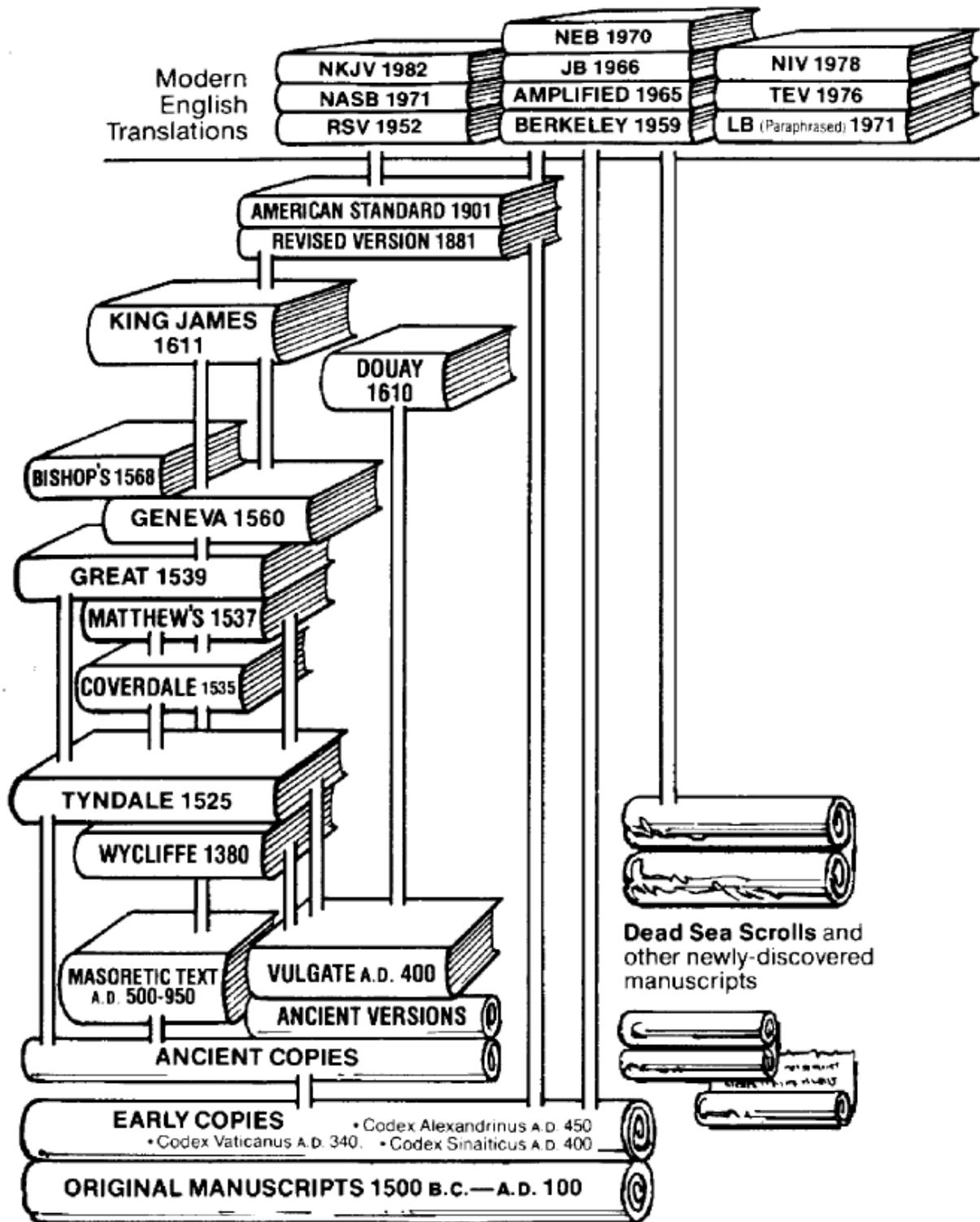


The Word of God



The drawing above shows the gradual development of the English Bible as well as the foundation on which successive version rests.

The Word of God

Original Manuscripts

2 Timothy 4:13 KJV (The Apostle Paul makes reference to the original manuscripts)

13 The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, *but especially the parchments.*

Early Copies

Codex Sinaiticus - a manuscript of the Christian Bible written in the middle of the fourth century, contains the earliest complete copy of the Christian New Testament. The hand-written text is in Greek. The New Testament appears in the original vernacular language (koine) and the Old Testament in the version, known as the Septuagint, that was adopted by early Greek-speaking Christians. In the Codex, the text of both the Septuagint and the New Testament has been heavily annotated by a series of early correctors.

The significance of Codex Sinaiticus for the reconstruction of the Christian Bible's original text, the history of the Bible and the history of Western book-making is immense. (source:

<http://codexsinaiticus.org/en/codex/>)

Codex Vaticanus - The Codex Vaticanus (The Vatican, Bibl. Vat., Vat. gr. 1209; no. B or 03 Gregory-Aland, δ 1 von Soden), is one of the oldest extant manuscripts of the Greek Bible (Old and New Testament). The Codex is named for the residence in the Vatican Library where it has been stored since the 15th century. It is written on 759 leaves of vellum in uncial letters, and has been dated palaeographically to the 4th century.

The manuscript became known to Western scholars as a result of correspondence between Erasmus and the prefects of the Vatican Library. Portions of the codex have been collated by several scholars, but numerous errors were made in the process. The Codex's relationship to the Latin Vulgate was unclear, and scholars initially were unaware of the Codex's value, which changed in the 19th century, when transcriptions of the full codex were completed. At that point scholars realised the text differed from the Vulgate and the Textus Receptus.

Current scholarship considers the Codex Vaticanus to be one of the best Greek texts of the New Testament, with that of the Codex Sinaiticus as its only competitor. Until the discovery by Tischendorf of the Sinaiticus text, the Codex was unrivaled. It was extensively used by Westcott and Hort in their edition of The New Testament in the Original Greek in 1881. The most widely sold editions of the Greek New Testament are largely based on the text of the Codex Vaticanus. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Vaticanus_Graecus_1209).

Codex Alexandrinus - The Codex Alexandrinus (London, British Library, MS Royal 1. D. V-VIII; Gregory-Aland no. A or 02, Soden δ 4) is a 5th century manuscript of the Greek Bible, containing the majority of the Septuagint and the New Testament. It received the name Alexandrinus from its having been brought by the Eastern Orthodox Patriarch Cyril Lucaris from Alexandria to Constantinople. Wettstein designated it in 1751 by letter A, and it was the first manuscript to receive thus a large letter as its designation.

Along with the Codex Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus, it is one of the earliest and most complete manuscripts of the Bible. It derives its name from Alexandria where it resided for a number of years before being given to the British people in the 17th century. Until the later purchase of the

The Word of God

Codex Sinaiticus, it was the best manuscript of the Greek Bible deposited in Britain. Today, it rests along with Codex Sinaiticus in one of the prominent showcases in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Library. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Alexandrinus).

The Vulgate - The Vulgate is a late 4th-century Latin version of the Bible, and largely the result of the labors of Jerome, who was commissioned by Pope Damasus I in 382 to make a revision of the old Latin translations. By the 13th century this revision had come to be called the versio vulgata, that is, the "commonly used translation", and ultimately it became the definitive and officially promulgated Latin version of the Bible in the Roman Catholic Church. (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate>).

Masoretic Text - The Masoretic Text (MT, **מס**, or) is the authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible regarded almost universally as the official version of the Tanakh.[citation needed] It defines not just the books of the Jewish canon, but also the precise letter-text of the biblical books in Judaism, as well as their vocalization and accentuation known as the Masorah. The MT is also widely used as the basis for translations of the Old Testament in Protestant Bibles, and in recent years (since 1943) also for some Catholic Bibles.[1] In modern times the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown the MT to be nearly identical to some texts of the Tanakh dating from 200 B.C.E. but different from others.

The MT was primarily copied, edited and distributed by a group of Jews known as the Masoretes between the seventh and tenth centuries CE. Though the consonants differ little from the text generally accepted in the early second century (and also differ little from some Qumran texts that are even older), it has numerous differences of both greater and lesser significance when compared to (extant 4th century) manuscripts of the Septuagint, a Greek translation (made in the 3rd to 2nd centuries BCE) of the Hebrew Scriptures that was in popular use in Egypt and Palestine and that is believed by scholars[citation needed] to be the source often quoted in the New Testament.

The Hebrew word mesorah (מסורה, alt. תרומה) refers to the transmission of a tradition. In a very broad sense it can refer to the entire chain of Jewish tradition (see Oral law), but in reference to the Masoretic Text the word mesorah has a very specific meaning: the diacritic markings of the text of the Hebrew Bible and concise marginal notes in manuscripts (and later printings) of the Hebrew Bible which note textual details, usually about the precise spelling of words.

The oldest extant manuscripts of the Masoretic Text date from approximately the ninth century AD, and the Aleppo Codex (once the oldest complete copy of the Masoretic Text, but now missing its Torah section) dates from the tenth century. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text)

Wycliff - John Wycliffe (pronounced /'wɪklɪf/; also spelled Wyclif, Wycliff, Wiclef, Wicliffe, or Wickliffe) (c. 1324 – 31 December 1384) was an English theologian, lay preacher, translator, reformist and university teacher who was known as an early dissident in the Roman Catholic Church during the 14th century. His followers are known as Lollards, a somewhat rebellious movement, which preached anticlerical and biblically-centered reforms. He is considered the founder of the Lollard movement, a precursor to the Protestant Reformation (for this reason, he

The Word of God

is sometimes called "The Morning Star of the Reformation"). He was one of the earliest opponents of papal authority influencing secular power.

Wycliffe was also an early advocate for translation of the Bible into the common tongue. He completed his translation directly from the Vulgate into vernacular English in the year 1382, now known as Wyclif's Bible. It is probable that he personally translated the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and it is possible he translated the entire New Testament, while his associates translated the Old Testament. Wyclif's Bible appears to have been completed by 1384, with additional updated versions being done by Wycliffe's assistant John Purvey and others in 1388 and 1395. (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wycliff>)

Tyndale - William Tyndale (sometimes spelled Tindall or Tyndall; pronounced /'tɪndəl/) (c. 1494 – 1536) was a 16th century scholar and translator who became a leading figure in Protestant reformism towards the end of his life. He was influenced by the work of Desiderius Erasmus, who made the Greek New Testament available in Europe, and Martin Luther. Tyndale was the first to translate considerable parts of the Bible into English, for a public, lay readership. While a number of partial and complete translations had been made from the seventh century onward, particularly during the 14th century, Tyndale's was the first English translation to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts, and the first to take advantage of the new medium of print, which allowed for its wide distribution. This was taken to be a direct challenge to the hegemony of both the Catholic church and the English church and state. Tyndale also wrote, in 1530, *The Practyse of Prelates*, opposing Henry VIII's divorce on the grounds that it contravened scriptural law.

In 1535, Tyndale was arrested by church authorities and jailed in the castle of Vilvoorde outside Brussels for over a year. He was tried for heresy, strangled and burnt at the stake. The heretical Tyndale Bible, as it was known, continued to play a key role in spreading Reformation ideas across Europe.

The fifty-four independent scholars who revised extant English bibles, drew significantly on Tyndale's translations to create the King James Version (or final "Authorised Version") of 1611 (still in mainstream use today). One estimation suggests the King James New Testament is 83.7 % Tyndale's and the Old Testament 75.7 %. (source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyndale>)

Coverdale - Myles Coverdale (Also spelled Miles Coverdale) (c. 1488 – 20 January 1569) was a 16th-century Bible translator who produced the first complete printed translation of the Bible into English.

He was born probably in the district known as Coverdale, in that district of the North Riding of Yorkshire called Richmondshire, England, in or around 1488. He studied at Cambridge (bachelor of canon law 1531), became priest at Norwich in 1514 and entered the convent of Austin friars at Cambridge, where Robert Barnes was prior in 1523 and probably influenced him in favor of Reform. When Barnes was tried for heresy in 1526, Coverdale assisted in his defence and shortly afterward left the convent and gave himself entirely to preaching.

From 1528 to 1535, he appears to have spent most of his time on the Continent. In 1535 he published the first complete English Bible in print, the so-called Coverdale Bible. As Coverdale

The Word of God

was not proficient in Hebrew or Greek, he used 'five soundry interpreters' in Latin, English and 'Douche' (German) as source text. He made use of Tyndale's translation of the New Testament (following Tyndale's November 1534 Antwerp edition) and of those books which were translated by Tyndale: the Pentateuch, and the book of Jonah. The publication appeared in Antwerp and was partly financed by Jacobus van Meteren. In 1537, his translations were included in the Matthew Bible. In 1538, he was in Paris, superintending the printing of the "Great Bible," and the same year were published, both in London and Paris, editions of a Latin and an English New Testament, the latter being by Coverdale. That 1538 Bible was a diglot (dual-language) Bible, in which he compared the Latin Vulgate with his own English translation. He also edited the Great Bible (1540). Henry VIII had a Coverdale Bible put into every English Church, chained to a bookstand, so that every citizen would have access to a Bible.

He returned to England in 1539, living briefly in Newbury, but on the execution of Thomas Cromwell (who had been his friend and protector since 1527) in 1540, he was compelled again to go into exile and lived for a time at Tübingen, and, between 1543 and 1547, was a pastor and schoolmaster at Bergzabern (now Bad Bergzabern) in the Palatinate, and very poor.

In March, 1548, he went back to England, was well received at the court of the new monarch, Edward VI, and was made king's chaplain and almoner to the queen dowager, Catherine Parr. In 1551, he became Bishop of Exeter, but was deposed in 1553 after the succession of Queen Mary. He went to Denmark (where his brother-in-law was chaplain to the king), then to Wesel, and finally back to Bergzabern. In 1559, he was again in England, but was not reinstated in his bishopric, perhaps because of puritan scruples about vestments. From 1564 to 1566, he was rector of St. Magnus's, near London Bridge. On 20 January 1569, Coverdale died in London and was buried in St. Bartholomew's by the Exchange; when that church was demolished in 1840 to make way for the new Royal Exchange, his remains were moved to St. Magnus. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myles_Coverdale)

Miles Coverdale, who gave us our first complete English translation of the Bible, had in the fly-leaf of his Bible the following words concerning the laws of interpretation: "It shall greatly helpe ye to understande Scripture, if thou mark not only what is spoken, or wrytten, but of whom, and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstance, considering what goeth before, and what followeth"."

Matthews - The Matthew Bible, also known as Matthew's Version, was first published in 1537 by John Rogers, under the pseudonym "Thomas Matthew". It combined the New Testament of William Tyndale, and as much of the Old Testament as he had been able to translate before being captured and put to death, with the translations of Myles Coverdale as to the balance of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, except the Apocryphal Prayer of Manasses. It is thus a vital link in the main sequence of English Bible translations. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew%27s_bible)

Great Bible - The Great Bible was the first authorized edition of the Bible in English, authorized by King Henry VIII of England to be read aloud in the church services of the Church of England.

The Word of God

The Great Bible was prepared by Myles Coverdale, working under commission of Sir Thomas Cromwell, Secretary to Henry VIII and Vicar General. In 1538, Cromwell directed the clergy to provide "one book of the bible of the largest volume in English, and the same set up in some convenient place within the said church that ye have care of, whereas your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it."

Although called the Great Bible because of its large size, it is known by several other names as well: the Cromwell Bible, since Thomas Cromwell directed its publication; Whitchurch's Bible after its first English printer; also the Chained Bible, since it was chained in "some convenient place within the said church". It has also been termed less accurately Cranmer's Bible, since Thomas Cranmer's preface appeared only in the second edition. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Bible)

Geneva Bible - The Geneva Bible is one of the most historically significant translations of the Bible into the English language, preceding the King James translation by 51 years. It was the primary Bible of the 16th century Protestant movement and was the Bible used by William Shakespeare, Oliver Cromwell, John Milton, John Knox, John Donne, and John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress. It was one of the Bibles taken to America on the Mayflower, it was used by many English Dissenters, and it was still respected by Oliver Cromwell's soldiers at the time of the English Civil War.

What makes this version of the Holy Bible significant is that, for the very first time, a mechanically printed, mass-produced Bible was made available directly to the general public which came with a variety of scriptural study guides and aids (collectively called an apparatus), which included verse citations which allow the reader to cross-reference one verse with numerous relevant verses in the rest of the Bible, introductions to each book of the Bible which acted to summarize all of the material that each book would cover, maps, tables, woodcut illustrations, indexes, as well as other included features — all of which would eventually lead to the reputation of the Geneva Bible as history's very first study bible.

Because the language of the Geneva Bible was more forceful and vigorous, most readers preferred this version strongly over the Bishops' Bible, the translation authorised by the Church of England under Elizabeth I. In the words of Cleland Boyd McAfee, "it drove the Great Bible off the field by sheer power of excellence". (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible)

Bishop's Bible - The Bishops' Bible was an English translation of the Bible produced under the authority of the established Church of England in 1568. It was substantially revised in 1572, and this revised edition was to be prescribed as the base text for the Authorized King James Version of 1611. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop%27s_Bible)

Douay–Rheims Bible - The Douay–Rheims Bible (also known as the Rheims–Douai Bible or Douai Bible, and abbreviated as D–R) is a translation of the Bible from the Latin Vulgate into English undertaken by members of the English College, Douai. The New Testament was published in Reims (France) in 1582, in one volume with extensive commentary and notes. The Old Testament, which was published by the university of Douai, followed nearly thirty years

The Word of God

later in two volumes; the first volume (Genesis to Job) in 1609, the second (Psalms to 2 Machabees plus the apocrypha of the Clementine Vulgate) in 1610. Marginal notes took up the bulk of the volumes and had a strong polemical and patristic character. They also offered insights on issues of translation, and on the Hebrew and Greek source texts of the Vulgate. The purpose of the version, both the text and notes, was to uphold Catholic tradition in the face of the Protestant Reformation which up till then had overwhelmingly dominated Elizabethan religion and academic debate. As such it was an impressive effort by English Catholics to support the Counter-Reformation. The New Testament was reprinted in 1600, 1621 and 1633, while both the Old Testament volumes were reprinted in 1635, but neither thereafter for another hundred years. In 1589, William Fulke produced an attempted refutation of the Rheims New Testament, setting out the complete Rheims text and notes in parallel columns with those of the Bishop's Bible. This work sold widely in England, being re-issued in three further editions to 1633; and it was predominantly through Fulke's editions that the Rheims New Testament came to exercise a significant influence on the development of 17th Century English.

Much of the text of the 1582/1610 bible, however, employed a densely latinized vocabulary, to the extent of being in places unreadable; and consequently this translation was replaced by a revision undertaken by bishop Richard Challoner; the New Testament in three editions 1749, 1750, and 1752; the Old Testament (minus the Vulgate apocrypha), in 1750. Although retaining the title Douay–Rheims Bible, the Challoner revision was in fact a new version, tending to take as its base text the King James Bible rigorously checked and extensively adjusted for improved readability and consistency with the Clementine edition of the Vulgate. Subsequent editions of the Challoner revision, of which there have been very many, reproduce his Old Testament of 1750 with very few changes. Challoner's New Testament was, however, extensively revised by Bernard MacMahon in a series of Dublin editions from 1783 to 1810; and these various Dublin versions are the source of some Challoner bibles printed in the United States in the 19th Century. Subsequent editions of the Challoner bible printed in England most often follow Challoner's earlier New Testament texts of 1749 and 1750; as do most 20th century printings, and on-line versions of the Douay–Rheims bible circulating on the internet.

Although the Jerusalem Bible, New American Bible (in the United States), the Revised Standard Version, the New Revised Standard Version and the New Jerusalem Bible are the most commonly used in English-speaking Catholic churches, the Challoner revision of the Douay–Rheims is still often the Bible of choice of English-speaking Traditionalist Catholics. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douay-Rheims_Bible)

King James Bible - The Authorized King James Version is an English translation of the Christian Holy Bible begun in 1604 and completed in 1611 by the Church of England. Printed by the King's Printer, Robert Barker, the first edition included schedules unique to the Church of England; for example, a lectionary for morning and evening prayer. This was the third such official translation into English; the first having been the Great Bible commissioned by the Church of England in the reign of King Henry VIII, and the second having been the Bishop's Bible of 1568. In January 1604, King James I of England convened the Hampton Court Conference where a new English version was conceived in response to the perceived problems of the earlier translations as detected by the Puritans, a faction within the Church of England.

The Word of God

James gave the translators instructions intended to guarantee that the new version would conform to the ecclesiology and reflect the episcopal structure of the Church of England and its beliefs about an ordained clergy. The translation was by 47 scholars, all of whom were members of the Church of England. In common with most other translations of the period, the New Testament was translated from the Textus Receptus (Received Text) series of the Greek texts. The Old Testament was translated from the Masoretic Hebrew text, while the deuterocanonical books were translated from the Greek Septuagint (LXX), except for 2 Esdras, which was translated from the Latin Vulgate.

While the Authorized Version was meant to replace the Bishops' Bible as the official version for readings in the Church of England, it was apparently (unlike the Great Bible) never specifically "authorized", although it is commonly known as the Authorized Version in the United Kingdom. However, the King's Printer issued no further editions of the Bishops' Bible; so necessarily the Authorized Version supplanted it as the standard lectern Bible in parish church use in England. In the Book of Common Prayer (1662), the text of the Authorized Version replaced the text of the Great Bible — for Epistle and Gospel readings—and as such was "authorized" by Act of Parliament.

By the first half of the 18th century, the Authorized Version was effectively unchallenged as the English translation used in Anglican and Protestant churches. Over the course of the 18th century, the Authorized Version supplanted the Latin Vulgate as the standard version of scripture for English speaking scholars.

Throughout most of the world, the Authorized Version has passed out of copyright and is freely reproduced. In the United Kingdom, the British Crown restricts production of the Authorized Version per transitional exemptions from the Copyright Act 1775 (which implemented this clause) in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (Schedule 1, section 13(1)), which expire in 2039. Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press, HarperCollins and the Queen's Printers have the right to produce the Authorized Version. (source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Bible)

Dead Sea Scrolls - The Dead Sea Scrolls are a large collection of scrolls discovered in the Dead Sea area. The first scrolls were discovered in early 1947 by three Bedouin shepherds. Eventually, some of the scrolls made their way into the hands of archaeologists and Hebrew scholars. They were amazed to find an entire copy of Isaiah which they dated to the first century BC. At that time, this was about 1000 years older than the next oldest manuscript of any part of the Bible. About 800 different manuscripts have since been found in this area. There are manuscripts or fragments of every book in the Old Testament except Esther. Several copies of some books were found including Isaiah, Psalms, Deuteronomy and Genesis.

All the manuscripts are dated between 150 BC and AD 250. Until this discovery, all translation was based on the Masoretic text which is a little over 1000 years old. The Dead Sea Scrolls are about 2000 years old! Yet when compared with the Masoretic text, there was hardly any difference. Because of their great age, they provide amazing evidence that the Bible has been faithfully copied by scribes for centuries. So accurate has this copying been, that it provides compelling evidence that God has preserved his word for future generations.

The Word of God

The scrolls are also interesting because they help to date prophecies. Before the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, some critics said that prophecies about Jesus, such as those in the Psalms and Isaiah, were written after the event. The Dead Sea Scrolls proved that they were true prophecies which predated Jesus, and we know they were fulfilled. Again, this gives further evidence that God inspired the Bible, and preserved it for us to read. (source:

<http://www.robjhyndman.com/bible/BRB/>)

Internal Evidence

John 1:1-4, 14 KJV

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 The same was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. 14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 KJV

14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; 15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

2 Peter 1:19-21 KJV

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 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.

John 14:6 KJV

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

1 Timothy 2:1-7 KJV

2 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. 3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; 4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. 7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

The Word of God

John 3:36 KJV

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 17:3 KJV

3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Acts 4:10-12 KJV

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Romans 3:23 KJV

23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Romans 6:23 KJV

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 11:25 KJV

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

1 John 5:13 KJV

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

God's Word - Summary

The Bible is God's authoritative and official revelation to man. It is composed of 66 books, penned by 40 different authors over a span of 1500 years. Its authors came from every walk of life - kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen and scholars. It was written on at least three continents in three different languages - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek - yet there is a thread of continuity from Genesis to Revelation, with the complete consistency of God's moral laws throughout.