

LESSON 12

Bible - Translation and Printing

- Objective** : To obtain basic knowledge on manuscripts, the initial translations to different languages and beginning of printing of bible thereafter to be firmly rooted in faith.
- Bible Portion** : Psalms 119: 129-144
- Memory Verse** : 1 Peter 1:23-25

Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever. Because "All flesh as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flowers fall away, but the word of the LORD endures forever". Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

INTRODUCTION

Would we be this privileged to understand the great things in bible, if bible had remained in its original language manuscript? We are indebted to servants of God who had copied and translated bible to different languages in spite of numerous hurdles and troubles. Many of them were martyred. Overpowering time and enmity, bible has become the most popular book. These historical facts would help us to be firm in faith and provide spiritual inspiration.

INITIAL TRANSLATIONS

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew language. Between B.C. 250 and 150. it was translated from Hebrew to Greek language. It is commonly believed that, the initial translation was pioneered under Ptolomy kings of Egypt where 70 Jewish scholars were send to Alexandria for the translation. It took more than 100 years to complete the translation. This translation was called as the Septuagint translation. During the life time of Jesus Christ, Old Testament was present in Hebrew and Greek language. They were in leather scrolls. Christ used Hebrew scrolls during his public ministry. Most of the books in Old Testament were written. Sooner they were translated to Greek language. Thus both Old Testament and New Testament were available to Greek people in their own language in the first century itself. During those times, Greek language was much popular in the world.

As Christian churches spread to different language people, they themselves started the translations. It is estimated that Latin, Syrian translations were formed during A.D. 150 itself. Without much delay. New Testament was translated to Coptic, Armanian, Gothic, Thiopian, Arabic, Persian and Slavanic languages. By 4th century, many Latin translations were formed. During that time church leader of Rome deputed Jerome, a scholar to translate bible to new Latin language. He completed his translation within 25 years in A.D. 410 by researching on Hebrew and Greek books. The translation by Jerome is called as the Latin Vulgate, which was used in Europe for around 1000 years till the revival.

MANUSCRIPTS

Hand written manuscripts were used till printing came into existence in 15th century. The people referred to as Scribes copied the word of God then. Likewise many manuscripts of around 4000 are found. Towards 2nd century, the written ones were included in this. Bible was written in scrolls made of skin knit together. Also, papyrus sheets made like paper from skin of njagana was used. They were made in 9 inch to 11 inch in length and 5 inch in breadth, on which word of God was written on the glossy side of each sheets and stacked to form a book. Papyrus sheets of 50 adi length and 10 inch breadth were also used. These manuscripts were called as Codex. As these manuscripts take longer time to make, availability of them was scarce. Below given are the oldest, complete and popular scripts got to us.

1. Sinai Codex- these were found from an ashramam in Mount Sinai and was kept in Russia till 1933. In 1933, it was bought with 1 lakh pawan and has been kept in British museum.
2. Alexandrian Codex- this old manuscript written during the 4th century is placed in British museum since 1627.
3. Vatican Codex- this scroll written during the 4th century is kept it Vatican library in Rome since 1481.

PRINTING OF BIBLE

Printing was found in china in the 14th century. But john Guten Berg started printing in Europe in 1454. The first book to be printed in his press was bible in its Latin language; hence forth various other European languages were also printed. Cacston in England pioneered the printing of bible in English language along with short stories from bible. Greek New Testament was printed in 1516 by Erasmus. With printing, bible was available to common man in lesser price. Thus a revival was spread out Europe. With the popularity of New Testament of Erasmus, Martin Luther, a German sanyasa soldier questioned the traditional faith of Roman Catholic Church which was against bible. He translated New- Testament into German language in 1522. He printed and published the whole bible in simple German language in spite of oppositions from Catholic Church. The translation of Luther formed the guideline for future translation.

BIBLE IN ENGLISH

Formerly, English Christians used the Latin Vulgate bible of Jerome. Only the main people of church knew bible while the common men didn't know anything of it. John Wycliffe born in 1320 in Yorkshire: later became a bible scholar and a reformer. He is known as the morning star of revival. Wycliffe started translating bible with firm decision to reach common man with English translation. In 1380. New Testament was completed followed by Old Testament after 2 years: unfortunately they weren't printed and published. He was miscommunicated by Roman church and his bones were burned in revenge after his death. But history reveals that the efforts of John Wycliffe didn't go futile. The fire he set for revival spread throughout the world.

QUESTIONS

1. Name them. First Latin translation, person who printed bible first, person who printed New Testament in Greek language, person who did German translation and published, person who translated entire bible in English.
 2. The full bible comprising of new and old testament was first available for which people?
 3. What is Latin Vulgate? Who prepared it? What are its specialities?
 4. What is Codex? Name 3 popular codex's?
 5. How printing did help the history of bible?
 6. What is the position of Martin Luther in the history of bible?
 7. Who is the morning star of reforms? How did he get that honour?
 8. Old Testament was written in which language? When was it translated to Greek language?
 9. What is Septuagint translation?
 10. Who were the people who copied the manuscripts?
 11. Within A.D. 150 in which all languages bible was translated?
 12. Where is Sinai Codex safeguarded now?
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