

Our Bible

In the first century most of the disciples and apostles met in Antioch, Syria. It is here that Paul called Peter's attitude to question and it is also here that it was decided that Paul would preach to the gentiles and Peter would remain with the circumcision.

Paul is believed to have died in Rome in 67 A.D. during the first persecution of Nero. Jesus tells Peter that when he is old another will gird him. Peter's first letter was written from Babylon. In the first chapter of his second letter Peter mentions his coming death. He is believed to have died around the same time as Paul. An ossuary bearing his name was found in a sepulcher on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem in 1953. In 100 A.D. John became the last of the Disciples and Apostles to die.

Paul warns of the gospel being distorted even in his time. Origen of Alexandria, born in 184 A.D. spent the first half of his career in Alexandria. Origen became a catechist at the Catechetical School of Alexandria. He founded the Christian School of Caesarea. Origen was largely responsible for the collection of usage information, or which churches were using which gospels, regarding the texts which became the New Testament. He was a prolific writer who did not believe as the apostles taught with a large quantity of writings in textual criticism, biblical exegesis and biblical hermeneutics, homiletics, and spirituality. He was one of the most influential figures in early Christian theology, apologetics, and asceticism. He wrote hundreds of homilies covering almost the entire Bible, interpreting many passages as allegorical. Origen produced the Hexapla, the first **critical edition** of the Hebrew Bible. Origen is often seen as the first major Christian theologian. In 543, the emperor Justinian I condemned him as a heretic and ordered all his writings to be burned.

Eusebius of Caesarea was born around 260 A.D. Pamphilus gave Eusebius a strong admiration for the thought of Origen. From a dogmatic point of view, Eusebius stood entirely upon the shoulders of Origen. He became counselor of Constantine the Great of Constantinople and the bishop of Caesarea Maritima about 314 AD. He was ordered by Constantine to produce 50 bibles of which the Codex **Vaticanus** is believed to be one. The Codex **Vaticanus** is dated between 300-325 AD.

The works of Origen make the **Vaticanus** a completely different book with some parallels to the manuscripts found around **Antioch**.

Jerome, born 347 A.D. went to Rome to study in about 360-366. In about 373 he set out on a journey through Thrace and Asia Minor into northern Syria. He went to Constantinople to pursue a study of Scripture under Gregory Nazianzen in 380 –382. He returned to Antioch several times. He is best known for his translation of most of the bible into Latin (the translation that became known as the Vulgate), and his commentaries on the Gospels. The **Latin Vulgate** follows the **Vaticanus**. Jerome's many trips to Antioch resulted in him adding back many of the verses that the **Vaticanus** omitted. His list of writings is extensive. The Vulgate is a late-4th-century Latin translation of the bible that became the Catholic Church's officially promulgated Latin version of the bible during the 16th century.

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Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus, born in about 1466 A.D. was a Dutch philosopher and Christian humanist, originally trained as a Catholic priest. Only when he had mastered Latin did he begin to express himself on major contemporary themes in literature and religion. He was critical of the abuses within the Catholic Church and called for reform. Despite a chronic shortage of money, he succeeded in learning Greek by an intensive, day-and-night study of three years, continuously begging his friends to

send him books and money for teachers in his letters. In his words: “My mind is so excited at the thought of emending Jerome’s text, with notes, that I seem to myself inspired by some god. I have already almost finished emending him by collating a large number of ancient manuscripts, and this I am doing at enormous personal expense.” He felt called upon to use his learning in a purification of the doctrine by returning to the historic documents and original languages of sacred Scripture. He felt that the translations had been wrongly rendered and therefore at great personal expense acquired as many ancient manuscripts as he could. Later versions of the Greek New Testament by others, but based on Erasmus's Greek New Testament, became known as the **Textus Receptus**.

Tyndale's translation was the first English Bible to draw directly from Hebrew and Greek texts. Erasmus third edition of 1522 which included 1 John 5:7, was probably used by Tyndale for the first English New Testament. Other translations based on the **Textus Receptus** were **Coverdale**, **Matthews**, the **Great Bible**, **Geneva Bible** and the **Bishops Bible**.

The **Authorized Version (AV)** or **King James Bible (KJB)**, is an English translation of the Christian Bible for the Church of England that began in 1604 and was completed in 1611. James' instructions included several requirements that kept the new translation familiar to its listeners and readers. The text of the **Bishops' Bible** would serve as the primary guide for the translators, and the familiar proper names of the biblical characters would all be retained. If the Bishops' Bible was deemed problematic in any situation, the translators were permitted to consult other translations from a pre-approved list: the **Great Bible**, and **Geneva Bible** and the compiled works of the **Tyndale Bible**, **Coverdale Bible** and **Matthew's Bible**.

In order to present a bible to the public before the **Authorized Version** came out, the Catholic Church published the **Douay–Rheims Bible** in 1609 which was translated from the **Latin Vulgate** which follows the Codex **Vaticanus**.

For the next 300 years the **King James Version (KJV)** would be the Bible of the protestant church and the **Douay–Rheims Bible**, the bible for the common people of the Catholic Church. Westcott and Hort published *The New Testament in the Original Greek* in 1881. It is a ‘**critical text**’ in which they rejected what they considered to be the dated and inadequate **Textus Receptus**. The two editors favoured two manuscripts: **Vaticanus** and **Sinaiticus**. The **American Standard Version (ASV)** completed in 1901 was based on **Westcott and Hort**. The **Revised Standard Version (RSV)** was a revision of the **ASV** with the New Testament published 1945 and the complete Bible published 1954.

An effort was made in 1966, through Vatican II, to bring about a 'common bible work' for all faiths between the Roman Catholic Church and the Bible Societies. The 1987 "Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible", affirming the spirit and following the principles set forth in the historic agreement first published in 1968' reiterates and clarifies the criteria for all future translations of the Holy Scriptures. (A copy can be found on the Vatican website.) It is stated that all future works should use the '**Critical text**' as a base. The '**Byzantine text**' when required may appear in the footnotes with appropriate markers to the text.

The **New American Standard Bible (NASB)**, completed in 1971 closely followed the **American Standard Version**. The **New International Version**, published in 1978, tries to balance word-for-word with thought-for-thought. The **New King James Version (NKJV)**, completed in 1982, was originally to only update archaic language but went further to change words and verses to follow the ‘**critical text**’. The **English Standard Version (ESV)**, published in 2001 is a literal update of the **Revised Standard Version**.