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Module 3: The Word
**Canonicity, Textual Criticism,
Translation, Preservation**

1. The Canon of Scripture: The Old Testament

As applied to Scripture, canon means “an officially accepted list of books.”



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. Was the book written by a true prophet of God?



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Deuteronomy 18:20-22

But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in my name that I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that same prophet shall die.

And if you say in your heart, ‘How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?’— when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word that the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. Was the book written by a true prophet of God?
2. Was the book confirmed by acts of God?



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2 Corinthians 12:11-12

For I was not at all inferior to these super-apostles, even though I am nothing. The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, with signs and wonders and mighty works.



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. Was the book written by a true prophet of God?
2. Was the book confirmed by acts of God?
3. Did its message tell the truth about God?



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. Was the book written by a true prophet of God?
2. Was the book confirmed by acts of God?
3. Did its message tell the truth about God?
4. Does it come with the power of God?



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1 Thessalonians 2:13

And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. Was the book written by a true prophet of God?
2. Was the book confirmed by acts of God?
3. Did its message tell the truth about God?
4. Does it come with the power of God?
5. Was it accepted by the people of God?



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John 7:17

If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority.



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John 10:3, 5

The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.



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Romans 12:2

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.



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1 Corinthians 2:12-15

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.

The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one.



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Old Testament Canon

Evidence clearly supports the theory that the Old Testament Hebrew canon was established well before the late 1st century A.D., though more likely as early as the 4th century B.C.



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2. The Canon of Scripture: The New Testament



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. The test of authority



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. The test of authority
2. The test of uniqueness



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The Canon's Guiding Principles

1. The test of authority
2. The test of uniqueness
3. The test of acceptance by the churches



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“It is likely that the codex (book form of the Scriptures) in which the Christian scriptures circulated helped to promote the establishment of the definitive, fixed canon of the 27 books we know as the New Testament.

When each book circulated as a separate entity, obviously there was no limit to the number of texts that could be received. When certain, approved texts were gathered into small collections, this had the effect of ostracizing and isolating texts which were not deemed suitable for inclusion.”

- J.K. Elliot



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From the beginning, the full authority of the apostles (and prophets) to deliver God's word was recognized by many.

(Acts 10:22; Eph. 2:20; 1 Thess. 2:13; Jude 17–18)



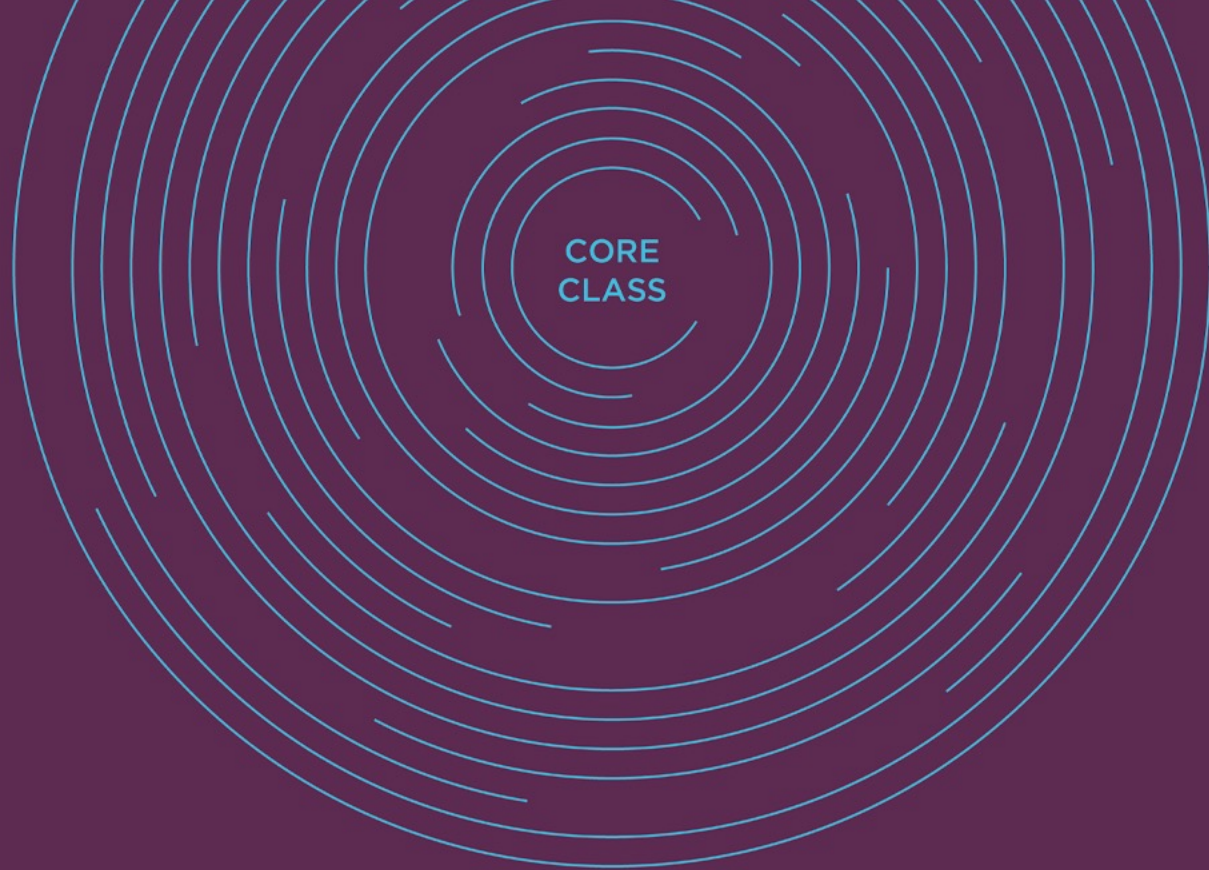
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3. The Apocrypha

- Literally means “those that have been hidden.
- Written: 3rd century B.C. - 1st century A.D.
- 14 books



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Module 3: The Word
Textual Criticism

Finding the Best Text



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Finding the Best Text

1. More than 80% of Greek texts available for our NT date from around the 9 century AD. These are known as the Majority Text.



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Finding the Best Text

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2. Codices: Sinaiticus, Alexanrinus, Vaticanus



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Finding the Best Text

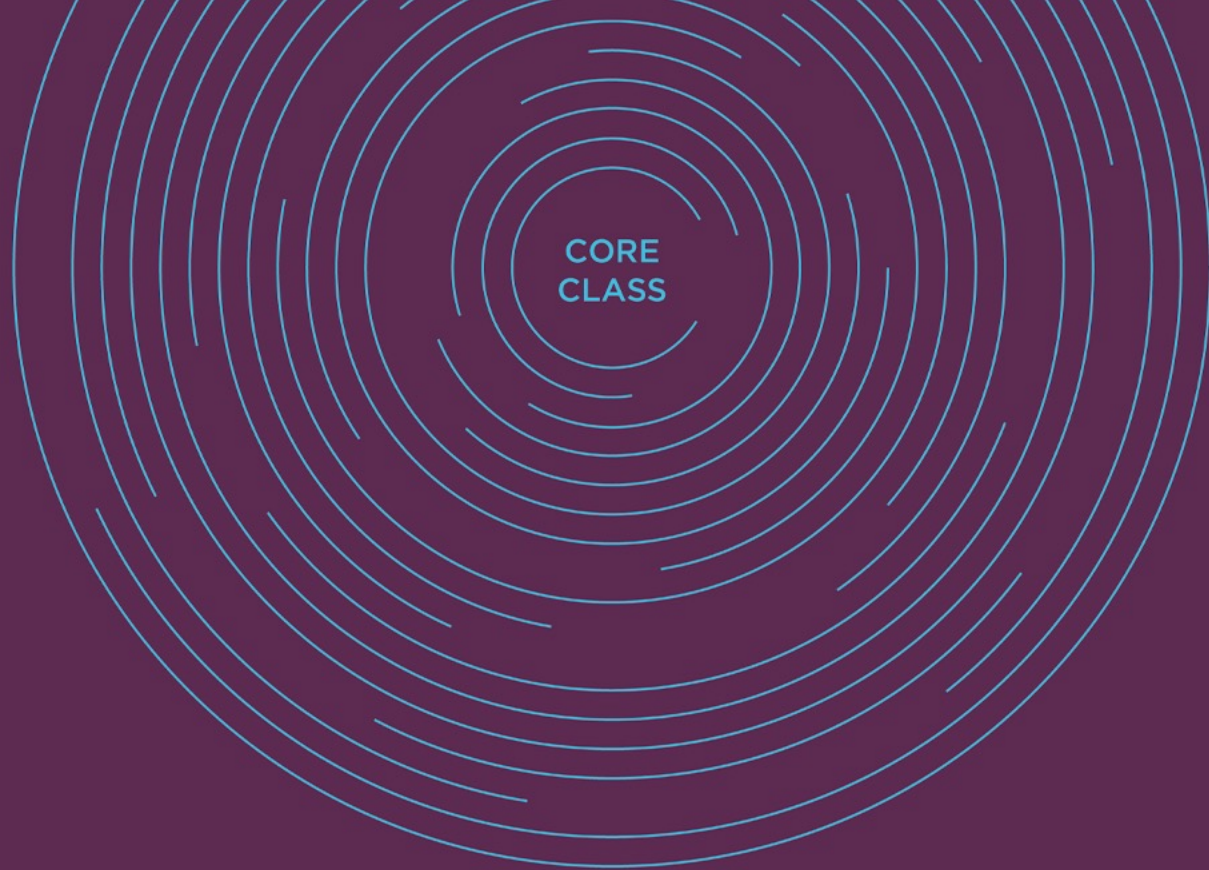
1. More than 80% of Greek texts available for our NT date from around the 9 century AD. These are known as the Majority Text.
2. Codices: Sinaiticus, Alexanrinus, Vaticanus
3. Most evangelical scholars today follow a middle course and compare all the available texts to produce an Eclectic Text.

“The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true word of God, handed down without essential loss from generation to generation throughout the centuries.”

- Sir Frederic Kenyon



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Module 3: The Word
Translation

2022 Wycliffe Global Alliance Statistics

- All of the Bible has been translated into 724 languages
- The New Testament has been translated into an additional 1,617 languages
- Smaller portions of the Bible have been translated into 1,248 other languages



Reasons for Different English Versions

1. Over time, the English language changes.



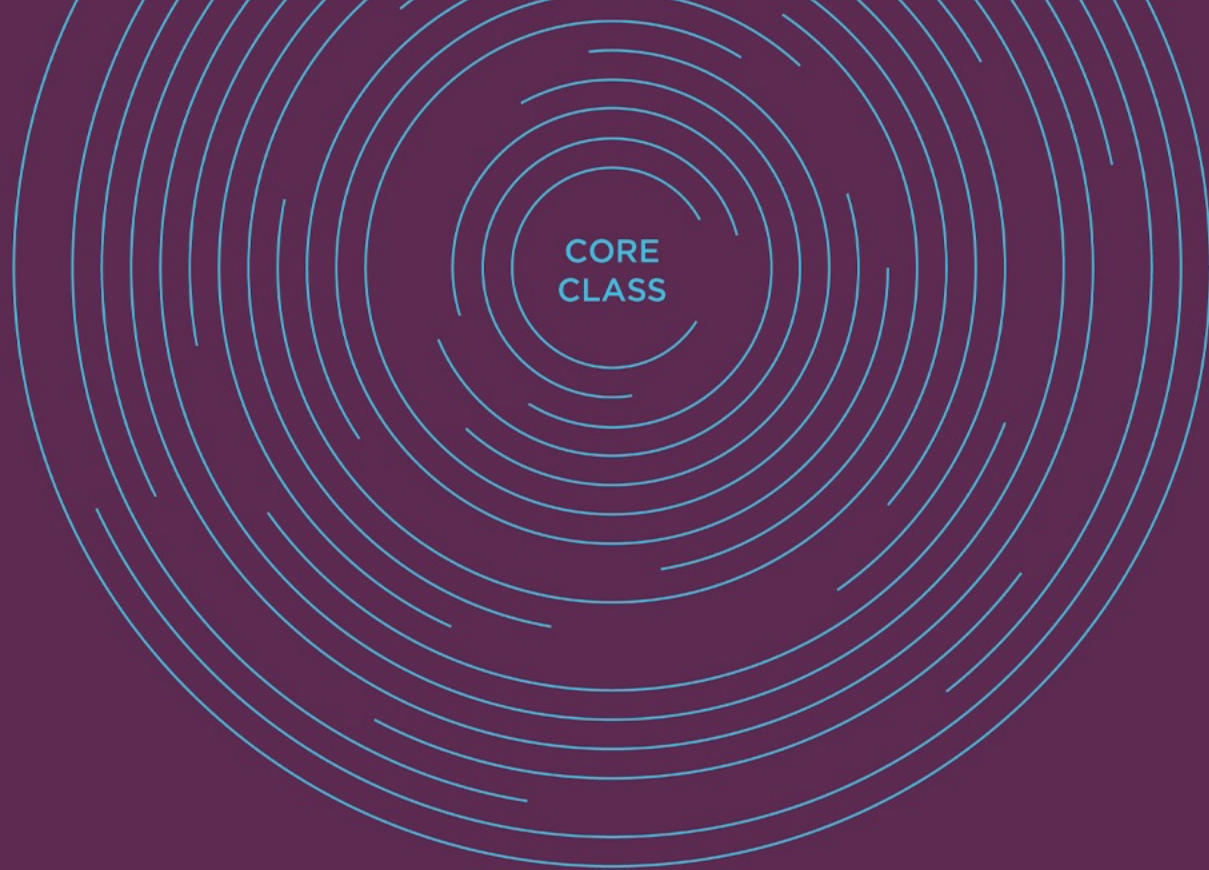
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Reasons for Different English Versions

1. Over time, the English language changes.
2. There are different translation methodologies for how to best render the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into English.



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Module 3: The Word
Preservation

Psalm 119:89

Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens.



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Isaiah 40:8

The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.



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Mark 13:31

Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.



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Deuteronomy 12:32

Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it.



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Proverbs 30:6

Do not add to his words, lest he rebuke you
and you be found a liar.



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Revelation 22:18-19

If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city.



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1 Peter 1:25

The word of the Lord remains
forever.



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Question of the Week:

What year was the first Bible printed on a press?



1455

The Gutenberg Bible was printed in Mainz in 1455 by Johann Gutenberg and his associates..

Only 48 copies are known to have survived.

