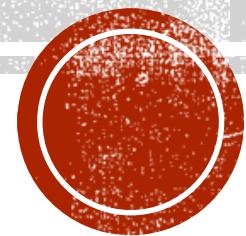


# **THE FOUNDATIONS OF SCRIPTURE: PART IV**

**The Transmission of God's Word**





# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

## ■ The History of Translation

Original Languages:

Hebrew (most of the OT):

בראשית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֵת הַשְׁמִים וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ: (Gen 1:1)

Aramaic (Gen 31:47; Jer 10:11; Ezra 4:8-6:18, 7:12-26; Dan 2:4-7:28):

וְדַנָּה כִּתְבָּא ذַּי רְשִׁים מְנֻא מְנֻא תְּקַל וְפָרַסִּין: (Dan 5:25)

Greek (NT):

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. (John 1:1)



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## OT Translation:

- Exiles forced out of Israel to Alexandria (Jer 43:1-7)
- and Babylon (Jer 39:1-10)
- Only a few returned
- Therefore, they learned new languages, and needed God's word in those languages



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## OT Translation:

- **Alexandria:**

- Primarily Greek spoken there
- Myth of translators
- But number somewhat stuck: Septuagint, Seventy, LXX
- Important translation: basically the OT for the early church, and favored by Paul

- **Babylon, further east:**

- Primarily Aramaic spoken there
- Targums – Aramaic translation of the OT



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## Bible Translation:

- Greek spoken widely, but not primarily in west (Latin)
- As Church power moved that direction, a Latin translation was needed
- Jerome commissioned by Pope Damasus



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## Bible Translation:

- The Vulgate:

- Produced from original Hebrew and Greek
  - Finished in 405 a.d.

- The Bible for the Catholic church for a millennia

- Affirmed at Trent (1545-1563) as the official version

- Jerome attempted to provide the “sense” not the literal idea



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## Bible Translation:

- Other Early Translations

- Peshitta (Syriac version)
- Coptic (Egypt, northeaster Africa)

- Secondary Translations

- Gothic, Armenian, Ethiopic, Georgian
- Not based on originals, but other translations



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## Bible Translation:

- The “dead” period

- After the Vulgate, translations into common tongues almost ceased in the west
- Until Wycliffe/Luther
- Why?

- Some limited translation:



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## Caedmon

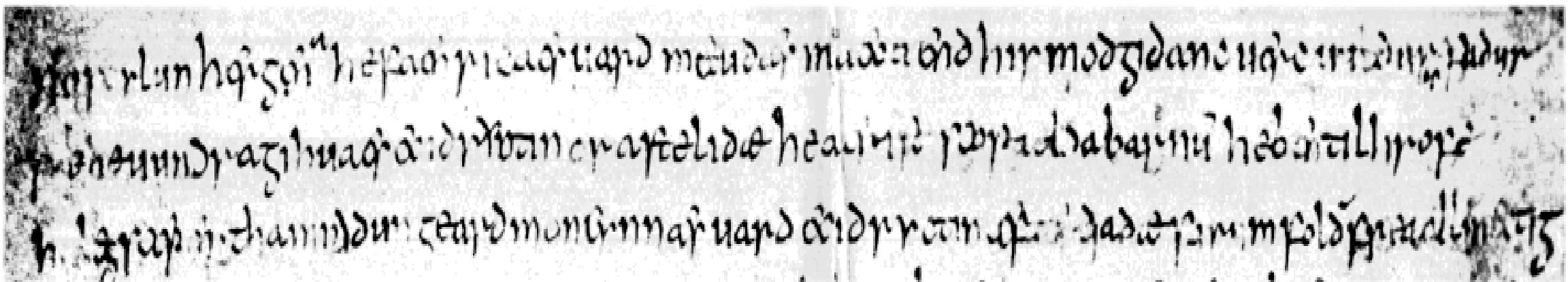
- 7<sup>th</sup> Century
- Composed songs/poems from Scripture
- Not truly English!



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

## ■ The History of Translation

# Caedmon



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

Others:

- Aldhelm – 8<sup>th</sup> C translation of Psalms
- Venerable Bede - 8<sup>th</sup> C translation of John's Gospel
- Wessex Gospels – 10<sup>th</sup> C of all four Gospels
- Aelfric – 10<sup>th</sup> C translation of Genesis – Judges

***But all old English, before the Norman Conquest (1066)***





*Venerable Bede Translates John  
James Doyle Penrose, 1902*



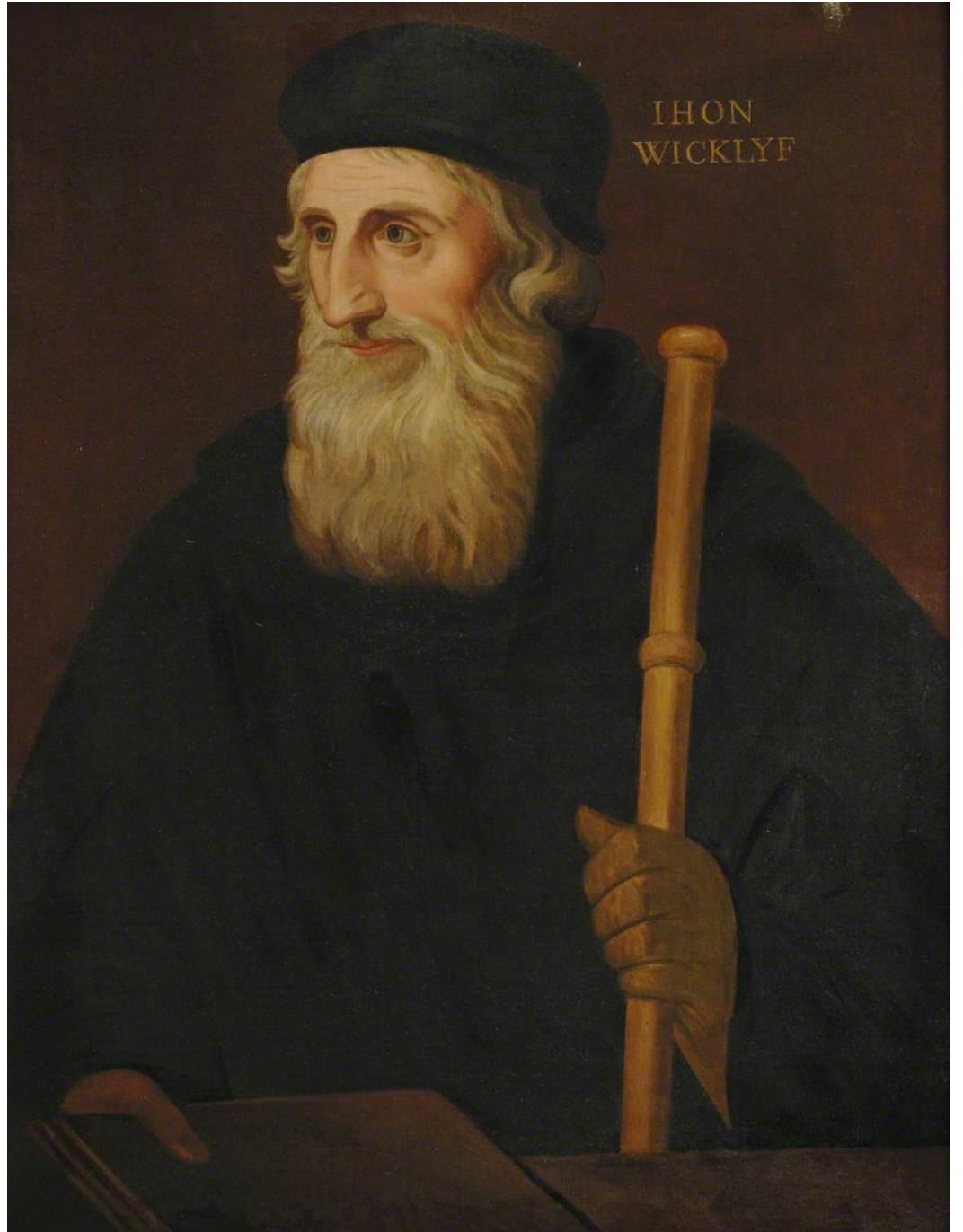
# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

John Wycliffe (c. 1330 – 1384)

- The Morning Star of the Reformation
- Not fully his translation, but the leader of the group
- Based on Latin Vulgate – Greek and Hebrew were not available
- Extremely wooden





*John Wycliffe*  
**Thomas Kirby, (1775-1848)**



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

John Wycliffe (c. 1330 – 1384)

- Condemned for speaking out against the church's lavishness and transubstantiation
- His body was exhumed, and symbolically burned at the stake (1428)
- John Purvey continued his project after his death, revising the language to give a more suitable syntax and idiom



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

John Wycliffe (c. 1330 – 1384)

- His followers (some of which were Lollards) soon were calling for reform of both the church and the monarchy based upon their readings of the Bible
- In 1408 the Archbishop of Canterbury forbade the production and use of vernacular Bibles without his express consent



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

William Tyndale (1494 – 1536)

- 2 major factors helped Tyndale immensely:

- Greek and Hebrew texts were available due to the Enlightenment
- Gutenberg's printing press



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

William Tyndale (1494 – 1536)

- English NT produced in 1526; printed at Worms
- His NT would serve as the basis for ALL NT translations until 20<sup>th</sup> C
- Never finished OT
- Most influential person in the production of English bibles ever





*William Tyndale*  
*Fox's Book of Martyrs*



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

Miles Coverdale (1488 – 1569)

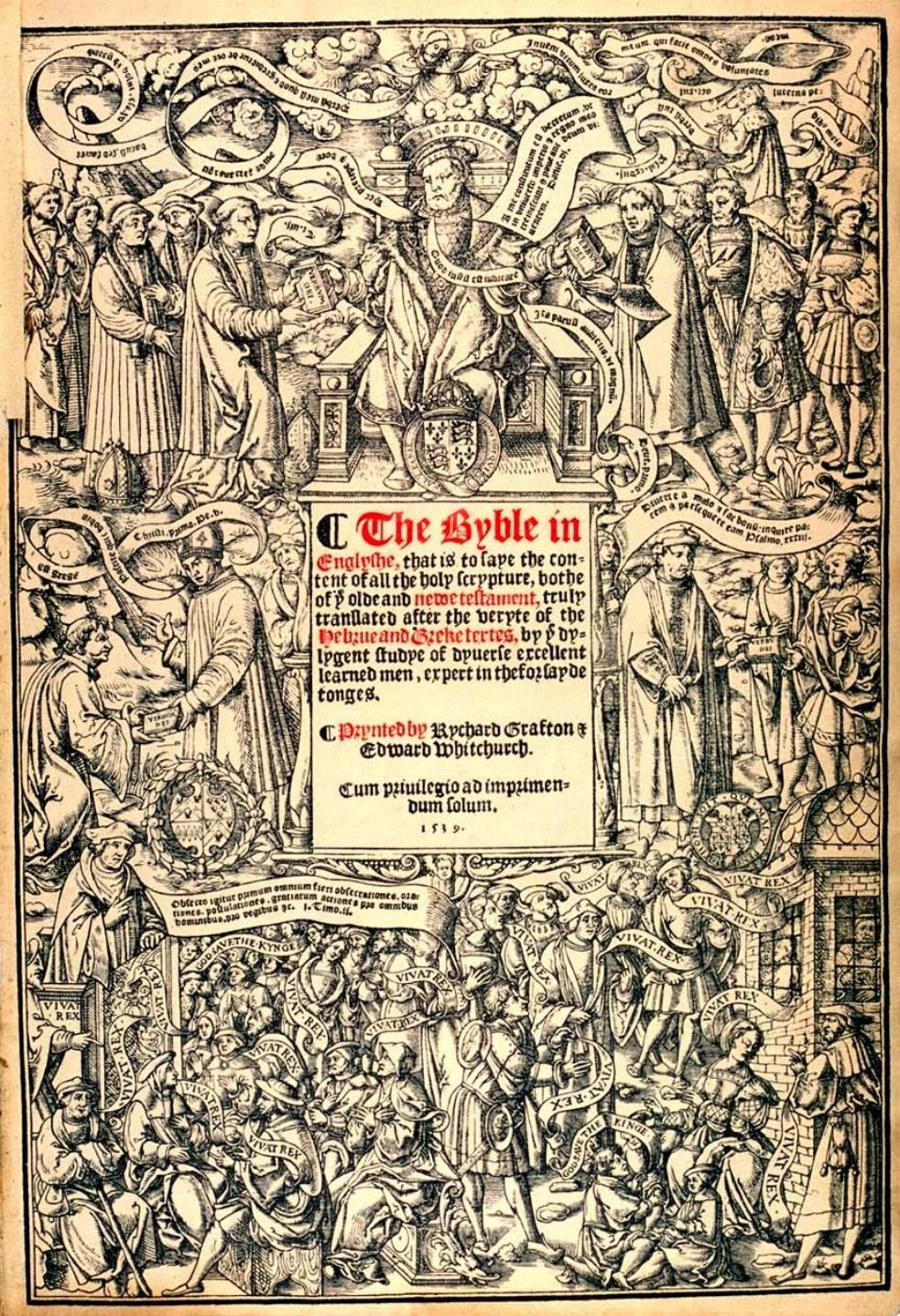
- Did not know Greek or Hebrew
- Translated out of German and Latin
- But he did finish the OT from these versions, producing the first full English Bible in 1535
- Main producer of the Great Bible of 1539





*Miles Coverdale  
Engraving from portrait  
Letters of the Martyrs, 1837*





**Cover of Coverdale's Great Bible, 1539**  
**The first “authorized” Bible in English, including a preface written by Thomas Cranmer**

# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## The Geneva Bible

- Produced NT in 1557; whole Bible in 1560
- Translated by a committee
- Used the Hebrew text missing from the Great Bible
- “Breeches” bible used by Shakespeare





# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## The King James Bible

- James didn't like the textual "notes"
- While using the Greek and Hebrew, the scholars were advised to use an updated version of the Great Bible for their basis
- More literal than previous versions
- Provided textual notes for reasonable alternate renderings



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

## The King James Bible

- Its quality is seen best in its longevity – basically the only English Bible for 270 years!
- But not based on the best manuscripts
- Didn't use concordance
- Paragraph problems
- Language necessarily becomes archaic



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

1881 – Revisions to the KJV

- The Revised Version (U.K.); American Standard Version (U.S.)
- Updated some of the language, only where absolutely necessary
- Better use of paragraph form
- Texts set out to better represent genre



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The History of Translation

Since the floodgates opened: Important Versions

- The Jerusalem Bible; 1966
- NASB; 1970
- Good News Bible; 1976
- NIV; 1978
- ESV; 2001
- HCSB; 2004



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The Promise of Translation

Problems with translation and meaning in general:

1. Postmodern skepticism and doubt over whether meaning is even translatable
2. Emphasis of inerrancy in the original languages



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The Promise of Translation

Problems with translation and meaning in general:

“We affirm that inspiration, strictly speaking, applies only to the autographic text of Scripture, which in the providence of God can be ascertained from available manuscripts with great accuracy. We further affirm that copies and translations of Scripture are the Word of God to the extent that they faithfully represent the original.”

Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, Article X



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The Promise of Translation

Karen Jobes – Translations Controlling Beliefs:

1. Language exists apart from the human mind (Gen 1)
2. Human language was created for a purpose (Gen 2)
3. The fall has affected both human nature and language (Gen 3)
4. God created the diversity of human languages (Gen 11)



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The Promise of Translation

Karen Jobes – Translations Controlling Beliefs:

5. Therefore, human limitations are no barrier for God's purposes or communication (Gen 11)
6. Meaning (communication) is transferrable between languages (Acts 2)
7. No language is ill-suited to communicate God's word (Acts 2)
8. Bible translation is essential in God's plan (Rev 14)



# THE TRANSMISSION OF GOD'S WORD

- The Promise of Translation

