

The Bible and Translation

URL for handouts, readings, and extra resources: <http://jlharmon.com/seekers-class>

Nov 1 - Week 1: Why and How? (Why read the Bible? How does translation work?)

Nov 8 - Week 2: Which? (Which translation should I read? Hint: It depends.)

Nov 15 - Week 3: But what about... (Did Paul really write those words? Do I need to learn Greek? What's the Septuagint? ...etc.)

If we want to engage with the original texts, there are some things we need to consider: Who wrote them? What did they write? How do we know what it means?

How do we know what words mean?

- Ask a speaker...but we can't do that with Biblical Hebrew or Koine Greek
- Root words? Can give us some idea of the range of meanings a word can have
- Etymology? Where words come from...what words *used to* mean
- Cognate languages? Pretty much like etymology: where words come from, but not what they mean now (or even meant then)
- **Context: find examples and information about the word based on how it is used.**
- Poetry: Biblical poetry often makes use of synonyms or related words that give us some idea of a word's meaning.

Who actually wrote the stuff?

- By looking at redundancies, contradictions, and changes in vocabulary or style, we can try to figure out if the passage was written by the person whose name is at the top of the page.
- *Documentary hypothesis* – The Pentateuch is a compilation of different sources (cf. Creation in Gen 1 vs 2)
- *Q source*: Matthew and Luke copied from Mark, and also from a lost source, now called Q
- Paul didn't write all of the letters attributed to him. 1/2 Timothy and Titus are widely considered pseudepigraphical.

What's up with manuscripts?

- Changes, corruptions, additions, erasures all happen over the centuries.
- *Textual criticism* attempts to find the errors and see what the original text was.
- In general though, **the meaning of the text is not significantly changed by these errors.**
- *Masoretic text* – the authoritative version of the Hebrew scriptures
- *Dead Sea Scrolls* – Hebrew scrolls with Biblical and non-Biblical texts, written from 408BC to 318AD
- *Septuagint* – translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Koine Greek, quoted by NT authors, copies found in the Dead Sea Scrolls

- *Received text* – Greek New Testament version, has the same status as the Masoretic text as the most “authoritative”
- *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece* – Greek NT with annotations indicating conflicts in different manuscripts: “critical apparatus”. NA28 is the text used by most scholars today.
- Some major differences between manuscripts:
 - o The longer ending of Mark – Mark 16 originally ended at verse 8
 - o The “*Pericope Adulterae*” - John 7:53-8:11, the story of the adulterous woman about to be stoned, was added to John later.
 - o 1 John 5:7-8 – a short passage that has been influential in the development of the doctrine of the Trinity. Was probably added when the NT was translated into Latin. Most modern Bibles don’t include it, but the KJV does.

How to Greek/Hebrew

- Interlinear Bible – Bible Gateway has a good one for the New Testament
- Concordance – Strong’s is based on the KJV, the NIV, NRSV also have concordances
- Expository Dictionary – gives complete definitions for original language words in English
- *21st century: we have so many more resources available for studying than at any other point in history.*

Next up for Seeker’s Class:

Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time: The Historical Jesus and the Heart of Contemporary Faith - Marcus J. Borg

Date	Chapter	Leaders
November 22	Chapter 1, “Meeting Jesus Again”	Susan and Jessica
November 29	<i>No Seeker’s Class</i>	
December 6	Chapter 2, “What Manner of Man? The Pre-Easter Jesus”	Jason
December 13	Chapter 3, “Jesus, Compassion, and Politics”	Susan and Jessica
December 20	Chapter 4, “Jesus and Wisdom: Teacher of Alternative Wisdom”	Bonnie and Beth
December 27	<i>No Seeker’s Class</i>	
January 3	Chapter 5, “Jesus, the Wisdom of God: Sophia Become Flesh”	Jason
January 10	Chapter 6, “Images of Jesus and Images of the Christian Life”	Jason

See the schedule at fccla.org/seekers-class