



Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood? (Part I)

2 Timothy 3:16: (NASB) *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

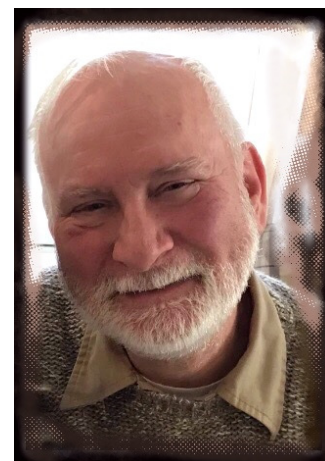
Special Guest: David Stein



The Bible is the foundation of our faith. We believe it to be the mind of God expressed to humanity. Its purpose is to tell us things we cannot deduce from nature - things such as where we come from, how we got to the present time and where we are going. The Bible shows us the heights of the plans and purposes of God and the depths of the experiences of sin and death. It shows us right and wrong, light and darkness and

answers questions about eternity. This book is a compilation of writings by many authors over a span of over 1,600 years. In spite of all of its wisdom, history, insight and prophecy, many questions swirl around the Bible's authenticity. How were the books of the Bible chosen? Why are there so many translations? Why is there so much disagreement about its message? How do we KNOW it is the inspired word of God? Join us now as we embark on a search to discover the origins and development of our Bible.

Joining us on our Bible Translation series is our friend and brother in Christ, David Stein. David has been a guest on Christian Questions many times. He is an elder of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, Bible Students and has been a student of the Bible since his teen years. David has several particular Bible study topics of interest that are close to his heart - the Tabernacle, science in the Bible and Israel.

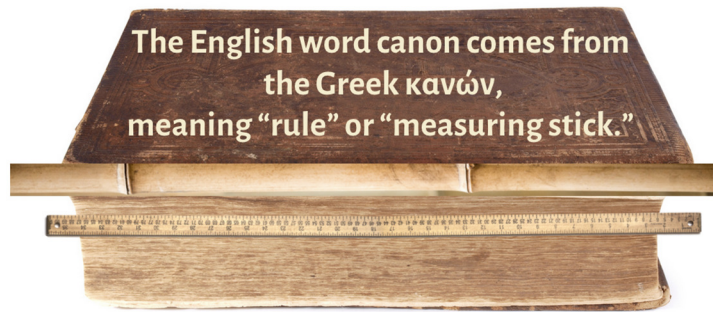


Where did the Bible come from and how were the books of the Bible chosen? What is the meaning of the phrase "the canon of Scripture?"

The word "canon" connects to both Hebrew and Greek words. The Hebrew source is the word, *hmq Qaneh*, which means reed or stalk. The English word "cane" also comes from this Hebrew word. Reeds were used as measuring rods in ancient times because of their straight form, hence, the measuring or rule of Scripture became known as the canon of Scripture.

We like the definition given in Wikipedia: "A biblical canon or canon of Scripture is a set of texts (or "books") which a particular Jewish or Christian religious community regards as authoritative Scripture."

The English word canon comes from the Greek word, *κανών*.



The phrase “measuring stick” is important because the measuring stick of Scripture is what we deem to be God's holy word. The word canon has both Hebrew and Greek roots and represents what we consider to be the accepted books of the Bible.

Interestingly, the Apostle Paul used this word *κανών* twice to describe a standard of behavior:

Philippians 3:16: (NASB) *however, let us keep living by that same **standard** <2583> which we have attained.*

Standard: Strongs #2583 *κανών*; (a straight reed, i.e. rod); a rule (“canon”), a standard of faith and practice; by implication, a boundary

This text talks about a measuring device to evaluate how our Christian life is being executed.

Galatians 6:16: (NASB) *And those who will walk by this **rule** <2583>, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.*

Our entire society depends upon standards. The scientific community has standards for speed or length and every dimension. There are also standards in law. It makes sense that there should be some standard by which we can measure what authentically comes from God.

Who makes the rules and then decides which books make it into this standard or canon of Scripture? The rules for canonicity were the general recognition of certain practical ideals.

WE CAN DESCRIBE THEM IN THREE PRINCIPLES:

1.

The writings had to be authored by a recognized prophet, apostle or someone associated with them.

2.

The writings could not contradict previously accepted books of Scripture.

3.

The writings had to be widely accepted by the church and its leaders as inspired of God.



1. In the rule of law - in our judicial system - we have judges that make pronouncements. We *recognize* the judges as authorities. It is the same way with Scripture. There were prophets that came from God with a message. The prophet Ezra is recognized and accepted.

2. The truth is never at odds with itself. It is inconceivable that the inspired word of God would be inconsistent. We would expect the pronouncements to be consistent. For example, Moses stated plainly, *Thou shalt not steal*. If another prophet came along and said it is all right to steal in certain circumstances, there would be a conflict. There is a standard behind the canon of Scripture.

3. This is probably the most subjective of the three principles. Who were the authorities in the church? Those who rose to the top and became shepherds of the church. They wrote and pronounced things, so there was a general recognition of those who appeared to be directed by God to oversee and foster His work. If we go back into the Hebrew Scriptures, we find there were Jews who put thoughts together. There is some tradition that says Ezra was the first one to put together what we call the canon of the Old Testament, or the Hebrew Scriptures. Others were in agreement, and so it came to be accepted. Likewise, in Christian times, after the apostles and disciples, there were Christian men who stood out as faithful teachers, providing guidance. This group over time agreed upon what should be part of the Scriptures. Again, this is subjective, but yet not hard to understand how it could happen.

The comments from the audio clips are from a brother in Christ, Jim Parkinson. He has done incredible work over his lifetime in terms of scholarly understanding of Hebrew and Greek pertaining to the Scriptures.

Jim is a retired aerospace engineer and private textual scholar, as well as an elder for the International Bible Students Association. His interest in scriptural textual criticism began in college when he had access, at the University of Michigan Ann Arbor, to the Greek papyri of the New Testament.



I have known Brother Jim since I was a child. When I was 12 years old, he visited us from California. He came to Connecticut for business and stayed with our family over a weekend. I played in a youth basketball league, and Jim came to my basketball game. I don't know what it was about having Brother Jim at my basketball game, but I played the game of my life when he was there watching. I'll never forget it because there was something about his smile and grace. I have a vivid memory of Brother Jim in my life from 50 years ago.

Here is a quick summary of the canon of our Protestant Bible.



How the canon of Scripture came to be, *Jim Parkinson*

- The Old Testament found in Protestant Bibles is simply the Hebrew Bible taken from the Jews. Then, we add to that the New Testament composed of the four Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles of Paul and of the other apostles, and finally, the Revelation by the Apostle John. Each of these books is present in the contemporary canon because they've been historically proven to be used by the early church. For example, we have a thousand manuscripts for each of the four Gospels, five hundred for Acts and the Epistles and even a couple hundred for the book of Revelation.*

The flip side of inclusion is exclusion; what is that all about? We have just begun to scratch the surface - let's dig in!

**So far, we have focused on how the Bible came to be.
What were the criteria for books to be included?**

It is important to remember the complexity, the history, the unrest and the geography in which the Bible was actually put together. What other book do we know of that was compiled over 1,600 years by over 40 different writers? This book is a miracle revealed! We just need to step back and appreciate it.

There are many writings both from Hebrew and Christian times that have been excluded from the canon of Scripture. But before we examine those writings, let's show how the current books came to be the accepted writings of Scripture.

THE OLD TESTAMENT:

By the time of Jesus in the first century, the canon of the Hebrew/Old Testament Scriptures was established.



Three years ago, when I went to Israel, we had a Jewish man who was our tour guide. I was giving a sermon at one of the gates of Jerusalem about the Old Testament. I addressed him and said, "Being Jewish, you're very familiar with the Old Testament." He said, "David, it's not old to me." All he knew was the Hebrew Scriptures - to him there was nothing "new" to distinguish between Old and New. Since that time, I have tried to use the term "Hebrew Scriptures," rather than the Old Testament.

By the time of Jesus, the Old Testament was established.

Jesus made reference to the Old Testament Scriptures in several places throughout the gospels:

Matthew 21:42: (NASB) *Jesus said to them, Did you never read in [the Scriptures](#)...*

There is an overriding descriptiveness of the grouping of the these books.

Matthew 22:29: (NASB) *But Jesus answered and said to them, You are mistaken, not understanding [the Scriptures](#) nor the power of God.*

Matthew 26:54,56: (NASB) ⁵⁴*How then will [the Scriptures](#) be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?* ⁵⁶*But all this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures of the prophets...*



When Jesus refers to *the Scriptures*, he is speaking of the established Hebrew Bible. Also, he often used the phrase *it is written* to refer to various Hebrew Scriptures.

The New Testament had not been written yet, since it did not come about until after Jesus passed away. The fact that Jesus used this expression shows that it was “settled Scripture.” It was authoritative, and he used it as the basis for what he taught.

Did Jesus quote from every book in the Hebrew Scriptures?

The Gospels show Jesus quoting all five books of the Torah/Pentateuch, eight of the Prophets and the book of Psalms. This is NOT to suggest that books not quoted by Jesus are not to be considered inspired. The Gospels give us only a slice of Jesus’ three-and-a-half-year ministry.



Let’s give an example: Let’s say we got four people together that would write something about Rick’s life in the past three and a half years. One person named Matthew would write 28 chapters about the life of Rick, Mark would write 16, Luke 24 and John would write 21. Now that is 89 chapters of Rick’s life. Do you think those 89 chapters would have everything that Rick said and did in the past three and a half years? No!

The Apostle John confirms in John 21:25 that Jesus taught much more than was recorded. We may safely presume that Jesus quoted from other books, probably all of them.



Trivia Question: Which books in the Hebrew Bible did Jesus quote the most?

Jesus quoted most from the book of Psalms! This tells us a lot about the value of the book of Psalms in our Christian walk.

Please see the Bonus Material for the citations.

When we look at a modern English translation of the Jewish Hebrew Scriptures, an important question arises: Why are there 39 books in the Old Testament and the Jewish Hebrew Bible has only 22 or 24?

While the number of Old Testament Books varies between our Christian version and the Jewish version, THE CONTENT IS THE SAME. The Jewish Old Testament called the *Tanakh* combines a number of books in our Christian version into a single book, thus reducing the number of books but still including the same content. A quick example includes the 12 prophetic books following Daniel in our Bible constitute one book in the Hebrew Scriptures called “The Twelve.”

One other observation about the Hebrew Bible is that the sequence or order of the books is different from Christian versions of the Old Testament. The last book in this sequence is what we would identify as 2 Chronicles.

The CONTENT is the same!

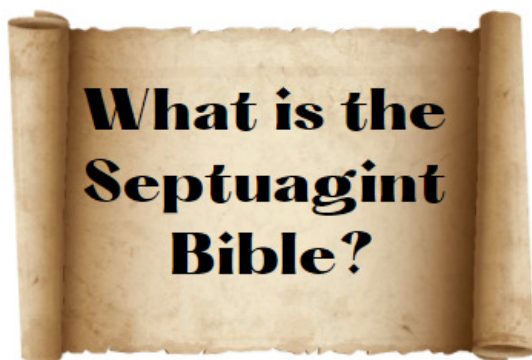


We have a quote from one of the books in the Hebrew Testament found in the Septuagint version. The Septuagint version is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures from around the 2nd century BC.

2 Maccabees 2:1-4: In those days arose Mattathias, son of John, son of Simeon, a priest of the true sons of Joarib from Jerusalem. Mattathias abode in the mountain of Modein and he had five sons - John, who was surnamed Gaddi; Simon, who was surnamed Thassi; Eleazar, who was called Avaran; Jonathan, who was called Apphus, and Judas, who was called Maccabeus.

Wait a minute, that's not in our Bible! Where did that come from?

The books of Maccabees, and others, are called apocryphal books. They were added to the Hebrew Scriptures around the time of the Greek translation. They do appear in the Septuagint but never appeared in the Hebrew Scriptures. When we use the term apocrypha, it means added.



The Septuagint is a Greek translation of the Hebrew text. Septuagint in Latin means "the 70." There were 70 Jewish scribes authorized by the civil rulers at that time to produce a translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the common language of the world at that time. It includes various apocryphal books.

The Greek word *apocrypha* is formed from the combination of *apo* (away) and *krytein* (hide or conceal).

We use the words **hide** or **conceal** in our language every day - cryptocurrency, for example. Some of our listeners may invest in Bitcoin - a digital or virtual currency. Bitcoin is called a cryptocurrency because it is a hidden currency. Computers are used to make sure the security of that currency is maintained. Another example is cryptography - being able to code something so that somebody cannot read it.



In general, the word apocrypha came to mean "false, spurious, bad, or heretical" and not intended to be in the original Scriptures.

Apocryphal books include: 1 Esdras, Ezra and Nehemiah (one book) in the Greek Septuagint, Tobit, Judith, Additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (*this is not Ecclesiastes*), Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, Song of the Three Children, The Story of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, 1 and 2 Maccabees and the 151st Psalm.



We quoted earlier from the apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees, which appears to be largely correct in recording historical things. But just because it is historically accurate does not mean it is intended to be included in Scripture or is validated by God.

Why do we consider apocrypha writings as not inspired by God and deserving to be excluded from the canon of Scripture?



The Apocrypha, Jim Parkinson

- *The Protestant canon does not add several books and chapters of questionable inspiration. Together they're called the Apocrypha, it means literally, "covered." In other words, not open like the rest of the Bible - inspired. The Old Testament apocrypha consists of 1 Estres, Judith, Tobit, Baruch and Sirach, the books of Maccabees and a few additional chapters. They were never in the Hebrew Old Testament, although parts of it are found in a few Dead Sea Scrolls. But they were added to the Greek Septuagint translation.*

The Apocrypha were never part of the Hebrew works. They came into play with the Greek translation and were never accepted by the Jewish rabbis as part of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures.



Let's summarize some of the reasons to exclude the apocryphal books from the canon of Hebrew Scripture:

1. None were composed in the Hebrew language, which was alone used by the inspired historians, prophets and poets of the Hebrew Scriptures. All of them were written in Greek between 400 BC and 200 BC, after the last of the accepted Hebrew prophets. This is a convenient and logical way to make a division between what was intended of God and what is apocryphal - simply by the language in which it was composed. The timing becomes suspect as well.
2. They appear only in the Greek Septuagint; they do not occur in the Hebrew Bible.
3. None of their writers of the apocryphal books claim to be inspired by God.
4. None of these apocryphal books are quoted in the New Testament.
5. Many of them contain fantastic statements that contradict Scripture and are inconsistent internally. For example, in the two books of Maccabees, Antiochus Epiphanes is made to die three different deaths in three different places.
6. They contain doctrines at variance with the Bible. For example, Ecclesiasticus 25:24: "From a woman sin had its beginning. Because of her we all die." This is NOT the truth - *in ADAM all die*. Another example is the concept of purgatory in 2 Maccabees.



These six reasons show us there is a sensibility as to why the apocryphal books are not part of Holy Scripture. It is not unreasonable to dismiss them. It is very rational to do so because they do not measure up to the standard of the Holy Scriptures.

As we can see, the Bible is a complex and ancient book that has a lot of questions and controversies surrounding it.

What about the Book of Enoch?

And how does the New Testament have its authenticity established?

While the Apocrypha is much more of a denominationally-based issue, the Book of Enoch and the Book of Jasher (spelled Jasher in the King James Version) have been brought up as other ancient writings that seem to have significant biblical connections. We need to clearly understand what they are and why they are NOT part of Holy Scripture.

First, let's look at Enoch, the individual who is an important scriptural figure:

Jude 14: (NASB) *It was also about these men that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold, the Lord came with many thousands of His holy ones.*



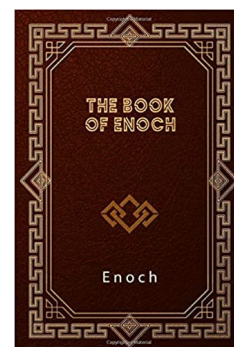
The Book of Enoch, Jim Parkinson

- *Any book referred to by Scripture is worth considering. But how does one know if the alleged copies of the book are valid or even written by the claimed author? Concerning the Book of Enoch, the first five chapters seem credible. Jude quotes chapter 1:9 and possibly the first eleven could be, but Enoch's supposed intercession for the fallen angels and his journeying through Sheol seem utterly not credible. Now, Paul quotes some of the great poets in Acts 17:28, but he doesn't imply that they are inspired, and so much of the book of Enoch we certainly couldn't give credence to.*

Just because Enoch is quoted is not necessarily a validation of the whole book. *The Book of Enoch* was never considered authentic by the Jewish rabbis; it was never ever included in the Hebrew Scriptures' canon. Throughout the Gospel Age, it was never up for consideration to be part of the Bible, including in the Catholic or Greek Orthodox Bibles.

There are twenty *Book of Enoch* manuscripts in the Dead Sea Scrolls, but all are in Aramaic, not Hebrew. Thus, they are not part of the Hebrew Old Testament.

As Jim mentioned, Paul quoted from some of the Greek poets, but they were obviously not inspired. So, the rule here is that the quotation from another extra-biblical source is not a validation that it was inspired.





What about the portions of Ezra and Daniel also written in Aramaic? Those portions were from Babylon and Medo-Persia. There were Hebrew versions of both of these. Just because they also appear in Aramaic is not a reason for dismissal.



For more on the book of Enoch, visit our Questions Answered page: christianquestions.com/bible-questions under "Bible."

What about the Book of Jasher?

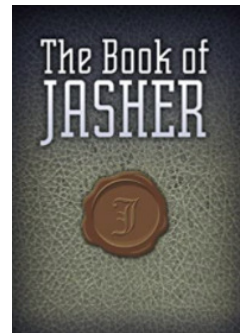
This book is quoted in the Old Testament:

Joshua 10:13: (NASB) *So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, Until the nation avenged themselves of their enemies. Is it not written in the book of Jashar...*

2 Samuel 1:18: (NASB) *and he told them to teach the sons of Judah the song of the bow; behold it is written in the book of Jashar.*

The Book of Jasher, Jim Parkinson

- The Book of Jasher, which means, "Book of the Upright," as quoted in Joshua 10:12-13 and 2 Samuel 1:18-27 - there have been conflicting attempts to forge such a book, but none seems credible. What this means is that we have no early manuscripts to indicate that any of the alleged texts of Jasher were circulating in the early church. Any textual evidence is dated much later into the development of Christianity.*



The current manuscripts we have of Jasher all seem to have been written in the past few hundred years. We have no indication there are any earlier. There was no acceptance of a Book of Jasher in the time of Jesus. What we have today has no connection back to the time of Joshua or Samuel. It is a lost book.

What about the New Testament apocryphal Gospels of Peter, Thomas and others?

New Testament Apocrypha, Jim Parkinson

- And there are also New Testament apocryphal books like the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, even the Gospel of Judas, probably written by Gnostics, but they add too many petty and doubtful details to be credible.*

The New Testament Apocrypha is generally agreed to be inferior in quality to the New Testament Gospels (such as not giving details of minor incidents) and are represented by only a few manuscripts each. They were not copied and recopied like the books we have in the New Testament.

Dan Brown's popular book (2003) and movie (2006), *The DaVinci Code*, was based largely on several of the apocryphal books.



The early church did not accept or include any of the apocryphal books. They are not found in the Catholic, Protestant or Greek versions of the New Testament. Quite a media stir was generated several years ago when a third manuscript of the Gospel of Judas was discovered. By comparison, there are over a thousand manuscripts for each of the four New Testament gospels.

Up to this point we have been discovering how many writings demonstrate that they have no legitimate place in our Bible. The canon of the Bible which we use has been well-accepted, but the writings are very old.

How can we be sure that these Bible books have not been distorted or changed since they were written? This is a legitimate concern.

One obvious way is to locate the oldest writings which, theoretically, should be the most reliable. The study of ancient manuscripts should provide proof, one way or another, about how well-preserved the words are of the Bible writers. We have over 3,300 manuscripts available to us to check on these questions. The fidelity to the ancient manuscripts is astounding!



How well-attested is our Bible, Jim Parkinson

- There are fewer variations among the oldest manuscripts than among the later manuscripts - the later being 10th through 16th centuries for the most part. There are above 3,300 New Testament manuscripts, over a thousand each in the Gospels, around 500 or so in Acts and in the Epistles, and roughly 200 in Revelation, maybe slightly more. Perhaps 100-200 verses are significantly changed, and maybe only a dozen or two make a big difference. The Sinaitic and Vatican 1209 are mid-4th century with about 70 fragmentary manuscripts still earlier. So, there are only a very few verses that remain uncertain. Now, Oxford Papyrologist Peter Parsons once commented to me, "Well, you know the Greek New Testament is the second-best attested work of ancient history." I thought, that's wonderful. So, then I asked, "What's the best attested?" and he replied, "Why, the Hebrew Old Testament, of course!"*



The Bible we use today reflects an amazing fidelity to the earliest manuscripts. What would you say accounts for this incredible preservation? The world has dramatically changed, but we are saying the Scriptures have remained dramatically unchanged. How is that possible?

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD! There have been some changes, but they are so few as to make a real difference in just a handful of texts. We will explore some of these in detail throughout this series.

It makes sense that if our faith is dependent upon the authority of Scripture, then it has to be preserved in order that the pure word of God is revealed to us. It would make no sense that God would be lackadaisical and our faith



would be based on something that can be overthrown, questioned or threatened. But it is not. It stands up under impressive scrutiny. We have so much evidence that it allows us to have absolute faith that what God has preserved for us today is worthy of basing our faith upon.

People outside of Christianity often look at us and say we believe in a book full of errors. They do not understand the factual basis in which we have to prove the Bible Scriptures are intact. Not only do we have manuscripts of the Bible itself, but when we review the writings of Christians in the second and third centuries, we find they well-attest to the early canon of Scripture. They even help clear up questions brought by later scholars regarding authorship! This is an additional testimony that what we have is correct.



Check out our CQ Kids video:
WHAT IS THE BIBLE, WHO WROTE IT,
AND HOW DO WE KNOW IT IS TRUE?
christianquestions.com/youtube

One of the questions that seems to be forever debated is who wrote the book of Hebrews?



The writings of Paul, Hebrews authorship, Jim Parkinson

- *There is some scholarly debate as to the exact dates certain books were written. Examples include the question of whether Hebrews was written by Paul. I've held a manuscript to Paul's Epistles from about 200 AD. Given a little bit different order: Romans, Hebrews, 1st and 2nd Corinthians and so forth. So, already around 200 AD, they knew that Hebrews had been written by Paul. It just took scholars another 16 centuries to become ignorant of it 😊.*

Studying the book of Hebrews, it is so “Pauline,” matching up with his other writings. We believe Paul was the author.

Why we do all of this research:

2 Timothy 2:15: (NASB) *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

We are doing this multi-part series on the Bible so we can more zealously and accurately handle the word of truth. As we seek to verify the Bible's authenticity, it is amazing how many details and pathways to positive proof exist.

**We have established which books belong and which ones do not.
Now, why are there so many translations?**

Most of us have never spent a lot of time thinking about how the books of the Bible got there. We do spend a lot of time thinking about what we believe based on our teachings and reading the Bible. This is where the question of translations is deeply important and also really fascinating!



Observations so far:

1. The present canon of Scripture has been collated by God-fearing people according to an informal set of rules that make sense. The rules may be informal, but there is a very high standard to those rules.
2. There is ample historical evidence that the writings we have in our Bible today are very faithful to the original writings and are reliable. History is on our side.
3. The apocryphal books have been left out of the canon of the Bible for good reasons. They do not stand up to the high standard the canonized texts follow.
4. There is every reason for faithful people of today to see God's hand guiding and guarding the creation, content, teaching, prophecy and inspiration of His Holy Word.



First, we will concentrate on the translation of the Bible into the language of the people, and then on all the specifically English translations that are now available to us.

This is easy to answer since we have a Scripture that provides an explanation:

Matthew 24:14: (NASB) *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.*

To preach and teach the gospel, you must use the Bible. It must be translated so that it can be understood. It is the source of the gospel and the only authority for what we preach. Since it must be *preached in the whole world*, it has to be translated into the language of the people! This is reasonable and was part of God's plan.

Related Note: In Acts 2, the preaching of the gospel was started with a miracle. The disciples of Jesus were gathered at the Jewish celebration of Pentecost 50 days after our Lord's death. The church was anointed at that time with the holy spirit to continue the ministry of Jesus. Immediately after the holy spirit was given, they began to speak in different languages. WHY? The diversity of languages was necessary for the many non-Hebrew speaking people to hear and understand the gospel in their own languages. God kick-started the preaching of the gospel by making it available in all of these different languages. We can see why this was so important! The Bible would not be gathered together as a canon of Scripture for some time after that. The learning of the gospel at this time was mainly by word of mouth.





Into how many languages has the Bible been translated?

(Source: www.christiantoday.com/article/nearly-700-languages-now-have-a-complete-bible-translation/133559.htm) November 2, 2019 - There are now complete Bible translations in nearly 700 languages. Latest figures from Wycliffe Bible Translators show that 698 languages now have the complete Bible, up from 683 in 2018. Even more have a complete New Testament, up from 1,534 last year to 1,548 languages today, while a further 1,138 have some translated portions of the Bible, up from 1,133.

The Bible is the most translated book in the world!



What is the second most translated literary work in the world? The second most translated (not counting certain religious materials) is the story of *Pinocchio*! It has been translated into over 260 languages. *Pinocchio* is just one story; the Bible is a compilation of 66 books that have been translated into three times the number of languages. What a massive undertaking. We can certainly see God's hand in all of this!

We can see God wanted to make His word available to mankind. Throughout the Dark Ages, the Bible was just in Latin. The educated and priestly classes were the only ones who could understand it. The rest of the people, commoners and many upper classes alike, never had an opportunity to read the Bible. When the Reformation came, the reformers translated the Bible into the local languages. This was one of the first things they did so that the people could learn the gospel.

As disciples of Jesus, we study the Bible fervently in order to learn God's will. We are blessed to have more English translations of the Bible than any other language. We also have the original language manuscripts from which the Bible has been composed, as well as tools such as concordances and Greek or Hebrew interlinear translations available in English. These help us to learn and understand the Bible in greater depth.



Why are there so many translations? By this we mean interpretations of Scripture, rather than different language translations.

The quick and obvious answer is that a translator believes others' translations are deficient in some way, so the translator endeavors to remedy that translation with what he/she considers a better one, more faithful to the ancient manuscripts.



There are, of course, many challenges to translating a different language. Idioms are especially problematic.

English examples that are difficult to translate:


- *He was barking up the wrong tree.*
- *Get real.*
- *Chill out!*

Hebrew and Greek idioms can be translated word-for-word or idiomatically.

Let's take a look at an example in the Scriptures:

What do caperberries have to do with translations?

| | |
|---|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ecclesiastes 12:5: (JPS)</u> (Jewish Publication Society)</p> <p><i>Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terrors shall be in the way; and the almond-tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall drag itself along, and the caperberry shall fail; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets;</i></p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Ecclesiastes 12:5: (KJV)</u></p> <p><i>Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:</i></p> |
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Capers and caperberries come from the same bush. Capers, a well-known food, are the unopened buds from the bush and the caperberry is its fruit.

Verses 1-5 are a beautiful Hebrew poem that describes the challenges of getting old through metaphor and simile. The Jewish Publication Society translated the Hebrew directly word-for-word, adjusting for differences in English word order. Capers and caperberries have been used since ancient times as a piquant flavoring (much like olives) to stimulate the appetite. The writer of Ecclesiastes apparently says that when an old man's sense of taste diminishes and his appetite weakens, even the stimulation of the caperberry is unable to awaken his desire for food.





The KJV interpreted the Hebrew meaning without using the metaphoric references. The translation is correct in the meaning of the verse but has not preserved the poetry, nor does it allow the reader to make the connections the poetic metaphor suggests. The beauty of the original pattern of writing is lost.

(Chart source: <https://scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/OTpdf/qoh12.pdf>)

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|------|------------|--------------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 12:5 | גַּם | מִגִּבְהָ | יִרְאוּ | וַתַּחַתְּחִתִּים | בְּדֶרֶךְ | וַיִּנְאַץ | |
| | gm | m·gbe | irau | u·chthchthim | b·drk | u·inatx | |
| | moreover | from·lofty | they-are-fearing | and·consternations | in·the·way | and·he-is- ^c spurning | |
| | הַשָּׂקֶד | וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל | הַחֲגַב | וַתִּפְרֹ | הָאֲבִיוֹנָה | | |
| | e·shqd | u·isthbl | e·chgb | u·thphr | e·abiune | | |
| | the·almond | and·he-is- ^s being-burden | the·grasshopper | and·she-is- ^c annulling | the·caperberry's effect | | |
| | כִּי | הֹלֵךְ | הָאָדָם | בֵּית - אֶל | עוֹלָמוֹ | וְסִבְּבוּ | בְּשׁוּק |
| | ki | - elk | e·adm | al - bith | oulm·u | u·sbbu | b·shuq |
| | that | going | the·human | to | house-of | eon-of·him | and·they-turn-about |
| | | | | | | | in·the·road |
| | | | | | | | the·ones-wailing |



Sometimes Hebrew words are either more specific or more ambiguous than can easily be expressed in English. The English language also changes over the years. An English language translation from the 19th century may not have the same import or meaning as a more modern translation.

Then there is translator bias. David H. Stern, who put together the *Complete Jewish Bible*, says on page xvi that he does “inject his opinions” because he says, “the translator cannot maintain neutrality.” Nevertheless, his Bible is one of the most accurate translations.



This is why there are so many translations. Even if a translator attempts to maintain neutrality, their religious background and way of thinking will shade how they interpret and will color what is being translated.

How reliable are our English translations of the Bible? Should this influence our confidence in the Bible?

As we mentioned, there can be many shades of meaning, finding the most accurate translation is important. Today we can go on the internet and compare dozens of translations instantly. We heard the audio clip earlier where Jim Parkinson indicated there are relatively few passages in Scripture where differences demand extra scrutiny and study. But the truth is that translators of the Bible are sometimes affected by their doctrinal beliefs and that can find their way into their translations.

We personally face this, as there are certain texts we may be inclined to interpret according to our own prejudices or doctrinal beliefs, but we need to honestly examine the Scripture as written.



As a rule, more recent translations are more accurate because they use of manuscripts that have been discovered more recently. To put it in perspective, when the King James Version was created, they relied upon relatively few manuscripts - only 10. When new translations are made or updated today, there are over 5,300 manuscripts available, allowing us to delve much deeper and truly discover what is really intended in the text.



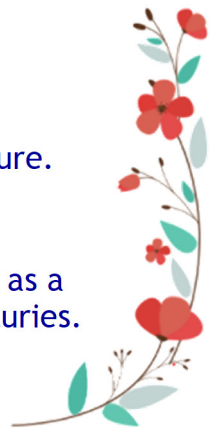
Best English Bible translations for accuracy, Jim Parkinson

- *I think the RVIC (Revised Version Improved and Corrected) is the most accurate. If any other, it would be Rotherham, though it's more difficult if others in the study are using a King James or similar version. The other accurate best translations are Sacred Name Restoration Bible, New World Translation, New European Version (which is Christadelphian), New American Standard Bible, that is, the 1970's editions but not 1995, American Standard Version (1901), David Stern's Complete Jewish Bible and the English Standard Version.*

Psalms 119:105-106: (NASB) ¹⁰⁵Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
¹⁰⁶I have sworn and I will confirm it, that I will keep Your righteous ordinances.

In summary:

- The Bible we have today is absolutely reliable.
- The apocryphal books do not belong in the canon of Scripture.
- We have a long history of scriptural evidence.
- Our Heavenly Father has preserved the Bible we use today as a basis for our faith. He has preserved it through many centuries.
- We can have great confidence that we can put our faith in the Scriptures.



We have something of incredible, eternal value when we look at the Holy Scriptures. It is no accident that the books that are included in our Bibles are there for a purpose and have been preserved for us. It is no accident that God's plan is revealed in the scriptural record.

Part II of our Bible translations series will delve into the harmony of Scriptures to teach God's plan, as we discover the fascinating history of many manuscripts and begin to uncover mistranslations that are present in many common translations. We have just begun the journey in looking into the Holy Scriptures, how and why they work, and how we can be inspired by them and learn God's plan.

***So, has the Bible been mistranslated and misunderstood?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***



Join us next week for our podcast on November 16, 2020

Ep. 1152: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated
and Misunderstood? (Part II)

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Learn what is true in order to do what is right. – Thomas Huxley

Jesus' quotations from the book of Psalms:

He was asked for a sign to show who he is. Psalm 78:24, John 6:32-33

The Jews wanted to stone him for claiming to be God. Psalm 82:6, John 10:34

He called himself the chief cornerstone. Psalms 118:22-23, Matthew 21:42,
Mark 12:10, Luke 20:17

He countered the Pharisees on several occasions. Psalms 8:2, 110:1,
Matthew 21:16, 22:44, Mark 12:36, 14:62, Luke 20:42-43

He foretold Jerusalem's destruction. Psalm 118:26, Matthew 23:39, Luke 13:35

He foretold his betrayal. Psalm 41:9, John 13:18

He foretold he would be hated without cause. Psalm 35:19, 69:4, John 15:25

His answer to Pilate when asked if he was the son of God. Psalm
110:1, Matthew 22:44, Mark 12:36

His dying on the cross. Psalm 22:1, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34

When he committed his spirit to his Father. Psalm 31:5, Luke 23:46

When he taught about those who try to work their way into the kingdom.
Psalm 6:8, Matthew 7:23

Reflecting on the sorrow of his soul. Psalms 42:5,9-11, 43:5, Matthew 26:38,
Mark 14:34

When he taught of man's reward for his works. Psalm 62:12, Matthew 16:27

When he taught about the manna God gave to their forefathers. Psalm 78:24,
John 6:31

When he spoke about the time they will see him again. Psalm 118:25-26,
Matthew 23:39

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1151: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood?(Part I)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1151-bible-authenticity/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. What does the phrase “canon of Scripture” mean? (See Philippians 3:16, Galatians 6:16)
2. What are the three principles used to decide which books were included in the Bible?
3. Was the Old Testament established before or after Jesus? Why are there more books in the Old Testament than the Hebrew Bible? (See Matthew 21:42, 22:29, 26:54-56)
4. What are the Old Testament apocryphal books and why are they excluded from the canon of Hebrew Scripture?
5. What are the books of Enoch and Jashar? Why are they not canon even though they are referenced in canon Scriptures? (See Joshua 10:13, 2 Samuel 1:18, Jude 14)
6. What is the New Testament apocrypha? Why are those books not included in the New Testament canon?
7. Why can we have such confidence that our biblical books have not been corrupted or changed over the many years since they were written?
8. Why has the Bible been translated into so many different languages? (See Matthew 24:14)
9. Why are there so many different translations of the Bible in the English language? Which versions are the most accurate? (See Psalms 119:105-106, Ecclesiastes 12:5)
10. What gives you confidence that the Bible is inspired by God? Why is it important to study the canon of the Bible? (See 2 Timothy 2:15)