

# Hermeneutics: Bible 101

Lesson 1: Where did the Bible get here.

9.2.2020

Small-Group

## 1. We often try to understand the Bible before we understand the Bible.

### A. For example:

1. Too many people are trying to figure out the End-Times but have no idea what the Gospel is all about.
2. Or people will tell me what the Greek says but have no idea what the Greek alphabet is.
3. My peeve, people tell me that the King James Version was good enough for Jesus and the Apostle Paul so it is the only version we need today.

### B. Before we try to figure out the deep secrets of the Bible, we need to understand the plain meaning of the Bible.

1. Here's a little head's up:
2. There are no deep, hidden, secrets in the Bible.
3. Because God wants you to know His will, His ways, and His character.
4. That is why the Bible is in plain language.
5. But too often we don't know how to understand the plain language of the text.

### C. This small-group intends to teach us some skills that help us explore the Bible in a way that our understanding is clearer and more accurate.

1. We want to hear God's Word for us as clearly and accurately as possible.

2. When we confuse God's Word for us, things get out of balance.

3. And out of balance leads to heresy and away from God.

4. It is not enough to be sincere in what we believe-we must believe the truth. (Gibbs, Teague, 16).

## 2. The Place to begin is understanding Where the Bible came from.

A. The Bible you have is made up of 66 Books.

1. There are approx. 35-40 authors who wrote those books.

2. The Bible books were written over a period of 3400 years.

B. The Bible was written in 2 primary languages.

1. Old Testament-Hebrew

2. New Testament-Greek.

3. By the time of Jesus' day, the Old Testament had been translated into Greek also, in what we call the Septuagint (LXX).

a. The LXX refers to the 70 men who translated the Hebrew into the Greek.

b. The Apostle Paul quotes the LXX most often when he refers to an OT text.

C. The Bible was not originally written in English.

1. Always remember this: If you are reading it in English, you are reading a translation.

2. We spend way too much time arguing over some of this.

3. Unless you are reading Greek and Hebrew, you are reading a translation.

## 3. Practice Example of the difficulty of translating:

A. Write these letters, in capital letters, with no spacing: DNRTCHTGNRB.

1. The languages in which the Bible is written—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek—have peculiarities unknown in the English language. For example the Hebrew and Aramaic of the original Old Testament manuscripts included only consonants. Vowels were understood and therefore not written (though they were filled in hundreds of years later around A.D. 900 by the Masoretes). Also Hebrew and Aramaic are read from right to left rather than from left to right. In addition no spaces were inserted between words. The words in all three biblical languages ran together.

2. An example of this in English would be the following: p 17 DNRTCHTGNRB. Reading these words from right to left the Hebrew reader would automatically sense that it included four words, which in English would be as follows: BRNG TH CT RND. It is not too difficult to sense that the sentence is saying “Bring the cot around.” On the other hand the two letters CT could be understood as cat or coat as well as cot. How then would a reader know which word was intended? Usually the context would give the reader a clue to the intended meaning. If earlier or later sentences referred to a cot, then it is most likely that this sentence would also refer to a cot. In some cases, however, the context may give no clue and therefore it becomes a problem in interpretation to know which word was actually intended.<sup>1</sup>

B. Can you see how hard it can be to get the right message?

1. When Moses was recording Genesis and other parts of the Pentateuch, he wasn't thinking about you.
2. He was writing to his people, in his language, in his time.
3. The Apostle Paul was doing the exact same thing.
4. He was not writing a book, looking for it to be translated into English and released in American bookstores.
  - a. He was writing to the believers in Thessalonica, or Colossae, or Corinth.

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<sup>1</sup> Donald K. Campbell, ["Foreword,"](#) in *Basic Bible Interpretation: A Practical Guide to Discovering Biblical Truth*, ed. Craig Bubeck Sr. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 1991), 16–17.

b. To understand what God is saying to us today in Licking, we have to know what God said through Paul in that day.

4. Question: What museum can you visit the original papers and letters that Paul, Peter, and John wrote in the New Testament days?

A. Answer: Nowhere.

1. The original manuscripts, called Autographs, haven't existed for thousands of years.

2. What we have are fragments of copies of copies that, when put together, give us a full picture of what was actually said.

3. **Image: Papyrus 30, portion of Matthew.**

B. Amazingly, even though we have thousands of years working against us, and culture, and language, and distance, we still have in front of us God's Holy Word.

1. God did not put the authors in a trance and force them to write word for word.

2. Instead, God moved upon them in such a way that He used their personality, their experiences, their own voice to communicate the clear and perfect Word of God.

a. That explains why Mathew's Gospel sounds different than Mark's.

b. This explains why Paul's letters are different than Peter's and different than John's.

C. Peter explains how God used men to declare the Word of God.

2 Peter 1:21

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. NIV

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were moved* by the Holy Ghost. KJV



For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ESV

## 5. What's the big deal with King James and missing verses in other "bibles"?

A. Lots of people are really touchy about the King James Version.

1. Maybe you have noticed on Facebook and other places that some verses that are in the KJV are not in newer translations.

2. So what is the deal with the KJV?

B. First of all, the KJV has been around for a long time.

1. It was commissioned by King James of England around 1611.

2. It was their attempt to put the Bible in the more modern English tongue.

a. Before, most of the Bibles were in Latin (but nobody spoke Latin except for Priests).

b. Then there were other translations by men like Tyndale, Wycliff, and the Geneva Bible.

c. Here is an example of Genesis 1:1-13 in the Geneva Bible of 1560.

1 **I**N THE beginning God created <sup>ȝ</sup> heaven and the earth.

2 And the earth was without forme & voyde, and darkenes *was* upon the depe, & the Spirit of God moved upon the waters.

3 Then God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

4 And God sawe <sup>ȝ</sup> light that it was good, and God separated the light from the darkenes.

5 And God called the light, Day, and the darkenes, he called Night. So the eveniḡ and the morning were the first day.

6 ¶ Againe God said, Let there be a firmament in the middes of the waters: and let it separate the waters from the waters.

7 Then God made the firmament, & parted the waters, which were under the firmament, from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament, Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the seconde day.

9 ¶ God said againe, Let the waters under the heavē be gathered into one place, & let the drye land appeare. and it was so.

10 And God called the drye land, Earth, & he called y gathering together of the waters, Seas: & God sawe that it was good.

11 Then God said, Let the earth budde forth the budde of the herbe, that sedeth sede, the fruteful tre, w beareth frute according to his kinde, which *maie* have his sede in it self upon the earth; & it was so.

12 And the earth broght forth the budde of the herbe, that sedeth sede accordīg to his kinde, also the tre that yeldeth frute, w hathe his sede in it selfe according to his kinde: & God sawe that it was good.

13 So the evening and the morning were the third daie. <sup>2</sup>

3. The beauty of the KJV is that it updated the language to the language of the people.

4. Surprisingly, English remained very similar for the next 300 years.

5. Different organizations updated the English periodically, but the KJV stayed remarkably similar.

C. A couple of remarkable things happened after 1611.

1. One of the most amazing things that happened was the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

2. Around 1945, a young boy found the fragments of some manuscripts in a cave along the Dead Sea around the fortress of Masada.

a. These fragments of many biblical books were older than anything we had discovered.

b. What they did was confirm how accurate our translations were, especially the newer English translations.

c. Much of the KJV was translated from Latin and new Greek texts.

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<sup>2</sup> [\*Geneva Bible\*](#) (Geneva: Rovland Hall, 1560), Ge 1:1–13.

d. The rule of thumb is, that the OLDER the manuscript the less errors that have occurred in the copying of it.

e. Think of the game telephone.

3. Another major development is a fundamental shift in English.

a. Have you ever read the letters of our founding fathers?

b. They communicated at a level far above what we do.

c. Today's English is very crude and simple compared to even a hundred years ago.

d. As language has changed, it became necessary to translate the Greek into more modern-English.

D. So what happened to some of the missing verses?

1. Look up Mark 16 and notice what some versions say after verse 8: [The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

2. The earliest manuscripts didn't always include vs. 9-20.

3. It could have been added later. It could have been missed in some versions. We don't know.

4. The newer copies that the KJV had access to include these verses, but the old ones like we have found in the Dead Sea Scrolls don't.

5. So what do we do? We include it, with an asterisk.

E. Let me say, there is no conspiracy to change the Word of God.

1. There is not attempt to take away from God's Word.

2. What we have is an attempt to be honest with what we have discovered.

3. What we also have is an attempt for people to understand what God has said even better.

4. This is why chapters and verses were added 1500 years later.

5. The first Bible to include Chapters and verses was the Latin Vulgate in 1555, and in English in 1560.<sup>i</sup>

## 6. Now What?

A. First, you can trust what you are reading.

1. The 66 books in our Bible have been vetted since the beginning.

a. The biggest conference happened in 325 at the Council of Nicaea where 318 leaders helped settle what books were of the Canon.

b. But the letters we have had been circulated since the beginning.

2. Please don't buy into the conspiracies that trash newer translations.

a. There are some that are absolutely wrong like "The Queen James Bible".

b. I also don't recommend the Klingon Version.

3. But Bible's translated by scholars who love Jesus are dependable and helpful tools to fulfill 2 Timothy 3:15-16.

B. Second, open your Bible and start reading.

1. Read longer sections first to get the whole context.

2. Read prayerfully and pause when something strikes you.

C. Third, believe that God wants you to understand what you are reading.

1. You don't need someone special to unlock deep-secrets or mysteries.

2. Let God open your ears to hear and your eyes to understand.

3. Through Bible reading, preaching, and studying, you can know God's Word and apply it to your life





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How and why the bible was divided into chapters and verses.

<sup>i</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart\\_don/faq/bible-special/question8-why-is-the-bible-divided-into-chapters-and-verses.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/stewart_don/faq/bible-special/question8-why-is-the-bible-divided-into-chapters-and-verses.cfm)

Unique and weird bible facts and mistakes.

<https://www.biblestudy.org/trivia/bible.html>