
LESSON 1

ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

In this lesson we will cover in detail the history of the precious Word of God, the Bible. You will appreciate your Bible more than before when you see how it has survived over the centuries.

Before we get into this lesson, I want to describe this portion.

After you begin reading, some of the material may seem a bit irrelevant to your walk with the Lord, but it will serve as a reference point on how God's Word has survived the ages and conflicts of time.

"Knowing the history of someone or something gives you a greater appreciation for it."

For the last three and a half centuries, the English speaking people of the world have derived their knowledge of the only true God, of Jesus Christ, of the divine aspect of Israel's history and of the inspired ideals of Christianity as it was revealed to the Apostles, from the Bible, which was first printed in 1611 and was known as the **King James Version** or **The Authorized Version**.

This Bible has securely established itself in the affections of the English-speaking people. Great spiritual values associated with the Scriptures have also been effectually imparted.

It is generally agreed that Christianity came to Britain in the second century of our era. But, who first brought the Christian faith to that island, and how extensive its acceptance was, we will probably never know. We can only speculate.

The many hundreds of religious monuments, civil and military, strewn about Britain from the second to the early fourth century, are purely pagan. There were some early British martyrs and Britain was represented at the earlier Church Councils.

We do not know what Bibles or parts of Bibles were in Britain in those mysterious decades. ^{2nd century} It is known that the oldest book written by a Britain belongs in this period. It is a commentary on the Epistles of St. Paul written by the heretic Pelegius. Pelegius left Britain at an early age, never to return, and wrote the book in Rome.

THE BOOK OF ARMAGH

For nearly 200 years after the departure of the Roman garrison in Britain, in 410AD, we know very little of the experiences of the Christian Church in England. The story is different, however, for the Church in Ireland. The Christian Faith first came to this mountainous country in the fourth century. Within three generations, monasteries sprang up throughout the land, so that by 600AD "the study of sound literature held the foremost place and was pursued with a thoroughness and intensity unknown elsewhere in Europe at that date". It was during this period that The Book of Armagh was written, partly in Irish and partly in Latin. The only complete copy of the New Testament that has come down to us produced by the Irish Church.

ANCIENT VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE

THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION

The translation of the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, made at Alexandria about 285BC.

THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH

Not strictly speaking a version, but the Hebrew text perpetuated in Samaritan characters.

PERSHITO OR SYRIAC

The whole Bible, date uncertain (first or second century) apparently a translation into the common language of certain portions of Syria.

THE VULGATE

The entire Bible translated into the Latin language, by Jerome at Bethlehem. It was completed about 400AD and for 1,000 years was the standard Bible in the Catholic Church.

THE LATIN BIBLE

It was with the coming of St. Augustine in 597 that any factual history of Christianity in England began. It is not known if Augustine actually had a Bible with him, though we are sure that there were hundreds of passages of Scripture stored in his mind. Among the gifts of Pope Gregory to the early church at Canterbury, soon thereafter was a Gregorian Bible in two volumes, two copies of the Gospels, two Psalters, an exposition of the Epistles and Gospels from other sources.

Here is the beginning of the history of the Scriptures in Britain.

Pope Gregory sent a Latin translation of the Bible to Augustine, not Hebrew or Greek. Most people in the western provinces of the Roman Empire knew very little Hebrew or Greek, but spoke Latin, which was the language throughout most of the Mediterranean world.

When and how Latin Bibles were replaced by English Bibles, which could be read by the common man, was the next step.

NOTE: During the Dark Ages, very little Bible translation was attempted. There were a few minor translations made up of portions of Scriptures. The Word of God was locked up in the Latin tongue and was unknown to the common people.

THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

Probably, the first attempts to bridge this linguistic gap in literary composition that still exists, are the beautiful Lindisfarne Gospels in Latin. Originally written about 700AD in an uncial Irish script, containing an interlinear translation written in Anglo-Saxon, added about 950AD. About 1000AD, appeared the celebrated Aelfric, of whom it has been rightly said, "He is among the first to stand out individually in the records of his contemporaries as one that labored to make the Scriptures available to English scholars in their native tongue, wrote commentaries on certain books of the Bible and composed a condensed version of the first seven books of the Old Testament."

Language changes, however, were rapid then, and by 1300 the Anglo-Saxon language of King Alfred and Aelfric had become almost obsolete, and yet, as a distinguished authority has reminded us, "From the day of Alfred to the time of Chaucer, the language of the English people had a continuous history although it underwent many vicissitudes and suffered great changes. It is this persistence of an English tone and spirit gradually regaining its ascendancy after having been overlaid for three centuries by the culture of the Normans that gives these Anglo-Saxon manuscripts their chief significance for us. We discern in these ancient versions some permanent core of basic speech that holds over from age to age and constitutes our English idiom, the most English part of our English tongue."

For two hundred years after the Norman Conquest (1066AD) French remained the language of ordinary intercourse among the upper classes of conquered Britain, but in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, its maintenance became increasingly artificial. In the fourteenth century, English won its way back into universal use and in the fifteenth century, French all but disappeared.

THE ORMULUM GOSPELS

The Ormulum Gospels and Acts at the beginning of the 14th century. A poetical version of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles appeared, accompanied by a commentary known as the **Ormulum**, the work of an **Augustinian Monk, Oem**. Toward the middle of this century, the stories of Genesis and Exodus were translated into rhyming English version.

THE PSALTER IN EARLY MIDDLE ENGLISH

Two Prose translations of the Psalter (salter) in Early Middle English have survived. One, composed by the famous Richard Rolle, attained great popularity. As an indication of Bible study during the 14th century, there are 170 Biblical manuscripts of this period still surviving.

NOTE: *Some of the names and time periods may sound foreign to you, but it is out of history. We do not see the need to describe every era or define each name. You need only a basic understanding for this lesson.*

THE WYCLIFFE TRANSLATION

John Wycliffe (1330-1384) made the first great effort to place the entire Bible in the hands of common people in their own language. Thanks to Mr. Wycliffe, that tradition has continued right into our era of the 21st Century, putting the Holy Scripture into other languages so that the heathen may come to God and then study His Word in their own dialect.

The Wycliffe version stirred up a desire on the part of many in his day to make available the Holy Scriptures in the language of people of that day. The first translation was made about 1400 and a second translation, which exercised much influence, was a revision by a man named John Purvey. This was the only Bible in English, which existed in Britain until Tyndale more than 100 years later.

NOTE: *The Wycliffe Bible is the first complete Bible to be found in England. Wycliffe Bible translators still work worldwide today, translating Scripture into other languages in lands where they do not have the Bible in their native tongue.*

THE GUTENBERG TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Between John Wycliffe in 1384 and Tyndale's Version 140 years later, some tremendous events changed the entire intellectual and religious atmosphere in Europe. In 1453, Constantinople fell, which was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. Many Greek scholars migrated to the West with their cherished manuscripts. In 1456, there appeared the first book printed with moveable type called, the Gutenberg Bible, printed on a Gutenberg press, which ushered in a whole new era for Western civilization. Universal literacy and education were now possible, though not yet reality. Before that century ended, Christopher Columbus had discovered America. In 1516, Erasmus published the first Greek New Testament ever to appear in print, which had enormous influence on subsequent biblical translations. In 1517, Luther posted his 95 thesis to the Church door at Wittenberg. The Reformation may be said to have begun in Switzerland in 1519, and John Calvin began his famous work in Geneva in 1541, this was the period of the "reign" of Henry VIII (1509-1547). This is a bit of Church History incorporated into your study on the Origin of the Bible.

NOTE: *These periods in history are extremely important to our heritage as Christians.*

THE TYNDALE BIBLE

William Tyndale was born in 1494 and educated at Oxford, England. He became possessed with a desire to produce a new edition of the Bible in the English of his day, translated out of the original Greek and Hebrew. Tyndale was able to speak and read fluently seven languages with ease. He received no encouragement from the Bishop of London on his efforts. Persecution caused him to cross the channel to Hamburg (1524), and then to Wittenberg, where he met Luther. It was in Cologne that the first printed English New Testament was issued in 1525. Tyndale, betrayed by a friend, was deceptively persuaded to come to England again, where he was imprisoned and martyred on October 6, 1536. His famous words as he died were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

It is believed that before his death, Tyndale translated the Pentateuch (5 books of Moses) and the book of Jonah. Tyndale continued to work at revising his New Testament, with new editions appearing in 1533, 1534 and 1535. Eighty percent of the text of **The King James Version** is taken from the Tyndale Bible.

Ecclesiastical authorities denounced this version so harshly that of the first edition there remains only a fragment now in a British Museum. And of the second edition, only two copies are known today. Of the New Testament printed at Worms, only two copies have survived to the present time.

As already stated, William Tyndale, a lover of God's Word was killed before he completed the Old Testament, but it is generally believed that he left the material which appeared later in the Matthew's Version, which will be discussed.

THE MYLES COVERDALE VERSION

Coverdale was a friend of William Tyndale. He prepared and published a Bible dedicated to Henry the VIII in 1535. Coverdale's New Testament is largely based on Tyndale's translated version. He explicitly disclaimed originality, but used the Latin and other versions as helps, as well as Tyndale's version. Next to Tyndale, the man to whom lovers of the English Bible owe the greatest debt is Coverdale. He was the first to separate the Apocrypha from the Old Testament and place it as an appendix.

Coverdale's Bible was the first Bible to introduce chapter summaries as distinct from brief chapter headings found in the Vulgate.

The translation of the Bible into the tongue for common man was strongly opposed by the Church. It was the position of the Church that commoners should accept the Preacher's words rather than discover for themselves. Coverdale's version was so important that his "The Great Bible" of 1539 is the only one that still appears in the Book of Common Prayer.

MATTHEW'S BIBLE

In 1537, about the same time as the second edition of the Coverdale Bible, another translation appeared. Its authorship is somewhat uncertain, but although it bears the name of Matthew's, it is generally credited to John Rogers, a friend and companion of William Tyndale. This scholar, it is thought, had come to find and possess an unpublished translation of Tyndale's historical books of the Bible. It contains Tyndale's translations in their latest forms but also gives evidence of Coverdale's work.

THE GREAT BIBLE

Miles Coverdale had a major part in a new revision of the Matthew's Bible, which was called "The Great Bible." The pages measured 9x15 inches and the text was 8½x13 inches, which was not considered a small book in that day. It was commanded in 1538 that a copy of the English Bible be set up in every parish church. This Bible was generally secured for carrying out his order. But, because of another more accurate version soon to appear, The Great Bible was not reprinted after 1569. John Rogers, of the Matthew's Bible was martyred in 1555. "It is Roger's Bible which became the foundation of all later English authorized versions, and it is through Roger's republication that Tyndale's 1535 version of the New Testament had its great influence upon subsequent versions." (L.A. Weigle)

NOTE: You are probably wondering about now, "What does this have to do with understanding the Bible and with my relationship with the Lord?"

As students of the Bible, we need to understand where the Holy Scriptures have come from, how they were preserved and how men of God kept them alive and active for this present generation. They were even martyred for their work.

Although there have been many translations; the Bible is still accurate and powerful as God's Holy Word. Just as the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gave the original Word of God to the Apostles, we can safely say, that the Holy Spirit also inspired those who have passed the Bible down from generation to generation.

THE GENEVA BIBLE

The most accurate version up to the Authorized Version of 1611 is **The Geneva Bible**. During the reign of queen Mary (1553-1558), no Bible was printed in England, but a group of scholars in Geneva produced an English version called **The Geneva Bible** in 1560 with a second edition in 1652. William Whittingham, who was married to John Calvin's sister, edited the New Testament. Calvin wrote an introductory epistle. For the first time, marginal notations called attention to variations in the Greek manuscript. This was the first English version to use numbered verses as well as to separate paragraphs. This was the Bible used by **Shakespeare, John Bunyan, and Oliver Cromwell** and so fervently used by the Puritans. Designated as "The Peoples Book," it held a pre-eminent place among English versions for 75 years. This was the Bible brought over on the **Mayflower**. From 1565 to 1644, 140 editions of **The Geneva Bible** appeared. The first Bible to be printed in Scotland was a Scottish edition of **The Geneva Bible**, in 1579. The verse divisions of Robert Estienne, originally employed in his Greek New Testament in 1551, were used. This was the first Bible to be printed in Roman type instead of the old Black Letter.

You will learn more about John Calvin in Church History in a later lesson.

THE BISHOP'S BIBLE

The popularity of **The Geneva Bible** persuaded the Anglican authorities, after the secession of Queen Elizabeth to the throne in 1558, that they should produce a Bible, which could bear the authority of the Church of England. Archbishop Parker, who appointed a committee to begin work on this, proposed this task. They were to use **The Great Bible** as their basis and were to check with the Greek and Hebrew text. The scholarship of these bishops was not equal to that of the group that had produced **The Geneva Bible**. The finished work was called **The Bishop's Bible**.

Nineteen editions were printed from 1568-1600. Convocation endorsed it in 1571. In the 1572 edition, one J. Parker published in parallel columns the Psalter of **The Great Bible** and the Psalter of **The Bishop's Bible**.

There are fewer differences between **The Bishop's Bible** and the **King James Version** than any other preceding translation.

THE RHEIMS BIBLE AND THE DOUAY BIBLE

These are the last two Bibles to be considered before The King James Version, which were both Roman Catholic.

The New Testament was published as early as 1582 by the English College, then located at Rheims, and was thus known as **The Rheims New Testament**. The Old Testament, for the most part the work of Gregory Martin, a translation of the Latin Vulgate, was published in 1609, when the English College had returned to Douay and hence the name, **The Douay Bible**. The poorest part of this version is acknowledged to be the Psalter, which has been rightly characterized as "a translation of a translation of a translation." There is, of course, a heavy emphasis in this version on ecclesiastical terms. Repentance is here translated, Penance. Here we have such unfamiliar words as exinanited, donances and commersation. Instead of "shewbread," this version reads, "proposition of loaves." Deacon is translated "Minister" and Elder is translated "Priest." Ephesians 3:9 is made to read, "The dispensation of the sacrament." The New Testament part of this Bible was extensively used by the King James revisers, but the Old Testament was published too late for any such influences.

There were many changes made, but it did not affect the Truth or Validity of God's Word.

THE KING JAMES VERSION

It is now time to turn to a consideration of the most important English version of the Bible ever to be produced, called sometimes the *Authorized Version*, and sometimes the **King James Version** (KJV). In the summer of 1603, when King James was on his way to London to receive the English crown, he was presented with a petition of grievances by the clergy of Puritan convictions. This led the King to call a conference "for hearing and for the determining of things pretended to be amiss in the church." This conference was convened for three days, January 14-16, 1604, and known as the **Hampton Court Conference**. During this conference, Dr. John Reynolds, the leader of the Puritan party and the president of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, made the motion that a new translation of the Bible be undertaken. Though the majority present was against the motion, it appealed to the King, and he ordered that such a translation be undertaken. Fifty-four of the greatest Biblical scholars in Great Britain were brought together for this great task, divided into six groups- three to work on a translation of the Old Testament and three on the New Testament. Two groups for the Old and New Testaments were to meet at Oxford, two at Cambridge, and two at Westminster. A recent writer had so well summarized the varied learning of this group that we like to take the liberty of quoting him: "The Oxford group was headed by Dr. John Harding, Regius Professor of Hebrew, and included Dr. John Reynolds, the originator of the project, 'his memory and reading were near to a miracle,' Dr. Miles Smith, who 'had Hebrew at his fingers' ends,' Dr. Richard Brett, 'skilled and versed to a criticism in the Latin, Greek, Chaldee, Arabic and

Ethiopic tongues; Sir Henry Saville, editor of the works of Chrysostom; and Dr. John Harmer, Professor of Greek, 'a most noted Latinist, Grecian and divine.' The Cambridge committee was at first presided over by Edward Lively, Regius Professor of Hebrew, who died in 1605 before the work was really begun. It included Dr. Lawrence Chaderton, 'familiar with the Greek and Hebrew tongues, and the numerous writings of the Rabbis'; Thomas Harrison, 'noted for his exquisite skill in Hebrew and Greek idioms'; Dr. Robert Spalding, successor to Lively as Professor of Hebrew; Andrew Downes, 'one composed of Greek and industry,' and John Bois, 'a precious Greek and Hebrew scholar.' The Westminster group was headed by Lancelot Andrews, Dean of Westminster, afterwards Bishop of Chichester, of Ely, and finally of Winchester. 'Who might have been interpreter general at Babel...the world wanted learning to know how learned he was' and included the Hebraist Hadrian Saravia; and William Bedwell, the greatest living Arabic scholar." - H. Wheeler Robinson

All these names may seem unimportant, but serve, again, as a key to our heritage.

There being a lapse of two or three years between the naming of these committees and the beginning of their labors, the work was begun in 1607 and completed in 1610. The Bible appeared the following year.

Fifteen rules were to bind this large number of revisers. The first reads as follows: "The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the *Bishop's Bible*, to be followed, and little altered as the Truth of the original will permit." The fourteenth rule was more comprehensive, reading as follows: "These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops Rule - Tyndale's, Matthew's, Coverdale's, Whitchurch's, Geneva." In the Preface to the Reader which appeared in this version, the translators stated that they did not hesitate: "to consult the Translators or Commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch."

The new version bore the following title: "**The Holy Bible**," containing the Old Testament and the New; newly translated out of the original tongues, with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by His Majesties special commandment. Imprinted at London by Robert Barker, Printer to the Kings most Excellent Majesty, Anno Dom, 1611, cum Privilegio." While this version is called **The Authorized Version**, no act of Parliament was ever passed approving it. King James vigorously promoted such an undertaking, but there was no subsequent official act. The first printing of this Bible was a folio 16x10½ inches. Three editions quickly followed, carrying a considerable number of misprints and variations in spelling. We must ask at this point how much of the KJV is dependent upon earlier versions? It has been said that 4% of the vocabulary goes back to the days of Wycliffe, 18% came from Tyndale, 13% from Coverdale 19% from the Geneva Bible, 4% from the Bishop's Bible, and 3% from all other preceding versions. Thirty nine percent of the vocabulary of the KJV is unique. Almost nine-tenths of the New Testament portion of this version can be found word for word in the Tyndale version of 1525. All controversial notes were excluded, but there were over 4,000 marginal notes, giving the literal meaning of Hebrew words and 765 in the New Testament, indicating

variant or alternative renderings. The chapter summaries and page headings were new, and some of these chapter headings are an indication of current theology and then prevalent principles of Biblical interpretation. The Old Testament rested upon the same Masoretic Hebrew text as all subsequent versions, but inasmuch as no ancient manuscripts of the Greek New Testament arrived in England until 1628, those responsible for this greatest of all versions did not have the advantage of the best Greek text.

During subsequent decades the spelling of the KJV has been modernized, misprints have been corrected, the larger chapter summaries have been abbreviated and the references in the margin have been examined. Chronological dates were introduced into the margin of the KJV in 1701, based on the chronology of Archbishop Ussher. As early as 1613, the text showed over 300 differences from the original of 1611! Thirty thousand new marginal references were added in versions appearing in the 1760's.

Soon the KJV crowded out all preceding translations except for students interested in specific variations and the development of the English language. For the first time, England was reading one Bible at home and hearing the same Bible read in church. "It thus became bound up with the life of the nation. Since it stilled all controversy over the best rendering, it gradually came to be accepted as so far absolute that in the minds of myriads, there was no distinction between this version and the original texts. They may almost be said to have believed in the literal inspiration of the very words which compose it." - Albert S. Cook

The beauty of the KJV, as well as its enormous influence, can never be exaggerated. The translators of **The Revised Version**, nearly three centuries later, themselves declared: "We have had to study this great version carefully and minutely, line by line. The longer we have been engaged upon it the more we have learned to admire its simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression, its general accuracy, and we must not fail to add, the music of its cadences, and the felicities of its rhythm." Even such a non-Christian as Thomas Huxley offered the following glowing tribute to this version of the Scriptures: "Consider the great historical fact that for three centuries this book has been woven into the life of all that is best and noblest in English history; that it has become the national epic of Britain, and is as familiar to noble and simple, from John O' Groat's House to Land's End, as Dante and Tasso once were to the Italians, that is written in the noblest and purest English, and abounds in exquisite beauties of pure literary form: and finally, that it forbids the veriest hind who never left his village to be ignorant of the existence of other countries and other civilizations, and of a great past stretching, back to the furthest limits of the oldest civilizations of the world." What a tribute to our Bible.

THE ENGLISH REVISED VERSION

It is not necessary to discuss the translation of secondary importance offered during the next three centuries. A number of changes had occurred in the use of the English language, and a great deal of new material was available for ascertaining the Greek text of the New Testament, and much more was known about the Hebrew language.

Consequently, on February 10, 1870, Bishop Wilberforce submitted the following resolution to the Upper House of Convocation of the Province of Canterbury: "That a Committee of both Houses be appointed; with power to confer with any Committee that may be appointed by the convocation of the Northern Province to report upon the desirableness of a revision of the Authorized Version of the New Testament, whether by marginal notes or otherwise, in all those passages where plain and clear errors, whether in Hebrew or Greek text originally adopted by the translators, or in the translation made from the same, shall, in due investigations be found to exist." In May of the same year, a committee made five suggestions: "1. That it is desirable that a revision of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures be undertaken. 2. That the revision be so conducted as to comprise both marginal rendering and such emendations as it may be found necessary to insert in the text of the Authorized Version. 3. That in the above resolutions we do not contemplate any new translation of the Bible, or any alteration of the language, except when in the judgment of the most competent scholars such change is necessary. 4. That in such necessary changes, the style of the language employed in the existing versions be closely followed. 5. That it is desirable that Convocation should nominate a body of its own members to undertake the work of revision, who shall be at liberty to invite the co-operation of any eminent for scholarship, to whatever nation or religious body they may belong."

Many of the finest Biblical scholars in Britain were enrolled to translate the Old and New Testaments - fifty-four of them. The first general principle was "to introduce as few alterations as possible into the text of the Authorized Version consistently with faithfulness. The fifth, seventh, and eighth principles were: "5. To make or retain no change in the Text on the second final revision by each company, except *two-thirds* of those present approve of the same, but on the first revision to decide by simple majorities. 7. To revise the headings of chapters, pages, paragraphs, italics, and punctuation. 8. To refer, on the part of each Company, when considered desirable, to Divines, Scholars, and Literary Men, whether at home or abroad, for their opinions."

The New Testament was issued in May 1881, and the Old Testament in May 1885. Two famous Greek scholars, B.F. Westcott, and F.J.A. Hort generally had their way in adoption of what they called "*the natural text*."

A number of passages were taken out of the text and placed in the margin as not appearing in the earlier Greek texts. For example, *John 5:3,4; I John 5:6,7; and John 8:1-9*, where parallel passages appeared in two or more books with identical working in the original, the translations, were made identical also. There were many criticisms of the *Revised Version*, and yet many agree with the statement of Professor F.F. Bruce that "the *Revised Version* with these marginal references is still the most useful edition of the Bible for the careful student who knows no language but English." The Old Testament is especially recognized as being a great improvement for accuracy's sake of the KJV. Of course, these are opinions for each student to take with careful studied thought.

THE AMERICAN STANDARD REVISED VERSION

It was hoped that the English and American committees could be responsible for a single revised version, but so many differences arose that after some years the American company asked to be released from further cooperation. They would publish their own Revised Version, promising not to do so for fourteen years. In 1897, **Thomas Nelson and Sons entered into an agreement with the American Company to meet the necessary expenses for the preparation of an American Revision.** Once again they went to work, minutely going over the entire text. **Twenty-nine years later *The American Standard Revised Version* of the Bible was placed on sale August 28, 1901,** and was at once recognized by many lovers of God's Word as really superior in many ways to the English revision. But again, this also is an opinion.

ENGLISH VERSION SINCE 1901

There has been ten Modern English Translations of the Bible produced since 1952. In the 20th Century, there have been numerous archaeological discoveries in the Holy Land, plus the **discovery in 1947 of the Dead Sea Scrolls** which included ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek manuscripts, some of which are older by more than 1000 years than the hitherto known Old Testament manuscripts. Thus, Bible scholars were able to study and compare the many available manuscripts including the more recent discoveries and arrive at a Bible text, which is much closer to what the inspired writers actually wrote. In addition to going back to most ancient copies of the original Scriptures and to the Dead Sea Scrolls, the modern translators, for the most part, used the text arrangement of the King James Version, the English Revised Version and the American Standard Version of 1901. Although many new translations are now on the American, Canadian and British market, the King James is still more widely used than any of the new versions.

A list of these new translations and a description for each is as follows:

The Revised Standard Version

1952. It is an authorized revision of the **American Standard Version** of 1901, which was copyrighted, and in 1928 the International Council of Religious Education acquired the copyright. Thirty-two Bible scholars served on the committee making the revision, the New Testament being published in 1946 and the complete Bible in 1952. It is copyrighted by the Division of Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. The Revised Standard Version Bible Committee is a continuing body, which is both Ecumenical and International with active Protestant and Catholic members from Great Britain, Canada and the United States, meeting at regular intervals. Additional revisions were made in the New Testament in 1971.

The Berkley Version

1959. Gerrit Verkuyl originally translated the New Testament of this version into modern English from the Greek. A staff of 20 translators including professors from various Bible schools, and seminaries worked on the Old Testament under the direction of Dr. Verkuyl. They were faithful to the original Scriptures and to preserving the Messianic Prophecies. Numerous footnotes assist on difficult passages throughout the Bible.

The Amplified Bible

1965. A Modern English Version sponsored by the Lockman Foundation, a California Corporation, not for profit. An editorial Committee of Hebrew and Greek scholars gave particular attention to the true translation from the original Greek text. It has bracketed explanatory words and phrases following places in the text where difficulty might arise and footnotes to explain more complicated passages.

The Jerusalem Bible

1966. A Roman Catholic Work produced originally in French at the Dominican Biblical School in Jerusalem in 1956, known as "**La Bible de Jerusalem**." The English Version was translated from the original Hebrew and Greek texts but was supported strongly by the French version on matters of questionable interpretations. The Divine name **Yaweh** is used. The Apocrypha has been placed between Malachi and Matthew.

New English Bible

1970. A Joint Committee of Bible Scholars from leading denominations in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, assisted by experienced counsel from the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge, worked some twenty-two years in compiling this new translation from the Hebrew and Greek texts. The New Testament of the New English Bible was published in 1961. The Books of the Apocrypha are included between Malachi and Matthew. The text is a new modern English translation printed in paragraph single column format with verse numbers on the outside margin of the page.

New American Standard Bible

1971. This is a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901 which itself was a revision of the English Revised Version of 1881-1885. The Lockman Foundation of La Habra, California, a non-profit Corporation, sponsored a group of Bible scholars who worked for ten years translating from the best original Hebrew and Greek texts, and endeavoring to render the grammar and terminology of the American Standard Version in contemporary English. The New Testament was published in 1963.

The Living Bible

1971. It is a compilation of Scripture paraphrases by Kenneth N. Taylor, previously published as "Living Letters," 1962, "Living Prophecies," 1965, "Living Gospels," 1966, "Living Psalms and Proverbs," 1967, "Living Lessons of Life and Love," 1968, "Living Books of Moses," 1969, and "Living History of Israel," 1970. This paraphrase of the Old and New Testaments is to say as exactly as possible what the writers of the Scriptures meant in the simplest modern English.

Today's English Version

1976. The New Testament in Today's English Version entitles "Good News For Modern Man" was first published in 1966 by the American Bible Society. A Translations Department Committee of Bible scholars was appointed by the American Bible Society in cooperation with the United Bible Societies to make a similar translation of the Old Testament. The translator's objective was to provide a faithful translation of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts into contemporary English, which was natural, clear and simple. The complete Bible was published in 1976 along with a British edition, which had some differences in vocabulary and form in keeping with British usage.

New International Version

1978. Under sponsorship of the New York International Bible Society, a Committee on Bible Translation was formed to oversee a completely new translation from the best Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The Committee enlisted the help of Bible scholars from colleges, universities, and seminaries in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and from various denominations including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and other churches in order to avoid any sectarian bias.

CONCLUSION

These facts given in this lesson on The History of the Bible should be of great interest to every Christian. To repeat what was said before, "We need to understand and appreciate the effort of the men and women of God over the centuries. They spent years translating accurately the Holy Scriptures and many giving their lives in martyrdom to give us in this age, **The Precious Infallible Word of God.**

To many believers, facts like these just given are of little or no interest and perhaps boring. When one grasps the full effect of history the Bible becomes a treasure, cherished and protected.

It should be noted that all these translations, those especially in the 20th century (1900's), do not change the true content and meaning of Scripture. Some do give a deeper meaning and a clearer understanding.

As a Student of the Bible myself, I use some of the aforementioned translations for study such as: Amplified, NJV, LVB, but my cherished translation is the King James Version.
