “*graphe*,” the holy writings. See Romans 1:2, 2 Peter 3:16.
- **Word of God** About 48 times throughout the Bible. But note that many of these do not refer to the Bible *per se* but rather to the message of the gospel, or the body of truth.
- **Old and New Testament** = Latin *Vetus Testamentum* and *Novum Testamentum*. For the NT, in Greek it is *Καινή Διαθήκη* (*Kainē Diathēkē*), with the second word meaning “covenant.”
  - Origin: Clement of Alexandria ~ 200 AD.

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# Old Testament

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The Hebrew Old Testament Arrangement		
Law (Torah)	Prophets (Nebiim)	Writings (Kethubim)
1. Genesis	A. Former Prophets	A. Poetical Books
2. Exodus	6. Joshua	14. Psalms
3. Leviticus	7. Judges	15. Proverbs
4. Numbers	8. Samuel	16. Job
5. Deuteronomy	9. Kings	
		B. Five Rolls (Megilloth)
	B. Latter Prophets	17. Song of Songs
	10. Isaiah	18. Ruth
	11. Jeremiah	19. Lamentations
	12. Ezekiel	20. Ecclesiastes
	13. The Twelve	21. Esther
		C. Historical Books
		22. Daniel
		23. Ezra-Nehemiah
		24. Chronicles

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# New Testament

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The Books of the New Testament		
<b>Gospels</b>		<b>Acts</b>
1. Matthew		5. Acts of the Apostles
2. Mark		
3. Luke		
4. John		
<b>Pauline Epistles</b>		<b>General Epistles</b>
6. Romans	13. 1 Thessalonians	19. Hebrews
7. 1 Corinthians	14. 2 Thessalonians	20. James
8. 2 Corinthians	15. 1 Timothy	21. 1 Peter
9. Galatians	16. 2 Timothy	22. 2 Peter
10. Ephesians	17. Titus	23. 1 John
11. Philippians	18. Philemon	24. 2 John
12. Colossians		25. 3 John
		26. Jude
<b>Apocalypse</b>		
27. The Revelation		

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# Spaces, Vowels, Verses, and Chapters

- **Spaces:** In early Hebrew manuscripts of the OT, there were no vowels and no spaces between words. This saved space because writing materials were much harder to obtain than today.
- Similarly in Greek manuscripts, as we saw above, there were no spaces and some abbreviations.
- **Hebrew Vowels:** During the period 500-1000 AD, Jewish scribes called Masoretes created a system of vowels so that they could avoid disturbing the consonantal text. These were vowel points, and depending on how you count/categorize them, there are up to 21 variations.
- **Chapters:** 1200-1228 AD by Stephen Langton for the Latin Vulgate, and put into the Hebrew Bible in 1330.
- **Verses:** Settled by about AD 900 by the Masoretes for the Old Testament. The Masoretic text is the basis of our Hebrew Bibles and Old Testaments today. Robert Stephanus added verses in 1551 (300 years after chapters!), influencing printed editions like the Geneva Bible.

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# Spaces, Vowels, Verses, and Chapters

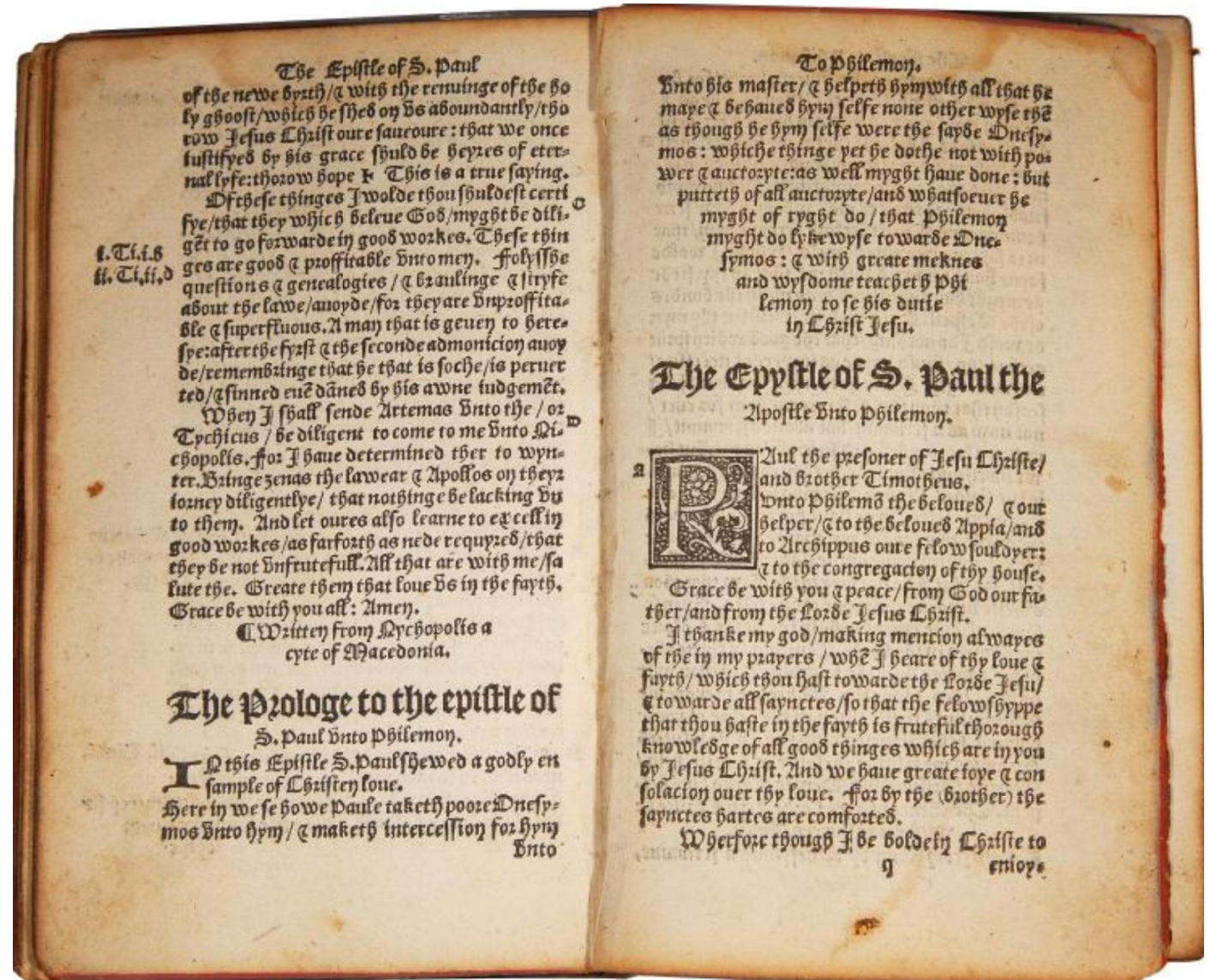
- **Chapters and verses together:** Fee and Strauss tell us (p. 123):
  - “The first whole Bible to have verse numbers was Beza’s Latin Bible of 1555.”
  - “The first Bible to appear in English this way was the Geneva Bible (NT 1557; whole Bible 1560).”

# Paragraphs

- **Paragraph** marks or section breaks were formalized by the Masoretes 6th-10th centuries AD.
- In the Dead Sea Scrolls (c. 100 BC) there were white space or orphans to denote literary units.
  - An orphan is a short line of text isolated by spacing from the text before or after. In modern text layout, orphans are generally frowned upon, but in the case of the Hebrew text it can make a section break more visible.
- In the Greek NT, scribes added section headings around the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- In English, ironically, the verse-by-verse layout came *second*. Tyndale in 1526 printed the Bible with chapters and paragraphed text, but no verse numbers (see next slide). Coverdale (1535) was similar.
- The Great Bible (1539) had a paragraph layout. Geneva (1560) had a verse layout.
- I thank the Lord for each of these improvements, which make the Bible easier to read and understand.

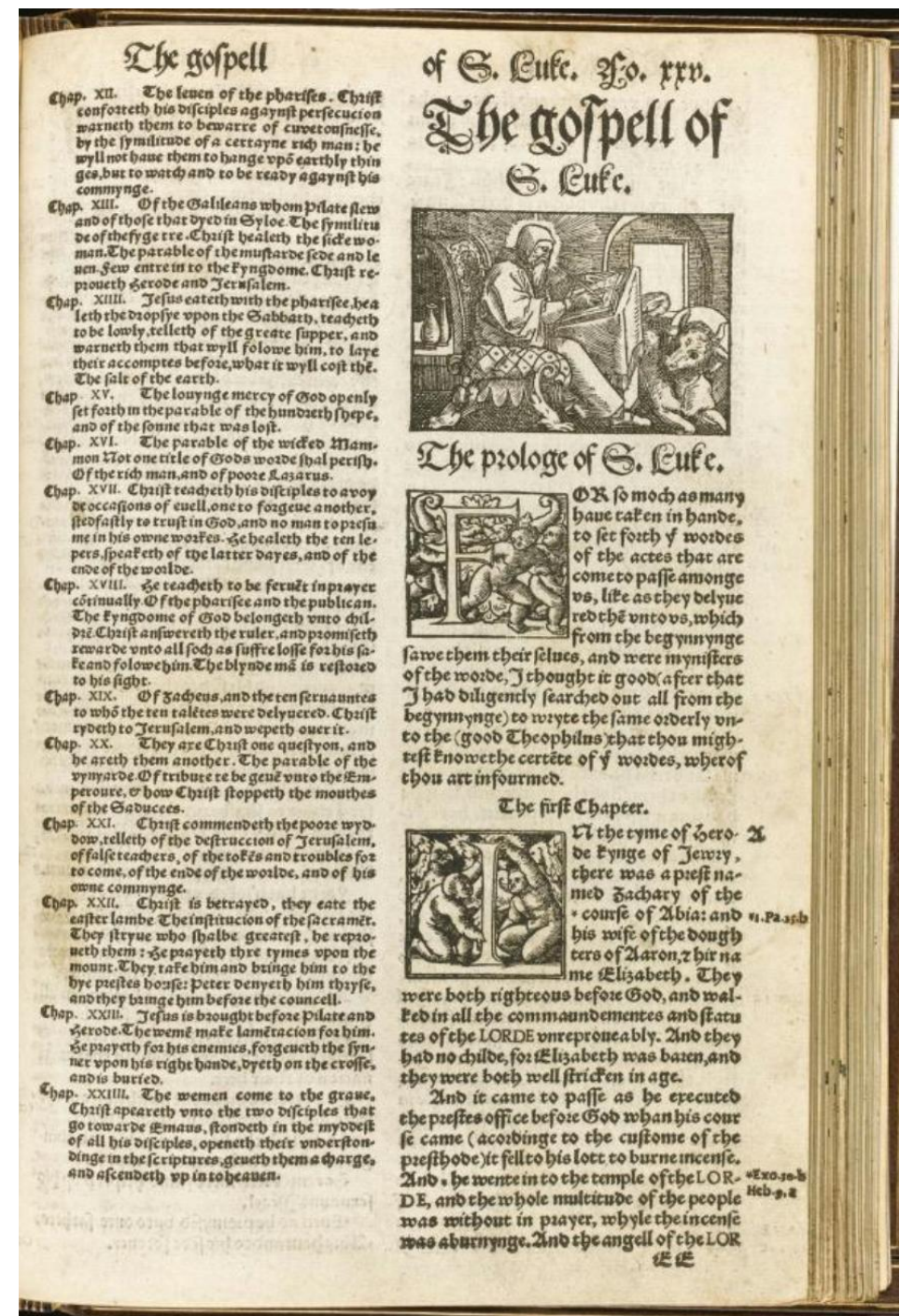
# Tyndale Bible 1526

- Paragraph layout.



# Coverdale Bible 1535

- Notice the right column with paragraph structure, no verse numbers.



ye, and make their stetes so boyde, that no mā shal goo th: erin. Ther cryes shal be broken downe, so that no body shal be left, nor dwell there any moze.

**B** I sayde vnto the: Ofseare me, and be content to be reformed. That they; dwellynge shulde not be destroyed, & that there shulde happen vnto them none of these thynge/ wherwith I shall byset them. But neuertheles, they stande vp early, to folowe the splthines of their owne ymaginaciōs. Ther foze, ye shall waite vpo me (sayth the Lozde) vntyl the tyme þ I stand by: foz I am determyned, to gather the people & to bynng the kyngdomes together, that I may poure out myne anger, ye all my wo: othful & byspylsure vpo the, & foz all þ wo: lde shall be colūmed w the fyre of my geloufi. And the wyl I clese þ lippes of the peple, þ they may euerychone call vpon the name of the Lozde & serue hym with one shoulder. Suche as I haue subdued, and my chyldzen also whom I haue scatered abrode shall bynng me p: elentes beyonde the waters of Etheopia.

Psalm. l. a  
Sopho. l. c

In that tyme shalt thou no moze be founded, because of all thy ymagynacions, wher thow w thou haddest offended me: foz \* I wyl take awaye the y: poude boosters of thyne honour from the, so that thou shalt no moze triumphe because of my holy hill. In þ also wyl I leaue a small pooze symple peo: ple, which shall trust in the name of þ Lozde.

Jerem. l. b

**C** The remnant of Israell shall do no wy: kednes, nor speake lyes: nether shall there any disceatful tunge be foude in they: mouthes. foz they shal be fed, & take they: rest, & no mā shal make the afraied. Geue thākes, O daughter Syon, be toypfull, O Israell: re: toyce and be glad from thy whole herte, O daughter Ierusalē, foz the Lozde hath takē awaye thy punyshment / and turned backe thyne enemys. The kyng of Israell, euen the Lozde hym selfe is with the: so that thou needest no moze to feare any mylfortune.

**D** In that tyme it shal be sayde to Ierusalem: feare nat, & to Syon: let nat thyne handes be slacke / foz the Lozde thy God is with the: it is he that hath power to saue: he hath a special pleasure in the, & a meruelous loue towarde the: pee, he reioyseth ouer the with gladnesse. Such as haue bene in heynesse, wyl I gather together / and take out of thy congregacion: as foz the shame and reprofe that hath bene layed vpo the, it shal be kare fro the. And so in that tyme wyl I destroye all those that vere the: \* I wyl helpe the lame / and gather by the cast awaye: pee, I

Mich. 4. b

wyl get them p: yse and honoure in al landes, where they haue bene put to shame. At the same tyme wyl I bynng you in / & at the same tyme wyl I gather you. I wyl get you a name and a good repute: amonge all peo: ple of the earth / when I turne backe poure captiuite befoze poure eyes, sayeth þ Lozde.

**C** The ende of the prophecye of Sophony.

**C**: The boke of the Prophete Aggeus.

The tyme of the Prophecy of Aggeus. In exhortacion to bylde the temple agayne.

C A P I. I.

**I**n the seconde yeare of bynng \* Darius, in the vij. moneth the fyrst daye of the moneth, came the wo: zde of þ Lozde (by the Propheete Aggeus vnto

\* Zorobabell the sonne of Salatiell the pryce of Iuday and to Iestathe sonne of Iosebedech the h: yeprest; sayinge. Thus spea: keth the Lozde of hostes, and sayeth. This people doth saye. The tyme is nat yet come to bylde by the Lozdes house. Then spake the Lozde that by propheete Aggeus, and sayde. \* Ye poure selues can fynde tyme to dwell in fylde houles / & shall this lye wast: Considze nowe poure owne wayes in poure hertes (sayeth þ Lozde of hostes) \* ye so we much, but ye byng litte i: ye cate, but ye haue not ynough ve dypnck, but ye are nat fylled: ye decke your selues, but ye are nat warme: & he that earneth any wages, putteth it in a broken purse. Thus sayeth the Lozde of hostes: Cōspzde your owne wayes in your hertes / get you vp to the mountayne / fetch wod / & bylde by þ house: that it maye be acceptable vnto me, & þ I may shewe myne honour, sayeth þ Lozde. Ye looked foz much / & lo it is come to lye / & though ye byng it home / yet do I blowe it awaye. And why so sayeth þ Lozde of hostes: & euen because þ my house lye: so wast / & ye renne euery mā vnto his owne house. Wherfoze / þ heauē is fozbyden to geue you any dew / & the earth is fozbyden to geue you encrease. I haue called foz a d: outh / bothe vpo þ lande & vpo the mountaynes / vpo rounge / vpo wyne / and vpo ople / vpon euery thynge þ the grounde bynngeth fo: th / vpo men and vpon catell / pee, and vpon all handy labour.

1. Esdr. vi. c  
Da. 5. c. 6. a

1. Esdr. 3. 4. b

Jer. xxii. a

Leu. xxv. b  
Mich. vi. b  
1. Cor. iiii. b  
1. Cor. iii. b

1. Esdr. viii. b

1. Cor. iiii. b  
and. 1. l.  
1. Cor. vi. c

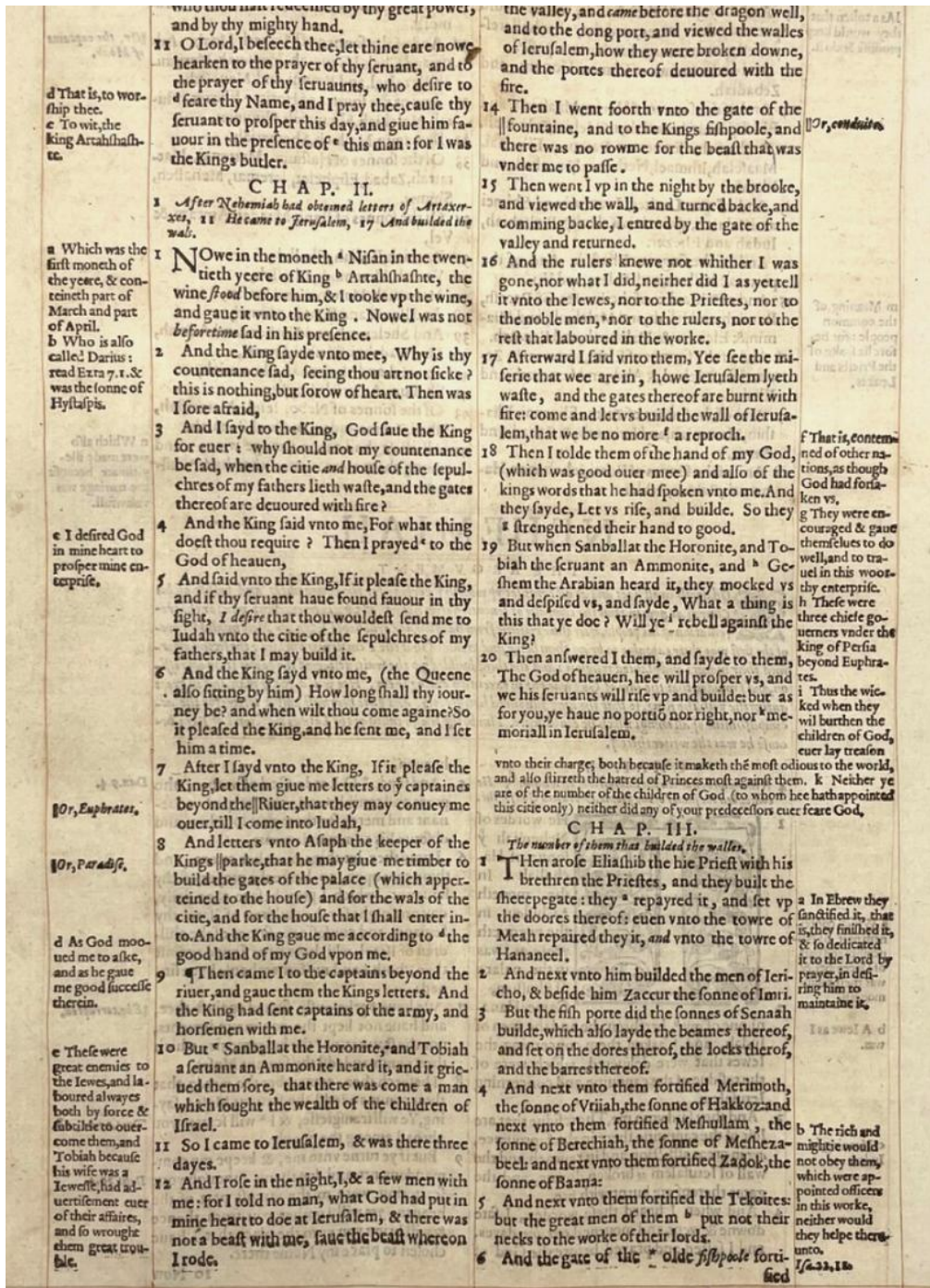
Deut. 28. b

# Great Bible 1539

- This copy is claimed to be from 1540.
- Paragraph-focused layout.

# Geneva Bible 1560

- This photo is from a copy dated 1597.
- Notice verse-focused layout.
- To create a paragraph layout requires some interpretation. Paragraphs are very helpful for the reader.
- Verse divisions also required interpretive work.



shut him up, and <sup>a</sup>set a seal upon him, <sup>b</sup>that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be <sup>l</sup>loosed a little <sup>a</sup>season.

### The Saints Reign with Christ 1,000 Years

<sup>4</sup>And I saw <sup>a</sup>thrones, and they sat upon them, and <sup>b</sup>judgment was given unto them: and I *saw* <sup>c</sup>the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and <sup>d</sup>which had not worshipped the beast, <sup>e</sup>neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they <sup>l</sup>lived and <sup>r</sup>reigned with Christ a thousand years. <sup>5</sup>But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. <sup>6</sup>Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such <sup>a</sup>the second death hath no power, but they shall be <sup>b</sup>priests of God and of Christ, <sup>c</sup>and shall reign with him a thousand years.

### Satanic Rebellion Crushed

<sup>7</sup>And when the thousand years are <sup>l</sup>expired, Satan shall be <sup>l</sup>loosed out of his prison, <sup>8</sup>And shall go out <sup>a</sup>to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, <sup>b</sup>Gog and Magog, <sup>c</sup>to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea. <sup>9</sup>And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and <sup>l</sup>compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. <sup>10</sup>And

*book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, <sup>a</sup>according to their works. <sup>13</sup>And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; <sup>a</sup>and death and <sup>l</sup>hell delivered up the dead which were in them: <sup>b</sup>and they were judged every man according to their works. <sup>14</sup>And <sup>a</sup>death and <sup>l</sup>hell were cast into the lake of fire. <sup>b</sup>This is the second death. <sup>15</sup>And whosoever was not found written in the book of life <sup>a</sup>was cast into the lake of fire.

### All Things Made New

**21** And <sup>a</sup>I saw a new heaven and a new earth: <sup>b</sup>for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. <sup>2</sup>And I John saw <sup>a</sup>the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared <sup>b</sup>as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, <sup>a</sup>the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. <sup>4</sup>And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and <sup>b</sup>there shall be no more death, <sup>c</sup>neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

<sup>5</sup>And <sup>a</sup>he that sat upon the throne said, <sup>b</sup>Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for <sup>c</sup>these words are true and faithful.

<sup>6</sup>And he said unto me, <sup>a</sup>It is done. <sup>b</sup>I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. <sup>c</sup>I will give unto him <sup>l</sup>that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. <sup>7</sup>He

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# Thomas Nelson KJV 2023

- This is a picture from a Thomas Nelson KJV Bible printed in January of 2023.
- KJV Holy Bible: Paragraph-style Large Print Thinline with 43,000 Cross References

# Interesting Aside: Jehovah

- Because of fears of breaking the third commandment, Jews stopped pronouncing the divine name of God in the OT, Yahweh (יהוה). Instead, they substituted the word for Lord, *Adonai* (אֲדֹנָי).
- The Masoretes carried on this tradition by pointing the consonants of Yahweh with the vowels of *Adonai* (יהוה).
- This perpetual qerê (reading) was not noted in the margin, however, since it was expected the reader would be aware of this change in the vowel pointing.
- During the Renaissance, when non-Jewish scholars began to study the Hebrew text, they mistakenly took the vowels as the proper pronunciation for the divine name, thus *Yehowah*, which in Latin became Jehovah.
- The Legacy Standard Bible takes us back to before this error and uses Yahweh instead of Jehovah and LORD in the Old Testament.

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# Canonization/Canonicity

- Canon – ruler or measuring stick; norm or standard.
- Around AD 350 the idea was used to refer to *The Shepherd of Hermas* as not authoritative. Also used in Laodicea in 363.
- Jews also had the same idea, but did not use the same word. Their authoritative texts “defile the hands,” a phrase meant to prevent careless handling of God’s word.
- **Definition:** Canonization “is the historical process by which the Spirit of God led the church to recognize those writings that were genuinely inspired. This historical process produced the canon we have today.”\*
- Note: the church did not give us the Bible; Christians simply *recognized* the books that were already canonical. The books were inspired, authoritative, etc. the moment they came off the pen of the prophet or apostle.
- Canonicity has to do with recognition and acceptance. This was basically done in the 300s AD.

# Canonization/Canonicity

- Old Testament: Christians agree with the Jews about the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh).
  - TaNaKh is an acronym that stands for Torah, Nebi'im, and Kethubim = Law, Prophets, Writings which encompass the entire Old Testament.
  - Jesus also accepted this canon according to Matt. 23:35 and Luke 24:44.
- New Testament: It took some time for recognition to become church-wide. This process was deliberate and cautious, with several measuring sticks:
  - Was the book apostolic, including apostolic associates?
  - Was the book catholic, that means, universally relevant to the church?
  - Was the book orthodox, that is teaching correct doctrine?
  - Was the book traditionally used by the churches? In other words, was it commonly used and show evidence of wide-spread acceptance?

# Canon: When Fully Recognized?

- See [Kruger's 10 Facts To Memorize](#). Here are a couple of pertinent points:
- The Gospels were recognized widely by the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and probably in practical terms long before that.
- 22 of the 27 NT books are listed at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century in what is called the “Muratorian Canon” fragment.
  - It does not list Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and perhaps 3 John.
  - The fragment also lists the Apocalypse of Peter which is not a Bible book.
- Christians affirmed the books they *already used* and believed were foundational documents of the faith. Councils like Nicea in May of 325 A.D. declared what *was*, not something new. But Nicea was concerned with the Arian heresy, not the canon of the NT.
- The canon was formally recognized by 393 A.D. at the Council of Hippo. Again, this is a formal recognition of what already was in practice in most churches.

# Canon: Other Definitions

- **Catholics** do not agree with the Protestant Canon. They add seven deuterocanonical books in the Old Testament: Tobias, Judith, Baruch, Sirach/Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon, First and Second Maccabees, along with additions to Esther and Daniel. Protestants call these *Apocrypha*.\*\*
- The **Eastern Orthodox Church** adds Prayer of Manasseh, 1 and 2 Esdras, 3 & 4 Maccabees, Psalm 151.
- The **Catholic Canon** refers to more than the Bible; it refers to the official collections of laws (Canon Law), the Bible, and liturgical prayers (Eucharistic Prayers) recognized as authoritative by the Catholic Church.
- **Mormons** view the canon as an open, evolving collection of sacred writings called the Standard Works. These include the KJV Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. The canon is not closed, which allows for continuing revelation from living prophets.
- **Islam** has a canon of the authoritative sacred texts (Quran, Hadith) and the body of established religious laws (Sharia). Hadith are collections of sayings of Mohammed which guide Muslim practice.

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# Canon: What Belongs

- In the NT use of the OT class, we see how the Bible is an interlinked book with thousands of cross-references throughout.
- The NT does not quote or refer to any Apocryphal books as authoritative or canonical.\* That is instructive.
- No council in the first 4 centuries of the church accepted them.
- Athanasius, Cyril, Origen, and Jerome opposed their inclusion!
- Some contain unbiblical teaching like prayers for the dead, good works can atone for sins, or God helping Judith in a falsehood.
- Judith has a clear historical error, saying Nebuchadnezzar ruled in Nineveh, but he was king in Babylon! Similar with the other books.
- Jews never accepted them as part of the Hebrew Bible.
- On April 8, 1546 the Apocrypha was formally accepted by Catholics at the Council of Trent. The Council said that anyone who did not accept these books as canonical was to be “*anathema*.”

# Translation

- At last we come to translation. Because the books of Scripture are in Hebrew and Greek (and a bit of Aramaic), we could not have practical access to the books unless they were translated into the “vernacular.”
  - Vernacular: “using a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a...foreign language” (Merriam Webster).
  - So we transform
    - οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ’ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον
- into
- For God loved the world in this way, that He gave His one and only Son, so that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life.

# Translation, cont.

- And we convert
  - הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים אָמַר קְהֵלֶת הַבֵּל הַבְּלִים הַפֶּל הַבֵּל:  
into
  - Vanity of vanities, says the preacher. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!
  - or
  - Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.
- Without translation, the overwhelming majority of people on the planet would not have access to God’s word. This is the problem with capturing the text in Latin (similarly for the Quran in Arabic).
- See later in this course for statistics on those remaining language groups who *still* do not have direct access to God’s word.

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# Translation, cont.

- When we translate, we are trying to communicate the meaning from one language into another in the best possible way. “Best” is in the eye of the beholder, and there are different philosophies about how to do so.
- Translation should take note of the fact that God delivered the New Testament in Koine Greek, which was the common language of the people “on the street” throughout the first century Roman empire. There were other languages as well (Aramaic in Judea, for example). God did not deliver the NT revelation in Latin or some other foreign or minority language. We therefore should not “lock up” the Bible in a language that is not known, nor should it be translated in an inaccessible style to the common person.
- Beyond this, there are many judgment calls. What reading level—8<sup>th</sup> grade, 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 5<sup>th</sup> grade? How long should the sentences be? What special vocabulary should we use or avoid? Should we add more or less “italicized” words to clarify the translation? How to handle idioms and figures of speech? And so on...

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# Publication and Distribution

- To get the Bible to people, it has to be published and distributed. Since the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg in 1440 this task has become much easier. In 1455 or so, the Gutenberg Bible was printed on his press, in the Latin language.
- Translating, checking, layout, and contracting with a printer are time consuming. Not to mention shipping and logistics across the globe add significant challenges to the process of Bible publication and distribution.
- With the advent of the Internet, it became possible to share the Bible electronically around the world.
- Again, with highly portable computers (aka smart phones and tablets) we can quickly distribute the Bible to many thousands of readers within the space of hours and they can have it in their pocket.
- Bible app development and distribution.

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# Illumination

- I assume you are reading the Bible. See Deut. 17:18-20. To do that well, you need a couple more things to be true: illumination and interpretation.
- **Illumination:** The work of the Spirit of God that enables a person to grasp the significance of Scripture and accept it as truth. This work begins at salvation and has continuing effect throughout life. 1 Thess. 2:13.

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# Illumination Creates Personal Acceptance of the Canon

- The historical determination of the correct list of books can only give a limited amount of certainty to the individual believer.
- Ultimately our confidence rests upon the internal testimony of the Spirit and the fact that God's word authenticates itself.
- Christians believe that God is and that He has revealed Himself in the canon of Scripture.
- Because it comes from God, the Bible is the ultimate "Supreme Court" authority. There is no "court" above it, no place that the Bible can appeal higher than itself, because God is the highest of all authority.
- At salvation, the Holy Spirit convinces the new believer that indeed the word of God (1 Thess. 2:13, 1 Cor. 2:14). This is what gives us certainty that it is God's word and it is true. Like with canonicity, the Spirit does not *make* the Bible true; He shows us what already *is* true.

# Interpretation

- **Interpretation:** Determining or extracting the author's intended meaning of a text.
- **Meaning** is carried in the sequence of words in their grammatical and historical context.
- Meaning is what the original author intends to say to us.
- **Significance** is a level beyond meaning: it connects the author's meaning to the reader. 1 Cor. 2:14, Acts 16:14.
- This is the realm of **hermeneutics**, the principles and methods of interpretation. Seminaries devote an entire semester-long graduate course to just this topic.
- The word *hermeneutics* derives from a Greek verb *hermeneuo*, which means to interpret or explain, "to explain on a more extensive and formal level the meaning of something which is particularly obscure or difficult to comprehend."
  - Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 404.

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# Proclamation

- The Great Commission tells us to “teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you.” (Matt. 28:18-20).
- Pastors must be able to teach (1 Tim. 3:2, 2 Tim. 2:24).
- Much of the local church ministry focused on teaching (Acts 15:35, 18:11).
- The ministry of the apostles focused on teaching (Acts 2:42, Col. 1:28).
- There is also preaching, which is found dozens of times in the New Testament.
- We usually think of teaching as conveying information, and preaching is characterized by more exhortation and illustration. Both are critically important.
- God has ordained that His word be proclaimed to the church, and to the world. Upon the hearing of the word of God, then faith can enter (Romans 10:17).

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# Proclamation, cont.

- This instructor believes strongly that proclamation of the word of God is of central importance in the life of the church.
- I believe in expositional / expository messages. Such a message is an explanation and application of a text of Scripture, controlled by that text.
- To create an expositional message, the pastor or teacher:
  - Studies a portion of the Bible
  - So that he can explain and apply it
  - So that the audience can understand and obey it.

# Homework Due Week 2

- We are reading the book of James several times this semester. As you read, highlight or take a few notes to share with the class. Maybe something was interesting, or you learned a new way a verse might be understood, or something else worth noting.
- If you normally use a particular translation, do NOT use that one for these exercises.
- **Formal equivalent translations: NASB, NKJV, ESV, ASV, KJV, LSB**
- Functional equivalent or “mediating” translations: NIV, TNIV, HCSB, NET
- Paraphrase-type translations: Living Bible, Good News Translation (GNT, TEV/GNB), New Living Translation, Contemporary English Version, The Message, God’s Word, New Century Version
- See Fee & Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation*, p. 12 for abbreviations and p. 28 for a chart of different translation types.
- Submit a one-paragraph reflection, maybe highlighting one or multiple verses that you noted as standing out or that sounded different from when you have read it before.

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# Homework Due Week 2

- Select the person you will do your final project on. We need to work together to make sure we do not duplicate.
- Examples: John Wycliffe, William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, John Rogers, John Huss, Martin Luther, Adoniram Judson, Hudson Taylor, Desiderius Erasmus, St. Jerome (Eusebius Sophronius Hieronymus). Consult with the instructor if you want to present on another person not on this list.
- St. Jerome = John Daudelin
- William Tyndale = Andrew
- Erasmus = Evangeline
- Hudson Taylor = Terry
- John Wycliffe = Mark Davidson

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# Side Note: Semantic Range

- Every word has various meanings. Only the context can tell you which meaning is what the author intends to communicate.
- Bank = financial institution, side of river; verb: trust (bank on it); veer one way or the other; the slope of a curved road; verb: to do financial business with (do you *bank* at Comerica?); etc.
- Fly = insect, verb: to move through the air.

# Homework Due Week 3

- We are reading the book of James several times this semester. As you read, highlight or take a few notes to share with the class. Maybe something was interesting, or you learned a new way a verse might be understood, or something else worth noting.
- If you normally use a particular translation, do NOT use that one for these exercises.
- Formal equivalent translations: NASB, NKJV, ESV, ASV, KJV, LSB
- **Functional equivalent or “mediating” translations: NIV, TNIV, HCSB, NET**
- Paraphrase-type translations: Living Bible, Good News Translation (GNT, TEV/GNB), New Living Translation, Contemporary English Version, The Message, God’s Word, New Century Version
- See Fee & Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation*, p. 12 for abbreviations and p. 28 for a chart of different translation types.
- Submit a one-paragraph reflection, maybe highlighting one or multiple verses that you noted as standing out or that sounded different from when you have read it before.

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# Homework Due Week 3

- You have selected the person you will do your final project on.
- **For the next assignment, list at least 5 resources you find about your person. At least two must be in print, not online.**

# Excellent Resource

- **How We Got the Bible: A Visual Journey (Zondervan Visual Reference Series)**
- Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/How-Got-Bible-Zondervan-Reference/dp/0310253063/>

