

The B.I.B.L.E.
(Yes! That's The Book for Me!)
Studies in Psalm 119

'Especially the Parchments'

The Apostle Paul was awaiting execution for the cause of Christ. His final letter to Timothy asked his young spiritual apprentice to come to Rome as soon as possible for some final fellowship before leaving this life. Paul desired a few special things for Timothy to bring with him – Mark (*who helped Peter in Rome before his execution*), a cloak he had left in Carpus, **'the books'** (*probably some Old Testament scrolls and maybe a few New Testament letters*) and **'the parchments'** (*vellum sheets with writing on them or blank sheets to be written upon*). Not only were the inspired writings of God's authors vital to Paul even to the end of his earthly days, the ancient manuscripts (*'man'/ manual; 'script'/ writing*) from which we have derived the Bible, remain absolutely essential all the days of our lives as Christians.

Reliable biblical scholarship has analyzed hundreds of ancient *'handwritten'/ manuscripts*) from Mediterranean regions in determining the best ones to use for translation from the original languages (*OT/ Hebrew & NT/ Greek*) into English and any other languages of the world. It is certain that we do not have any of the original manuscripts written by the actual God-inspired human authors (*autographs*). Rather we have numerous copies of the originals from various locations that match and concur, assuring us of their accuracy to the original from which they were copied. However, different linguistic scholars trust particular groups of manuscripts from which they do the work of translating God's truth into an accurate English *Version* of the Scriptures.

'Transmission'

To assure that both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are as close to the Bible *autographs* as possible, a precise and careful scholarship (*textual criticism*) carefully evaluates, catalogues, and preserves manuscript evidence that is discovered. Comparing texts, Bible scholars can determine the authenticity and accuracy of all manuscript discoveries.

The Old Testament Hebrew manuscript evidence, called **Masoretic** texts, only dates back to the 10th century AD, but because two other ancient sources agree with the *Masoretic* text, we know it is an impeccable copy of the originals. The two ancient sources:

- 1) **The Septuagint** (*LXX/ Greek translation of the OT written about 200-250 BC*) &
- 2) **The Dead Sea Scrolls** (*scrolls written about 200-100 BC and discovered 1947-1956*)

These two ancient text sources concur with the *Masoretic text* and therefore give us great confidence that the **Masoretic Text** is a very accurate copy of the original Hebrew (*and some Aramaic writings/ Canaanite languages*) transmission of OT Scripture.

The New Testament evidence is based on the study of over 5,000 Greek NT manuscripts, scrolls and parchment fragments. It is strongly believed that some of the fragments actually can be traced back to within 25-50 years of the original autograph writing. Scholars have concluded that 99.99% of the original writing has been reclaimed and that the remaining small amount of *variant* difference is of no significance to any Christian doctrine.

Translation of original languages into English using manuscript evidence:

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| AD 1330-1384 | John Wycliffe made the first English translation of the whole Bible |
| AD 1526 | William Tyndale - first printed NT in English, following the invention of the printing press in AD 1450 |
| AD 1611 | The King James Version (KJV) completed |

Since then many better (and many worse) translations have been made.

Better: **New King James Version (NKJV)**
 New American Standard Version Bible (NASB) and
 The English Standard Version (ESV).

Other versions like **The New International Version (NIV)** are easy to read but take *interpretative liberties* in their translations. Other Bibles like ‘**The Living Bible**’ or ‘**Good News for Modern Man**’ aren’t actually translations, but rather paraphrases of an English version, into the ideas and words of the author... *(to be continued)* **PtL**

‘Spiritual U-Turns’

(Revival – Turning back to the Lord after failing)

Psalm 119:25-32

(‘Daleth’ – ‘D’ sound/ weak, hang down, feeble)

Revival Prayers

(Contrition, Confession, Conviction)

“My soul clings to the dust – revive me according to Your word.” (25)

I have declared my way and You answered me. (26)

Teach me Your statutes – make me understand the way of Your precepts; (27)
so shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.”

- How does the Psalmist’s feelings after backsliding compare with yours when you’ve sinned?
- Why is a repentant heart essential to true personal revival? (*2 Corinthians 7:9-11*)
- Talk about how v 26 ‘declare my way’ is the OT counterpart to 1 John 1:9.
- V 27 is God’s ‘answer’ to the Psalmist’s confession. What does God desire of ‘confessors’?

The Revival Process

(Confliction, Concession, Consecration)

“My soul melts from heaviness; strengthen me according to Your word.” (28)

Remove from me the way of lying and grant me your law graciously. (29)

I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I’ve laid before me.” (30)

- Talk about the weakened condition that sin, repentance and confession causes in backsliding.
- The sin that the Psalmist confessed was ‘lying’. What does he want besides forgiveness for it?
- His renewed commitment to do what’s right includes ‘what’ in v 30?
- Discuss how you pray when you have failed, are sorry for it and want to return to God.

Revival Proofs

(Confirmation, Conformation, Consolation)

“I cling to Your testimonies; O LORD, do not put me to shame!” (31)

I will run the course of Your commands, for You enlarge my heart.” (32)

- How do these 4 declarations of the repentant Psalmist prove he has truly been revived?
- How do these proofs of revival compare with Hebrews 12:11-13?