



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE

February, 2017

About Our Bible ...

I have received questions about the Bible from time to time, and it occurs to me that other "Good News Guide" readers may have their own questions. So this month let's talk about the Bible.



The Bible is a collection of ancient writings, presented as a series of "books." These are usually assembled into a single volume called "the Bible." I'm a Protestant

Christian, so my Bible has 66 books—39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians have more books in their Bibles, while Jews use a 24-book Bible that is basically equivalent to the Protestant Old Testament.

1. How did we get the Bible we use?

The earliest writings that eventually became part of our Bible were written down perhaps as much as 3500 years ago, and the last book of the Old Testament was written down around 2400 years ago. Other than the Bible itself, we don't have much information about those times. So there's a lot that we don't know, and will never know, about how the Bible came into being.

What we do know, from reading the Old Testament, is the God created the world, that He appointed Abraham to be the ancestor of His chosen people, the Jews, and that He inspired certain people to write down things that eventually became part of the Holy Scriptures: "... men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21). Another passage tells us God's purpose: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Approximately 2100 years ago, the writings we call the Old Testament were accepted by the Jews as Scripture — sacred writings. All of these texts were written in Hebrew, except for a few passages that were in Aramaic.

Somewhere around 65 A.D, some 30 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, His followers started

writing about Him in Greek, which was the major language of that day. They wrote the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), The Acts of the Apostles (Acts), 21 letters to various church congregations or individuals, and the Revelation to John (Revelation). These are the 27 "books" that make up the Protestant New Testament today.

Not everyone could read Hebrew, so translations of the Scriptures (into Greek) began to be made as early as 250 years or so before Jesus was born. As Latin became the dominant language in Europe and the



Middle East, there began to be translations of both Testaments into Latin. Then, for nearly a thousand years, when the Roman Catholic Church was the only Christian church in Europe, the Latin Bible

was Europe's only Bible. But an Englishman named John Wycliffe worked on an English translation in the 1300s, and Martin Luther translated the Bible into German in the 1500s. Both men were trying to give the common people a Bible they could read and understand.



2. Why are there different versions of the Bible?

I cannot read Hebrew or Greek. Chances are you can't, either. We need an English translation because English is the only language we know.

Suppose there were two men, Jim and Fred, who both knew Hebrew. Each of them had to translate the book of Isaiah into English, using whatever portions they could find of the earlier texts.

Jim went to the library and found a translation of Isaiah into Latin. Since he knew Latin better than he knew Hebrew, he decided to base his English translation on the Latin one.

Fred went to the Internet and downloaded an image of the Hebrew text of Isaiah from the Dead Sea scrolls, which is one of the oldest sources there is. He used some guidelines from other scholars, and came up with a really excellent English translation.

Now imagine that Fred did his work last year, but Jim did his work over 400 years ago. Fred's translation used today's English; Jim's was in "King James" English, the English that was the common speech of England in the 1600s. You can see that the two versions would be very different.

We have many different versions because they were produced by different individuals or groups of scholars, with different skills, at different times, and using portions of the Scriptures from different sources, sometimes even from earlier translations into another language.

3. How was the King James Version created?



The King James Version of the Bible is an English translation that has been widely used continuously for well over 400 years, and is still favored by many Christians today. It was commissioned in 1604 by King James I of England, to provide a single trustworthy version in the language of the people of that day. It was intended to be read aloud in the churches, because in those days not many people could read. Also known as the "Authorized Version," it quickly replaced earlier translations in the Anglican Church and some other Protestant denominations.

4. What about other English translations?

By 1879 church leaders realized that the King James Version was no longer entirely adequate. Its language was outdated, and other manuscripts had been found that were considered better than those on which the King James was based. This led to the *Revised Version*, then the *American Standard Version*, and ultimately, about 1950, to the *Revised Standard Version* (RSV). The RSV is still regarded as excellent, though two important follow-ons have been released: the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) in 1989 and the *English Standard Version* (ESV) in 2001. The NRSV uses "gender-neutral language" and other concessions to political correctness, and is therefore less popular than the ESV with many conservative Christians.

Other notable modern English translations are the *New International Version* (NIV) of 1973 and the *New King James Version* (NKJV) released in 1982.

5. What is the difference between a translation and a paraphrase?

A "translation" tries to convey the meaning of the original text by translating its words using English words that mean the same thing. A "paraphrase" tries

to communicate the sense or the ideas of the original text using modern English words and phrases. Quite often a word-for-word translation of a segment of Scripture will leave some question as to what it actually means. The paraphrase author usually tries to answer the question, so that some paraphrased versions could be considered more of a commentary on the Bible, rather than an actual translation. Many leaders think that paraphrases can be helpful, but that a good literal translation should always be used as the believer's primary Bible.

The *New Living Translation* (NLT) is a notable recent attempt to combine the faithfulness of a translation with the readability of a paraphrase. In my opinion it is excellent.

6. Using the Bible

Learning about the Bible is interesting, but those facts are not really very important. It's what we do with the Bible that matters.

Look again at 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

"Teaching" — God wants us to learn from His word: Who He is, how He created and governs everything; how He hates sin but loves sinners; how He provided His Son to suffer the penalty for our sins, so that we can be in His wonderful presence forever.

"Reproof" and "correction" — God wants us to understand how our selfishness offends Him, and to strive to overcome our sinful nature with the help of the Holy Spirit, so that we may truly begin to approach the righteousness He requires of us.

Why? For two reasons: (1) so that we might become His children in fact as well as in name, growing more and more like Jesus as we go on with Him; and (2) so that we can perform "every good work" that He has prepared for us to do.

So read the Bible. Study it. Meditate on what it says. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal its truths to you. The Bible has often been described as a "love letter from God." Read it that way, and notice how God says "I love you" as you open your mind and heart to His truth.

Peace and Joy—

Brother Roland



Why Love One Another

By Mary Carothers

In John 5:12, Jesus commanded us to love each other. Have you ever wondered why He did so? He didn't *suggest* that we care deeply about our brothers and sisters in Christ, He commanded that we have love for each other. Jesus felt it was so important that He repeated the command in verse 17. The apostles also spoke of this need to love other Christians (see Paul in Galatians 5:14, John in his letters, and Peter in I Peter 4:8).

This command was stressed, I believe, for several reasons. **For one, love is to be the hallmark of Christians. This is how the world — the unsaved — will know that we are Jesus' followers. This is the proof, as it were, that we are part of God's family. Our love for our brothers and sisters in Christ is evidence that Christ is being formed in us.**

Another reason is that we get enough hate from the world. Jesus told us plainly in John 15 that since the world hated Him, it would also hate us. By "world" Jesus meant the unsaved, particularly those who scoff at the need for salvation — those who feel they are as good as anyone in the church. (And, you know what? They are as good. We all are in need of redemption). Sometimes this hate is evidenced in something as simple as scornful laughter at Christians.

At other times it can be violent abuse, sometimes even mob spirit. Wherever hate is manifested toward Christians, we can be sure that Satan is behind the words and actions, energizing the attack.

Still another reason Jesus commanded us to love one another is that it is so much easier to criticize and find fault with others than to cover them with the love of Christ.

Too often I hear wives criticizing their husbands, or husbands making fun of their wives. Whatever the reasons, when we criticize our spouses, we are doing exactly what Satan wants us to do. **Jesus, on the other hand, wants us to love *all* of God's family, and that includes our husband or wife, parents, children and siblings. He wants us to cover each other with His love. Above all else, love one another, for love covers many sins (I Peter 4:8).**

Jesus told us that a divided kingdom *cannot* stand. This is true in our local church body, our family, or our nation. Satan wants to divide us with criticism and gossip. But God wants to strengthen us and build us up. He wants Christ to be formed in us.

We are engaged in spiritual warfare. The slogan, "The devil made me do it," may be humorous, but it is not completely true. We are not helpless pawns, moved against our wills by master players. We are created in the image of God, with the ability to make choices and decisions. The devil is against us, but God is FOR us. We must choose whom we will follow. We will cast the deciding vote. Whom will we obey? The father of lies, who comes to deceive and to destroy us? Or will We obey the One who created us in love — who promises to always be with us — who loves us with an everlasting love? His command is that we love one another, and He stands ready to help us.

Open our eyes, Lord, to know when we are bringing glory to You, or being tricked by the devil to sow seeds of discord.

Send Bible questions or address updates to

Brother Roland

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Inmates -- include name, DOC No., and SID with address.

Books of the Bible

It's good to know the names of the books of the Bible, and where they are in relation to each other. It's good to think about that as you enjoy the puzzle.

Puzzle:

H N M K C H C J X J H E U G S S S J L X K O S N B M S R J A
 C B H P G F Z T W H A C U E O X E E S V O B S R U N E X S O
 J O U R J P G S H P I M T A Q G I L H X R F V H A T U M L S
 R O M A N S R I I L R S W V B K L S C E T R A I E K L D E A
 F N I Y I C P S T P A R H Q E Z N P V I E N S P W A O G N D
 S U C I T I V E L I H U E Z K A S O H H N S 1 2 S S D O B Y
 A R I 2 K F S N S J C S E V I G R R T I O O S P N U J U H U
 A R E S T L I E K E E T R N E P E S U L L A R O J I P T M B
 X E Z B R H L G E K Z L O V X L E F O M M I I H 2 J O H N B
 H A S E M C E H O K J L E V S S A C P U F T P H C M Y E E N
 Y P X O C U D S N Y A B S T M E E T E G A R A P I 1 L J A Q
 M M S E H K N H S S O O E G U M O L I T V I U T I Q F M 1 Z
 O S G N I K 1 P S A W Z L A N A J X N O N C 1 S C A V D S Q
 N H N S A Y O E F M L A C D P J W E D A N H C S U P N B A W
 O T O B J I H T O M S O I I T H M I H M A B W I S J B S M I
 R A S T K T H A G G A I N W I A I P 2 I 2 E X M W M G J U P
 E U F M 1 J W T Y G G Y O I L I E L M T R K S T A U A U E R
 T I O I N O M M N N K L R H A Z S E E B I E I O R L L R L D
 U O G A U H S O J I E A H W L N H X E M Y M Q N E U A U K U
 E B N B S N E R E S R D C C E E S H B D O K O B G H T C K Y
 D A O I B X T P M S O O 2 L N H F 1 O A G N G T A S I H H E
 S D S N A I H T N I R O C 2 E 2 T M J O M E G B H U A A F I
 D I M Q T E Z I Z S H Y A 1 P I I T H O W O A 3 Z Y N O T Z
 L A W U S Q N J X W T C J E J C N A A Q H K S J F N S D S W
 X H S I G K O B U P T J T K A G Y A H M K N I O I S A I A H
 E H A I M E R E J S U E O H U R A Q D U S C S H P B O T C C
 A N N U L C X O G D R S O C O A T B K X E Y B N M H A N O J
 S E X O D U S V E S O Y U M U A L H B Y H B G Z C H Q S H D

Words:

Old Testament

GENESIS
 EXODUS
 LEVITICUS
 NUMBERS
 DEUTERONOMY
 JOSHUA
 JUDGES
 RUTH
 1 SAMUEL
 2 SAMUEL
 1 KINGS
 2 KINGS
 1 CHRONICLES
 2 CHRONICLES
 EZRA
 NEHEMIAH

ESTHER
 JOB
 PSALMS
 PROVERBS
 ECCLESIASTES
 SONG OF SONGS
 ISAIAH
 JEREMIAH
 LAMENTATIONS
 EZEKIEL
 DANIEL
 HOSEA
 JOEL
 AMOS
 OBADIAH
 JONAH
 MICAH

NAHUM
 HABAKKUK
 ZEPHANIAH
 HAGGAI
 ZECHARIAH
 MALACHI
New Testament
 MATTHEW
 MARK
 LUKE
 JOHN
 ACTS
 ROMANS
 1 CORINTHIANS
 2 CORINTHIANS
 GALATIANS
 EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS
 COLOSSIANS
 1 THESSALONIANS
 2 THESSALONIANS
 1 TIMOTHY
 2 TIMOTHY
 TITUS
 PHILEMON
 HEBREWS
 JAMES
 1 PETER
 2 PETER
 1 JOHN
 2 JOHN
 3 JOHN
 JUDE
 REVELATION