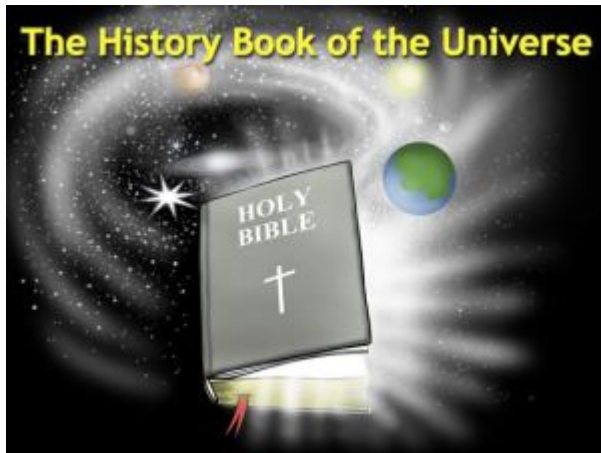


[The King James Version: Section IV.](#) [The History of the Bible](#)



Continued from [The King James Version: Part III The Forerunner and the Biblical Shepherd Theme](#)

Note: If you read all of the previous section before Oct. 8th, you might want to go back to it because I added more to it when I posted this section.

The History of the Bible

Most of History Is Lost

C. S. Lewis described our knowledge of history as if all the libraries in the world were destroyed, except one, and that was also burned up, except for one book, and that book had only one sentence left visible, and it could hardly be read. We read histories without assuming that the effort in each case is to condense facts and perspectives as much as can be known at that time. The first to uncover something new is often able to own that story when published, accepted, and promoted.

Yale professor Paul L. Holmer discussed this in a lecture we attended. He said, "There is a new idea every 50 years, with everyone writing about that idea until something else comes up. However, the subordinate writers between eras are always stuck in producing about books. They are writing about that new or creative discovery."* The temptation with ancient documents is to invent something worthy of universal publicity while controlling the information. Rewards are great for the person who discovers or uncovers something new and ancient. The temptation to commit fraud is great because the supposed facts become established truths in spite of contrary evidence. A good example is the promotion of Roman Catholic dogma, with the claim, "We have always taught this" – Purgatory, the Assumption of Mary, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the power of the scapular, the infallibility of the Pope, and the ability of the Pope to forgive all sins or retain all sins.

* These words are paraphrased from memory, summer school at Yale Divinity, about 1980.

Old Testament

The Old Testament is written in Hebrew and Aramaic. The sentences read from right to left, which seems impossible for the uninitiated, but the style is not difficult to learn. The Hebrew language is quite different from our Greek, Latin, and English, but learning it opens up the meaning to Biblical students, young and old. One professor described Hebrew as “easy to learn, easy to forget,” but easily remembered again. Greek is difficult to learn but also difficult to forget, because so many Greek words transliterate into English – lamp, sandal, photo, graph, phone, and hydro.

The original Old Testament has not been trashed and cut up the way the New Testament has in the Westcott- Hort-Aland era, doubtless because Old Testament copies remained within the Jewish community and particular care was given to each copy. The letters and words were counted to make sure the copy was the same as the original being reproduced.

The Old Testament books accepted by the Jews, excluding the Apocrypha, are also accepted by Christians.

Alexander the Great’s Universal Language

One man changed our world and gave his language and culture to generations following – Alexander the Great. When his father King Philip was murdered in 336 BC, Alexander took over the professional army of Macedonia, which was always kept in training, not called up part-time as other armies were. Alexander first united Greece and then sailed across the Mediterranean Sea to conquer Persia, a constant enemy and threat to the Greek cities.

Alexander turned the largest empire in the world, Persia, into his empire, and exported his language and culture to the lands he conquered.*

* His favorite item was a copy of Homer’s Iliad, which he kept in a special box near his bed.

The Romans eventually took over that territory and more, but Greek remained the international language of culture and commerce, much like English is today. Baby Boomers were told they needed Latin to get into a good college, but the Roman Empire always saw Greek as the language of culture. From Greece they borrowed the gods, engineering, math, architecture, sculpture, architecture, poetry, drama, comedy, and republican government. Washington DC is a collection of Greek temples with Roman touches. Rome’s unique accomplishments are perhaps overstated, so there is a saying – “The Romans had the drains, but the Greeks had the brains.”*

* Ignore the San Francisco song. The original words of the poem are – “The glory that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome.” Poe, 1845, “Helen”. Compare that to Tony Bennett singing, “The glory that was Rome is of another day.”

The Septuagint and the Subsequent Loss of Greek

One of the greatest achievements of Biblical versions came from the need of Jews to have the Old Testament studied a common language. The name Septuagint is often represented by the Roman numeral LXX for 70. No one knows exactly

when it was translated or the exact dates. The translation probably began around 285 BC, so it was available not only to Jews but to those who knew Greek.

The glory of Greece was far gone when the Son was born of the Virgin Mary. However, the language remained in all territories conquered by Alexander and ruled by his generals afterwards. Rome got into peace-making, often called occupation, when they were called in to settle the constant fighting in the Holy Land, around 60 BC. For a time, people teaching the Bible claimed the New Testament was written in Aramaic, that Jesus taught in Aramaic. No one has found this proposed Aramaic New Testament, a theory which ignores how useless a local idiom might be contrasted to the language used around the civilized world, Koine Greek, or common Greek. They did not use the same style of Greek as Homer did centuries earlier but the simplified Greek of conversation, letters, and commerce.

Jesus was born in the pagan Roman Empire, seemingly at the peak of its size, power, and grandeur. But the decline had started and rushed to a conclusion a few centuries later, the Western Roman empire conquered by outsiders. However, the Eastern Roman Empire began with the Emperor Constantine Christianizing its lands, which lasted a more than 1100 years, 306 – 1453 AD. The Fall of Rome led to the fragments of the Western Roman Empire – Europe – adopting Latin Bibles while the Eastern Roman Empire – called Byzantium after its capital city – preserved Greek, Greek literature, and Greek culture with Christianity the main religious force.

Constantine became Emperor of Rome in 306. He was enough of a Christian to create a new capital at Byzantium, a small town ideally placed for trade between the West and Asia.*

* Scholars are divided about how sincere his faith was. He named himself Equal to the Apostles, but his actions did not always reflect that title.

He wanted a Christian capital and enticed Roman families to move to his new home, which he dubbed the New Rome.* As a trading city for jade and silk, the city became known as Constantinople. Vast wealth accumulated and enemies were defeated in their attacks on the city. In spite of a long and glorious history, from growth to decline and defeat, historians have given little thought to the Byzantine Empire. As a result, most people think the Roman Empire collapsed around 400 AD, but that was only the European part. While Europe seemed divided into little fiefdoms and duchies, developing new languages, Byzantium preserved the Greek language, Greek art, and the Greek manuscripts. The tragedy of Constantinople's fall is directly connected to the Renaissance in Europe when Greek scholars and manuscripts made their way into Europe as they escaped.

* Empires after Rome have sought to be the New Rome, first the Byzantine, then the Holy Roman Empire, Russia with its Caesars or Tsars, and Germany as the Third Empire – Rome, Holy Roman, and Nazi. However, the Byzantine was the longest surviving and remains the most ignored by historians.

The Ottoman Empire

After the prophet Mohammed died, in 632 AD, his enemies rose up to remove his influence from Arabia. Instead, his followers countered and wiped out all active opposition.

The Byzantine Empire was protected against invasion until the growth of the Ottoman Empire in the 1300s. Byzantium did not have a warlike culture, but the Muslims were active in conquest. By 1453, the Byzantine Empire had been whittled down to Constantinople alone, and it fell on May 29th. The last emperor of Constantinople, who died fighting, was named Constantine, just as the last emperor of Rome was named Romulus and died fighting in 476, which was considered the end of the Roman Empire.

Constantinople became Istanbul by combining the Greek words for “into the city.” (εις την Πόλιν) The great and golden metropolis was simply called “The City,” just as New York City is today. A lawyer who worked in New York said to us, “I can do my work in the suburbs, so I seldom have to go into The City.” He added, “That is how we tell newcomers from old hands. New York is simply The City.”

The fall of Constantinople was preceded and followed by Greek scholars and artists fleeing to Europe with their treasures, which initiated the Renaissance. Ancient Greek culture was admired and copied in many ways, and the Greek New Testament came to replace the Vulgate. Thus, the end of the two empires, Rome and Byzantine, mark the beginning and end of the Middle Ages.

The fall of Rome facilitated the Church in governing Europe, with its common language – Latin – and its network of bishops and priests. The greater struggle began, not with the first Rome to fall, but with the second – Constantinople – the Renaissance and Reformation, the Gospel versus the Antichrist.

The Old Latin Version and Jerome’s Vulgate – Apocrypha

The Latin version of the New Testament seems to come to life in the fifth century after Christ, with Jerome creating the Vulgate. However, that is far off, because the Old Latin version was actually translated around 150 AD. The difference is that the Old Latin and the Vulgate have different sources. The Old Latin uses the Traditional Text, the other is the Vaticanus, the opposing minority version Tischendorf and Hort adored and exalted. This fact introduces the concept that there are two basic traditions for the New Testament. One was copied voluminously and left behind thousands of examples – the Traditional or Majority Text. The second is the corrupted Vatican and Sinaiticus, deviously promoted by Tischendorf, who “discovered” both, then made the Standard Text by Westcott, Hort, Nestle, and Aland.

The Traditional Text in its many variations and translations became important for the independent Waldenses, who in turn influenced Luther’s translation. The story of these people is one of extreme persecution and hardship.

The Waldensians – Pre-Reformation Gospel

Most of us think of New Testament development as Greek – Latin – Erasmus – Luther – KJV, omitting the Waldenses and many others. The path is not so simple, as the Old Latin and Vulgate show. The Waldenses persecution is taught in church history classes, but the story does not get the lasting recognition it deserves. Wylie argues that the original idea came from a poem, Nobla Leycon.*

* The Nobla Leycon though a poem, is in reality a confession of faith, and could have been composed only after some considerable study of the system of Christianity, in contradistinction to the errors of Rome. Wylie, J.A. . The History of the Waldenses (p. 8). Kindle Edition.

An opponent of the movement, Rorengo, declared the movement was ancient.* The name of the group comes from Peter Waldo, a merchant who sold his business and gave the money to the poor toward the end of the 1100s. Others followed him, which contributed to a tradition of voluntary poverty, lay preaching, and evangelism. They did not agree with the Roman pope and already had a tradition of independence from Rome. The Waldenses were discussed at the Third and Fourth Lateran Councils. They were prevented from preaching without permission from Rome. Persecution arose and they escaped to the mountains of Northern Italy.

* Yet he states that “they were not a new sect in the ninth and tenth centuries, and that Claude of Turin must have detached them from the Church in the ninth century.” Wylie, J.A. The History of the Waldenses (p. 8). Kindle Edition.

John Milton penned the sonnet, which touches upon the violence against the Waldenses

Sonnet 18

On the Late Massacre in Piedmont (1655)
Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold,
Ev'n them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worship'd stocks and stones;
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubl'd to the hills, and they
To Heav'n. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow
O'er all th' Italian fields where still doth sway
The triple tyrant; that from these may grow
A hundred-fold, who having learnt thy way
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

*

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44747/sonnet-18-avenge-o-lord-thy-slaughterd-saints-whose-bones>. The actual slaughters are too horrible to print. They are haunting, focused on the innocent, and impossible to forget.

Waldenses Bible

The Waldenses endured horrific persecution from the Church of Rome, which made them the forerunner of the Reformation.* Studying one book on the long history of the Waldensians will show that the Vatican did not control all of Europe, and people stood up to the false claims and teachings of the pope. They had Bibles translated into their languages, and these Bibles influenced Luther and the King James editors in the language and Greek manuscripts used. They followed the Majority Text tradition and not minority Vaticanus.

* Jack Moorman, *Forever Settled*, pp. 227.

Erasmus – The Reformer Who Stayed in the Church

Roman Catholic priests and nuns remember Erasmus, and not always with fondness. One priest visited Notre Dame University, wearing a Hawaiian shirt, to promote the social activism goals of his group. A nun confronted him. “There you go, just like Erasmus, turning Protestant and going secular.” Erasmus received a dispensation to wear secular clothes, and he enjoyed the friendship of many powerful people. That remains the paradox of Erasmus, because he starting the wagon going downhill to start the Reformation – then he jumped off. Or – he laid the egg that Luther hatched.

Those analogies overlook the slow and bloody build-up of the Reformation, a seeming series of defeats by papal armies and allies. By accident, or God’s design, one man decided to make a lot of money by producing fake hand-made Bibles, extremely valuable. To do so they had to use a new invention and design the fonts and fancy-work. When expensive volumes looked identical, impossible with hand-drawn work, the scheme blew up. The outcome made printed Bibles and religious books far less expensive, because Gutenberg turned a wine press into a printing press. This was so simple that everyone copied the design and created their own publishing companies. Thus, the budding reform movements against the Vatican – which had been impeded by exile, execution, slavery, torture, and warfare – were given protection and speed by the printed Word of God.

Erasmus gathered the Majority Text, which fueled the Reformation, but he stayed in the Church of Rome.



Figure 8 Erasmus edited the first Greek New Testament and rejected Vaticanus. The liberals are still pouting.

The Luther Bible and the Printing Press Established the Reformation



Continued in [The King James Version: Part V. One Reformation, One Evangelical and Protestant Church](#)

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