

CROSSROADS
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

*Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that need not to be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth.
-2 Timothy 2:15*



Starts with the Heart:

“The **heart** of man is the worst part of his being before his conversion, and the best afterwards. It is the fountain of all his actions. The eye of God is always fixed on the heart. And believers should be carefully watchful of their hearts. Christianity is a religion of the heart. It is not a system of moral conduct. It is the life of Christ in a man's soul. Salvation is the work of God in a man's heart. The conviction of sin, repentance, faith, and, worship are all works of the heart. The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink, things of the body; but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. These are things of the heart. There is no responsibility placed upon the shoulders of a believer of greater importance than the keeping and proper government of his heart in all conditions, by faith in Christ the Lord. If we truly learn to guard our hearts, this practice will bring the beauty of holiness into our lives, and sweeten our spirits with the grace of heaven.”

–John Flavel, English Puritan

Just as the physical heart must be in good shape for our body to be healthy, so too must our spiritual heart be in good condition for optimum functioning in the spiritual realm. When the Spirit of God measures the “worth” of a man’s life He puts the measuring tape around his heart, not around his head. Be a man after God’s Own heart (cf. *the heart of David*, Acts 13:22), not a perfect man but one who offered God a “**broken and a contrite heart**,” (Psalm 51:17)

“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do *it*, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (Ezra 7:10)

- I. One could also read the text of Ezra 7:10 as stating he “**set his heart firmly**” which gives the idea that Ezra was inwardly determined or resolutely steadfast. He was determined and this determination was directed toward studying, obeying, and teaching God’s Law to others! This pattern is to be sure an inviolable order for a Spirit empowered ministry! You cannot teach with power until you yourself have practiced (obeyed) what you have studied.

Daniel was without question one of the greatest of the Old Testament saints (cf. Ezekiel 14:14) and was one who able to live godly in a radically ungodly, perverse, idolatrous culture (sound familiar?).

- I. **What was Daniel’s secret?** Daniel 1 explains that Daniel’s secret was the same as Ezra’s in that it has to do with the choices one makes in one’s heart. In Daniel chapter 1 we read the key to his long godly life in which he repeatedly experienced the hand of God upon him:

“But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”
(Daniel 1:8)

- II. So we see that Daniel made a choice that could have cost him his life.

Isn’t life really nothing but a series of (sometimes hard) “**heart choices**”? Perhaps what you are considering is not sinful, but is it God’s best? Is it something that will allow you to redeem the time knowing how precious are these few years we have on earth in light of our eternity in God’s presence? **May God give each of us the grace that Daniel and Ezra possessed to assess our “life options” and choose to lay on our heart those options which are the most God glorifying** (cf. Romans 12:1-2).

ONLINE RESOURCES

Logos (\$):

www.logos.com

E-Sword:

www.e-sword.net

Interlinear Bible:

www.biblestudytools.com/interlinear-bible/

Bible Study Tools:

www.biblestudytools.com

Net Bible:

www.netbible.org

Blue Letter Bible:

www.blueletterbible.org

Enduring Word:

www.enduringword.com

Study Light:

www.studylight.org

Bible History (maps, images, archeology):

www.bible-history.com

The Bible Says

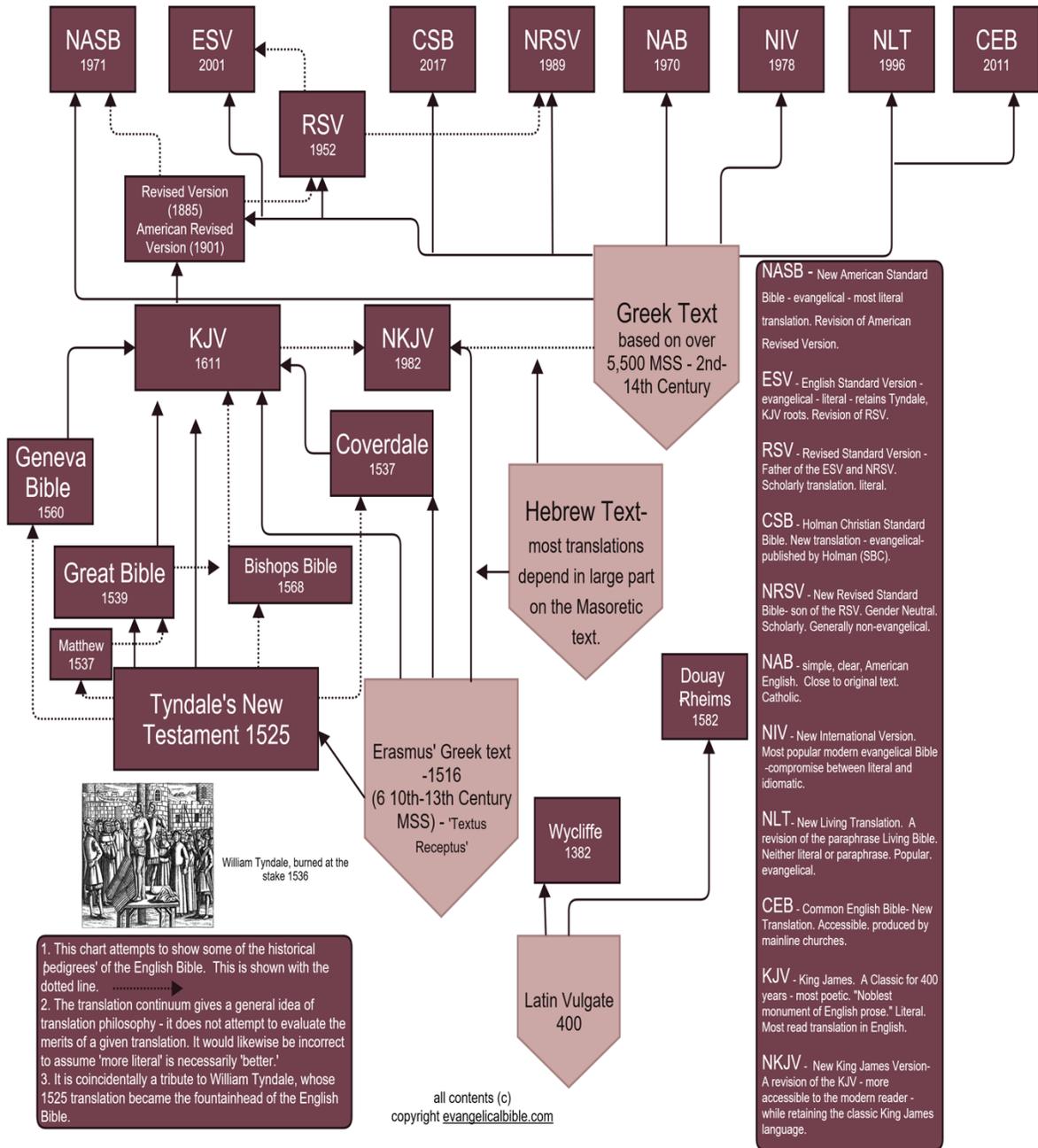
<https://thebiblesays.com>

The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge:

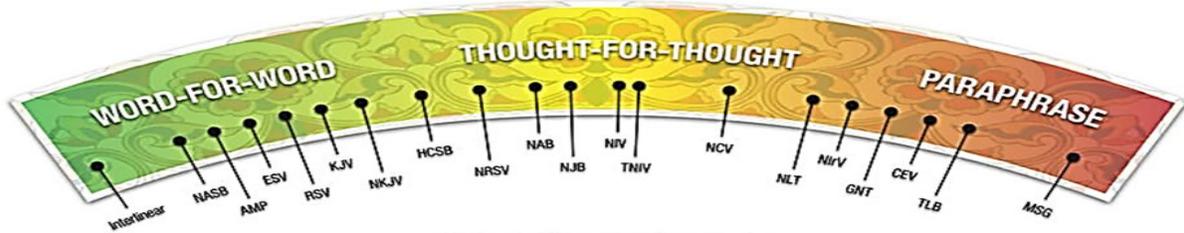
www.tsk-online.com

English Bible Overview

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Types of Bible Translations

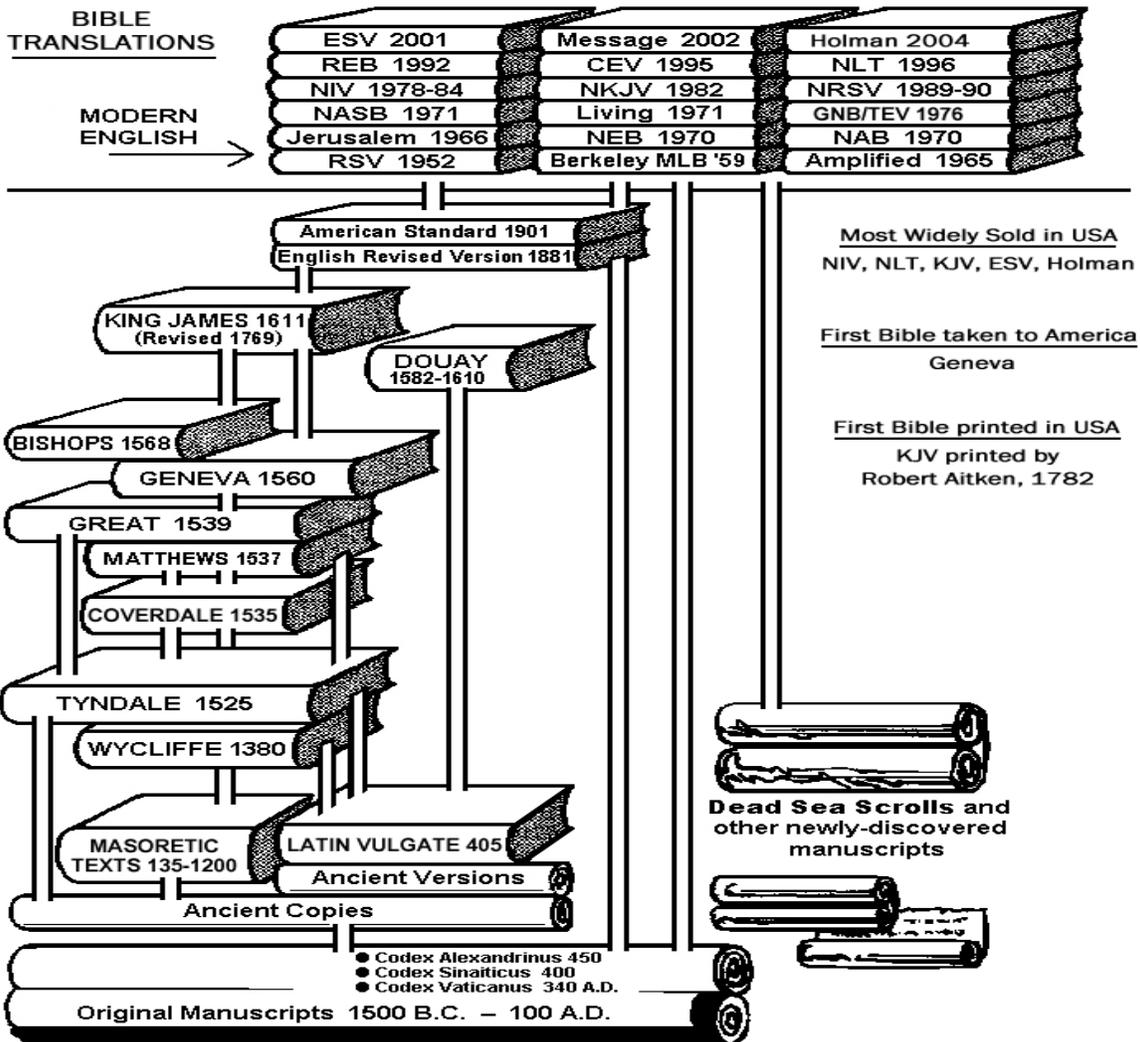


NASB - New American Standard Bible
 AMP - Amplified Bible
 ESV - English Standard Version
 RSV - Revised Standard Version
 KJV - King James Version
 NKJV - New King James Version

HCSB - Holman Christian Standard Bible
 NRSV - New Revised Standard Version
 NAB - New American Bible
 NJB - New Jerusalem Bible
 NIV - New International Version
 TNIV - Today's New International Version
 NCV - New Century Version
 NLT - New Living Translation

NIV - New International Reader's Version
 GNT - Good News Translation
 (also Good News Bible)
 CEV - Contemporary English Version
 TLB - The Living Bible
 MSG - The Message

Not All Bibles Are the Same



Charted adapted, corrected and updated from Thompson Chain Reference Study Bible by David Ahl, 2015, www.BibleStudyMen.com

BIBLE TIMELINE

*Then He said to them,
"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!
Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"
And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all
the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."*

–Luke 24:25-27

We clearly see that Jesus often went back to Old Testament scripture to help others understand that He really was the Messiah! Such is the case when He met up with the men traveling the Road to Emmaus. They were discussing recent events in Jerusalem (the crucifixion and resurrection) and trying to make sense of them. Instead of starting with His own identity, ***Jesus started by laying the chronological foundation for the big picture.***

We see this same method of study and teaching used by the apostles throughout the book of Acts, and today it's used successfully by many scholars and expository preachers, as well.

“Chronology is important. Without chronology it is not possible to understand history, for chronology is the backbone of history. We know that God regards chronology as important, for He has put so much of it into His Word. We find chronology not only in the historical books of the Bible, but also in the prophetic books, in the Gospels, and in the writings of Paul”
(A Chronology of the Hebrew Kings, Edwin R. Thiele)

Don Stewart article: *Why Should the Historical Background of the Bible be Studied?*

LITERARY GENRES

The Bible is a complex work of literature. It contains sixty-six different books written by about forty different authors inspired by God over about 1,500 years. Each book was written in a particular style, or genre, to a particular audience for a particular purpose. Understanding what type, or genre, of passage we are reading can help us better interpret the Bible. Just as one would read and understand a classic novel differently than a government document and a science fiction novel differently than a scientific study, so too knowing the genre of the passage of Scripture helps us understand how to better read and interpret the passage.

There are a few main genres contained in the Bible. These include:

- **History**
- **Law**
- **Wisdom**
- **Poetry**
- **Prophecy**
- **Gospels**
- **Epistles**
- **Apocalyptic**

Some books of the Bible fit neatly into one genre; for example, Genesis is a historical narrative. But other books may span multiple genres; for example, Daniel has parts that are historical narrative and parts that are prophetic. Even within these main genres, there are other literary configurations used like parables, symbolism, hyperbole, and various others. Keeping in mind knowing these literary styles is paramount to correctly understanding the text.

Poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy with its use of metaphors is generally meant to be understood more figuratively. Whereas historical narrative and the gospels can be understood more literally.

Law and the epistles are certainly designed to be understood literally, especially by the intended audience of the day. It also requires historical context and cultural awareness to be applied correctly in today's world.

A strong understanding of Scripture necessitates recognizing into what literary genre a passage fits, a familiarity with the historical and cultural context of its intended audience, and a general knowledge of how that passage fits into the Bible as a whole.

