

Introduction: Portraits of Jesus

Oral teachings

Jesus probably did not produce any writings, for none are extant. His teachings were spoken orally in the Aramaic language. It is possible that he also spoke Greek.¹ The public ministry of Jesus appears to have extended about three years. Jesus grew up in Jewish surroundings in Galilee, which was under Roman rule. Twelve apostles were chosen by Jesus to spread his teachings. After his crucifixion his disciples understood clearly that he was the Christ, the promised Jewish Messiah. For a period of about twenty years the message of Jesus was taught orally to others. Early convert Saul (later named Paul), wrote to various churches and individuals. Paul's letters appear to be the first writings relating to what became Christianity.

Writings of the Gospels

The four gospels are not intended to give us the precise words of Jesus. All of the gospel writers tried to report to their audience the substance of the teachings of Jesus. F. F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, England, wrote, "All four of the Gospels are anonymous in the sense that none of them includes its author's name."² The late Raymond E. Brown, a Catholic scholar and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, considered the four evangelists as second-generation Christians who organized their remembrance of oral and written traditions about Jesus into a written gospel. Brown explained:

The recognition that the evangelists were not eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry is important for understanding the differences among the Gospels. In the older approach,

1 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "Did Jesus Speak Greek?," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 18 (Sept./Oct. 1992):58-63, 76-77.

2 F. F. Bruce, "Gospels," in *The New Bible Dictionary*, J. D. Douglas, organizing ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1978), 488.

wherein the evangelists themselves were thought to have seen what they reported, it was very difficult to explain differences among their Gospels. . . . Rather than depending on a personal memory of events, each evangelist has arranged the material he received in order to portray Jesus in a way that would meet the spiritual needs of the community to which he was addressing the Gospel.³

Early traditions associated apostolic authorship to the gospels: apostle Matthew, Mark (interpreter of apostle Peter), Luke (companion of the apostle Paul), and apostle John. Matthew, Mark, and Luke have material common to them and are known as the synoptic gospels. These three gospels contain similar material. Most New Testament scholars hold Mark as being first written and that it was used as a guide for the writing of Matthew and Luke. Acts of the Apostles is the companion book to the gospel of Luke.

It appears that the first writers preserved their accounts of the ministry of Jesus in the Greek language. As time passed various handwritten copies were made. What happened to the original autographs is not known. Copies of the text were made on papyrus and later compiled in uncial codices. The Greek text was written like capital letters. There was no space put between words or sentences for they were written continuously. Example: CANYOUREADTHIS. Codices are manuscripts that have separate pages sewn or bound together like modern books. Papyrus copies, most of which are fragmentary, have been preserved because of the dry climate where they remained for centuries. Some of these manuscripts date to the second century C.E. Of particular interest for students of the New Testament are two fourth-century manuscripts that contain the text of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These manuscripts are Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. These two manuscripts are called codices because they were written in book form as opposed to scrolls.

The gospel writers express their words in narrative form as events in the life and death of Jesus. Their good news reflected back to Hebrew prophets who made predictions of a Messiah. The

3 Raymond E. Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 109-110.

evangelists did not write as we do today. They were not concerned with historical accuracy. When looked at separately, each writer does not give exact dates to when events occurred in the life of Jesus. The writers compiled their story giving emphasis to aspects of the story of Jesus that compelled individuals to believe in him. We should not expect from the four accounts a gospel harmony since it is difficult to make one when the original authors had no intention to write a biographical record. Each gospel should be understood on its own terms as a portrait of Jesus based upon the purpose of the writer.

Many early Christians lived without hearing or reading the accounts in the gospels. They had expressed faith in the risen Christ. This has raised questions today, such as, “Were the gospels the product of the church or was the church the product of the gospels?” An individual gospel was written as a separate document and the four gospels were put together at a later time. Many early Christians would have heard readings from only one gospel.

The gospels were chosen over a period of time and eventually formed four of the twenty-seven “books” of the New Testament. When written the four gospels could be read completely in several hours. It was easy for early Christians to understand what they were hearing since they were taught in a language they understood.

From the original autograph a scribe would make a copy to preserve the text for use in one or more congregation. In time the original work was lost and there were some gaps between when the original was copied and the writings preserved in later manuscripts and papyri.

It appears that scribes in copying the manuscripts made mistakes in completing them. Sometimes the scribe would later catch his mistake and correct it. At other times a corrector, when examining the text, would see what was considered to be an error and make a correction. Some of these mistakes included visual mistakes, such as repeating the same word (dittography), or skipping a number of words with the same beginning to the next occurrence of the word without realizing it (homoioarcton), and making an intentional correction. This last error could be because a scribe or corrector was already familiar with a different version of the text. The reading also could be improved because of a

perceived theological problem, better grammar or style, or even harmonizing with one of the other gospels. All of these problems need to be taken into account when studying these early manuscripts. None of them is perfect in every way.

Early Versions

When the message of Jesus was preached to people who did not understand Greek, the writings of the New Testament were translated into their own language such as Latin, Syriac, and Coptic. In 383 Jerome (ca. 340-420) completed a translation of the gospels from Greek into Latin. He completed the Bible in 405. This Bible is known as the Vulgate and was highly regarded by the Roman Catholic Church. Over time the text became corrupted and various editions were produced to correct the errors. The Vulgate was used by missionaries as they preached in western Europe. Under the influence of John Wyclif (ca. 1328-1384) the gospels were translated into English in the fourteenth century. The current Latin Vulgate was used for the translation. The first printed book was the Latin Vulgate published on Johann Gutenberg's press about 1455. The Clementine Vulgate of 1598 became the official Latin text of the Bible for the Roman Catholic Church.

Codex Vaticanus (B)

Fourth century documents such as the Codex Vaticanus (also known as Codex B, 03, or Gr. 1209) is a Greek uncial manuscript. The codex was written in Greek script like our capital letters. The Codex Vaticanus (B) is dated at about 350. There are three columns to a page with 40-44 lines per column. The New Testament portion of the manuscript begins at folio 618. The faded letters have been retraced and there were corrections to the text. It is, at present, the earliest complete manuscript of the gospels.

Codex Vaticanus (B) is missing the last part of the New Testament from Hebrews 9:14 through Revelation. The Vatican Library in Rome is the repository of this important codex. It has been at the Vatican since at least 1475 when an inventory was made of the holdings of the library. Codex Vaticanus (B) contains the complete text of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The codex

was retraced by a later hand over the original written text. The corrector traced over most of the words but not all. The manuscript contains marginal and interlinear additions. The manuscript is not error free. Ira Price, Professor of Semitic Languages and Literature at the University of Chicago, wrote about Codex B:

Abbate Mico collated it [made a list of variant readings] for Richard Bentley in 1720 (published in 1799) and Andrew Birch, of Copenhagen, again collated it in 1781 (published in 1788, 1798, 1801). Napoleon took this treasure to Paris, where [Leonhard] Hug carefully examined it in 1809 and was the first to make known its great value and supreme importance (1810).”⁴

In making available these variant readings scholars became acquainted with readings of B. The complete Greek text of B was published at a later date. Adam Clarke (1763-1832), for example, refers to readings in Codex B in his Bible commentary.

Codex Sinaiticus (Ⲁ)

Codex Sinaiticus (known as Codex Ⲁ [first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, aleph] or 01) is a Greek manuscript written in uncial characters. The dating is about 375. There are four columns with usually 48 lines to a column. There were correctors to the text over a period of time. The text closely resembles that of Codex Vaticanus (B). It is located in the British Museum in London. The New Testament segment was obtained by Constantin von Tischendorf on his third trip to the Monastery of Saint Catherine, on the traditional site of Mount Sinai, in February 1859. It is not known when the codex had been deposited there. The monastery was founded in the sixth century. It appears that Tischendorf may not have been the first outside individual to see the manuscript. For example, a Russian scholar, Porphyrius Uspensky, saw most of the manuscript in 1845 and 1850 but nothing came of his discovery. The underlining text of B and Ⲁ (aleph) as first copied is a good

4 Ira Maurice Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, 3rd rev. ed. by William A. Irwin and Allen P. Wikgren (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 57.

indication of how the gospel texts were closely copied by the fourth century.

Codex \aleph contains the New Testament, and included the Epistle of Barnabas, and a large section of the Shepherd of Hermas, two early Christian writings. The manuscript was copied at Cairo and later presented to Tsar Alexander II of Russia in November 1859. In 1933 it was sold by the Russian government to the British Museum.

Variants in Texts

It should be pointed out that between these two fourth-century uncials there are over 2,500 words in the gospels that differ in ways besides spelling. The text behind Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (\aleph) was not uniform. Scribes were more likely to add wording to the manuscripts rather than delete passages that were from other manuscripts, no matter how questionable they were.

Printed Greek Texts

Desiderius Erasmus in 1516 published the first edition of the Greek New Testament. He used six Greek manuscripts dating from the 10th and 12th century for the gospels. The published text contained many typographical errors. His second edition was used by Martin Luther for his German translation in 1522 and by William Tyndale for his translation into English published in 1526. The third edition by Erasmus became what is called the Textus Receptus (or Received Text). Robert Estienne (called Stephanus) printed his own Greek texts from 1546-1551. The fourth edition (1551) of a Greek-Latin New Testament included verse numbers like those used today.

The Received Text contains variations of meaning when compared to manuscripts and papyri going back to an earlier textual tradition. It is generally acknowledged that the inclusion of the two longer texts of Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11 in the Received Text are additions to each of these gospels.

English Publications

Many Bibles, in the common language of the people, were published before 1611. These were preparatory to the work done on the King James Version (KJV). Most histories of the Bible contain more information on these editions and the reader is referred to them for further study on the background of the English Bible.

A young scholar named William Tyndale (ca. 1494-1536) printed the first English translation of the New Testament in 1526. Tyndale's work influenced other English versions including that of Miles Coverdale (1535), "Thomas Matthew" (i.e. John Rogers) of 1537, Richard Taverner (1539), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), and the Bishops' Bible (1568). The Geneva Bible used by the Puritans was the first Bible in English to include numbered verses.

King James Version

In the sixteenth century what became italics were introduced into the English Bibles. They were printed in a different type style than the regular text. Most often a word would be printed in italics to indicate to the reader that the appropriate word or words were not found in the original language. Subsequent editions of the KJV have included additional italics but there was no standard form for the italicized words. Dewey M. Beegle, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament, Wesley Theological Seminary and a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Bible Society, figures that "from 75 per cent to 90 per cent of the italics in the King James Version are worthless."⁵

King James I of England commissioned a Bible translation at the Hampton Court Conference in January 1604. The committee of revisors was to make a revision of the Bishops' Bible as outlined in their rules of procedure. Based upon one of forty Bibles used in the revision, two recent authors reported:

5 Dewey M. Beegle, *God's Word into English* (New York: Harpers & Brothers, 1960), 115.

The translators, for example, in revising the text of the synoptic Gospels in the Bishops' Bible, owe about one-fourth of their revisions, each, to the Geneva and Rheims New Testaments. Another fourth of their work can be traced to the work of Tyndale and Coverdale. And the final fourth of their revision is original to the translators themselves.⁶

The title page of the first edition of the 1611 King James Bible read:

THE HOLY BIBLE, Conteyning the Old Testament, AND
THE NEW: Newly Translated out of the Originall tongues:
& with the former Translations diligently compared and
reused. by his Maiesties speciall Comandement. Appointed
to be read in Churches. Imprinted at London by Robert
Barker. Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie.
ANNO DOM. 1611.

There were two presses used which produced separate Bibles, each with the date 1611. Though there are variants in the printings the best known is the reading in Ruth 3:15 where evidently the earlier printing read "he went into the city" and the other printing had "she went into the city." Because of this passage the two printings of 1611 are known as the "he"-Bible and the "she"-Bible. One variant, probably a typographical error, is "strain at a gnat" (for "strain out a gnat") in Matthew 23:24 is still in current use. Problems in the spelling of proper names appear one way in the Old Testament and another way in the New Testament such as Elijah = Elias, Isaiah = Esaias, and Jeremiah = Jeremy or Jeremias.

Since 1611, editions of the KJV have corrected most of the printing errors, added more italics to the text, and modernized the spelling. Spellings in the seventeenth century frequently differed from modern spellings. In the 1613 edition there were 300 variants from the first two 1611 printings. What is called the "Wicked

6 Ward S. Allen and Edward C. Jacobs, *The Coming of the King James Gospels: A Collation of the Translators' Work-in-Progress* (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University of Arkansas Press, 1995), 29.

Bible” appeared in 1631. It rendered the seventh commandment of Exodus 20:14 as: “Thou shalt commit adultery” leaving out the word “not.”

Revisions to the KJV were printed in the revised editions of 1629, 1638, 1653, and 1701. The edition printed in 1762 is known as the Cambridge Standard Edition. The more modern updated corrected edition by Benjamin Blayney, is basically the current text of the KJV, and is known as the Oxford Standard Edition (printed in 1769).

Bible in America

The first English New Testament was published in 1777 by Robert Aitken, a printer and bookseller, in Philadelphia. The Bible (without the Apocrypha) was first printed also by Aitken in 1782. The first American edition of George Campbell’s *The Four Gospels, translated from the Greek* was published in 1796. This was included in an edition of the *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ*. Edgar J. Goodspeed, a biblical scholar and contributor to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, wrote:

In 1788 Principal George Campbell, of Aberdeen, published an original translation of the gospels, which had an interesting history. It was combined in 1818 with a translation of the epistles published in 1795 by James MacKnight, and a translation of the remaining parts of the New Testament made by Philip Doddridge. Afterward, in 1826, this work was re-edited, in Buffalo, Virginia, by Alexander Campbell, the founder of the Church of the Disciples of Christ, and was widely used by him in his ministry.⁷

Missionary and tract societies were formed such as the American Bible Society which was established in 1816. Also Bible commentaries were published including those written by Thomas

7 Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Making of the English New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), 73.

Scott and Adam Clarke. The firm of H. & E. Phinney of Cooperstown, New York, published *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments: together with the Apocrypha . . . with Canne's Marginal Notes and References* in 1825. The 1828 printing was used by Joseph Smith, Jr. for his Bible revision (purchased in October 1829). Smith's work was published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints posthumously in 1867.

Some Early Papyri Fragments (ca. 125-275)

At the end of the nineteenth century, about a dozen papyri were found containing parts of the New Testament. Most of these papyri were published shortly after their discovery. But in the twentieth-century many additional papyri were discovered containing portions of the New Testament text. Of these were some papyri dated prior to the fourth century. The following is a list of those early papyri fragments that were written in the second and third centuries that include texts of the four gospels:

Matthew

1:1-9, 12, 14-20	P1 (Papyri Oxyrhynchus 2)	ca. 250
2:13-16; 2:22-3:1; 11:26-27; 12:4-5; 24:3-6, 12-15	P70 (P. Oxy. 2384)	ca. 275
3:9, 15; 5:20-22, 25-28; 26:7-8, 10, 14-15, 22-23; 26:31-33	P64 + P67	ca. 200
13:55-57; 14:3-5	P103 (P. Oxy. 4403)	ca. 175
20:24 -32; 21:13-19; 25:41-26:39	P45 (P. Chester Beatty I)	ca. 250
21:34-37, 43, 45(?)	P104 (P. Oxy. 4404)	ca. 150

Matthew

23:30-39 P77 (P. Oxy 2683, 4405) ca. 175

26:29-40 P53 ca. 260

Mark

4:36-5:2, 16-26;
5:38-6:3, 15-25, 36-50;
7:3-15; 7:25-8:1, 10-26;
8:34-9:9, 18-31;
11:27-12:1, 5-8, 13-19,
12:24-28 P45 (P. Chester Beatty I) ca. 250

Luke

1:58-59; 1:62-2:1, 6-7;
3:8-4:2, 29-32, 34-35;
5:3-8; 5:30-6:16 P4 ca. 200

3:18-22; 3:33-4:2;
4:34-5:10; 5:37-6:4;
6:10-7:32, 35-39, 41-43;
7:46-9:2; 9:4-17:15;
17:19-18:18; 22:4-24:53 P75 (P. Bodmer XIV, XV) ca. 225

6:31-41, 45-49; 7:1-7;
9:26-41; 9:45-10:1
10:6-22; 10:26-11:1
11:6-25, 28-46;
11:50-12:13, 18-37;
12:42-13:1, 6-24;
13:29-14:10, 17-33 P45 (P. Chester Beatty I) ca. 250

22:41, 45-48, 58-61 P69 (P. Oxy. 2383) ca. 250

John

1:1-11:45, 48-57; 12:3-13:1, 8-9; 14:8-29; 15:7-8	P75 (P. Bodmer XIV, XV)	ca. 225
1:1-6:11; 6:35-14:26, 29-30; 15:2-26; 16:2-4, 6-7; 16:10-20:20, 22-23; 20:25-21:9	P66 (P. Bodmer II)	ca. 200
1:23-31, 33-40; 16:14-30; 20:11-17; 20:19-20, 22-25	P5 (P. Oxy. 208, 1781)	ca. 225
4:51, 54; 5:21, 24; 10:7-25; 10:30-11:10; 11:18-36, 42-57	P45 (P. Chester Beatty I)	ca. 250
5:26-29, 36-38	P95	ca. 275
6:8-12, 17-22	P28 (P. Oxy. 1596)	ca. 275
8:14-22	P39 (P. Oxy. 1780)	ca. 275
15:25-16:2, 21-32	P22 (P. Oxy. 1228)	ca. 250
18:31-33, 37-38	P52	ca. 125
18:36-19:7	P90 (P. Oxy. 3523)	ca. 175

Recent editions of the New Testament

The above papyri have helped scholars of the New Testament make the Greek text more accurate. In more recent times important English editions of the Bible include the *New Jerusalem Bible* (1985), the *New Revised Standard Version* (1989), and the *Revised English Bible* (1989). While no one has in their possession the lost original gospels, the work by New Testament scholars continues to present the best possible Greek text — one

that most closely represents those early writings. Since languages change over time, newer revisions or complete translations are made of the Bible. Because of this, I would suggest the use of modern translations when studying the text of the gospels and/or a Greek text.

Recommended Readings

Aland, Kurt, and Barbara Aland. Translated by Erroll F. Rhodes. *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans and Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1987.

Allen, Ward, translated and edited. *Translating for King James: Notes made by a translator of King James's Bible*. Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1993.

Brown, Raymond E. *An Introduction to the New Testament*. New York: Doubleday, 1997.

Comfort, Philip W. *Early Manuscripts & Modern Translations of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1996.

Kerr, John Stevens. *Ancient Texts Alive Today: The Story of the English Bible*. Ed. by Charles Houser. New York: American Bible Society, 1999.

Ladd, George E. *The New Testament and Criticism*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1967.

Lawton, David. *Faith, Text and History: The Bible in English*. Charlottesville, Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1990.

Metzger, Bruce M. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*. Third, enlarged ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992.

Common Abbreviations

1830 BOM	=	Joseph Smith, <i>The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi</i> . By Joseph Smith, Junior, author and proprietor. Palmyra, NY: Printed by E. B. Grandin for the author, 1830, cited with page number and followed by versification of both LDS and RLDS churches
BC	=	A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ. Zion [Independence, Missouri]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833.
BOM	=	Book of Mormon
D&C	=	Doctrine and Covenants
JS Bible	=	The Holy Bible. Cooperstown, New York: H.&E. Phinney, 1828. Oliver Cowdery purchased this printing of the King James Version of the Bible for Joseph Smith and himself on October 8, 1829. It was purchased at Egbert B. Grandin's Bookstore in Palmyra, New York. Contains the Apocrypha. Used for Bible revision.
JS Revelations	=	H. Michael Marquardt, <i>The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary</i> . Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1999.

JST	=	The Holy Scriptures. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], 1991. Also known as Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.
KJV	=	King James Version of the Bible
LDS	=	Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.
LDS archives	=	Archives, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.
LDS D&C	=	The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981.
Moses	=	Selections from the Book of Moses in The Pearl of Great Price. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981.
NT	=	New Testament
OT	=	Old Testament
PGP	=	Pearl of Great Price
RLDS	=	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (known as the Community of Christ), headquartered in Independence, Missouri.

RLDS archives	=	Community of Christ Library-Archives (formerly the Library-Archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints).
RLDS D&C	=	Book of Doctrine and Covenants. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [Community of Christ], 1990)

Chronology:
Joseph Smith's Bible Revision, 1830-1835

1830

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO CO., NEW YORK

April 6 The Church of Christ is organized; six revelations are received (JS Revelations, 57-61; LDS D&C 21, 23; RLDS D&C 19, 21). Oliver Cowdery is ordained an elder. Joseph Smith, Jr. is ordained an elder, also prophet and seer by Cowdery.

FAYETTE, SENECA CO., NEW YORK

June 9 The first church conference is held; Articles and Covenants are presented (JS Revelations, 62-66; LDS D&C 20; RLDS D&C 17).

June Revelation of Moses to Joseph Smith
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 1-3;
Joseph Smith dictating
Text: Moses 1; RLDS D&C 22
Scribe: Oliver Cowdery
Note: "A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator June 1830" (1).

ca. June Revision of Genesis started
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 3-10
Text: Genesis 1:1-4:18 (KJV); Moses 2:1-5:43; Gen. 1:1-5:28 (JST)
Scribe: Oliver Cowdery
Notes: "A Revelation given to the Elders of the Church of Christ On the first Book of Moses given to Joseph the Seer Chapter first" (3); "Chapter 2 A Revelation concerning Adam after he had been driven

out of the garden of Eden” (8).

- September [5-26] Revelation mentions OT Adam (JS Revelations, 80-83; LDS D&C 29; RLDS D&C 28).
- September 26 The second church conference commences; total membership is sixty-two.
- ca. October 17 Oliver Cowdery and missionaries leave for mission to Native Americans
- October 21 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 10
Text: Gen. 4:18-24 (KJV); Moses 5:43-51; Gen. 5:29-37 (JST)
Scribe: John Whitmer
Note: “October 21st 1830” (10).
- November 30 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 10-11
Text: Gen. 4:25-5:11 (KJV); Moses 5:52-6:18; Gen. 5:38-6:16 (JST)
Scribe: John Whitmer
Note: “November 30th 1830” (10).
- December 1 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 11-13
Text: Gen. 5:12-21 (KJV); Moses 6:19-52; Gen. 6:17-53 (JST)
Scribe: Emma Smith (wife of Joseph Smith)
Note: “Dec 1st” (11).
- ca. December [2-11] Addition not in Gen. (KJV)
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 14-15
Text: Moses 6:52-7:1; Gen. 6:53-7:1 (JST)
Scribe: John Whitmer
- December [7-11] Revelation instructing Sidney Rigdon to write for Joseph Smith — “And the scriptures shall be given even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine

own elect” (JS Revelations, 96; LDS D&C 35:20; RLDS D&C 34:5).

ca. December 11-30 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 15-20
Gen. 5:22-32 (KJV); Moses 7:2-8:12; Gen.
7:2-85 (JST)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

1831

KIRTLAND, GEAUGA CO., OHIO

February 9 Laws of the church given (JS Revelations,
107-110; LDS and RLDS D&C 42).

ca. February 9 -
March [6-7] Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 20-49
Text: Gen. 6:1-19:29 (KJV); Moses 8:13-30;
Gen. 8:1-19:35 (JST)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

[March [6-7] Prophecy mentions that Joseph Smith may
now translate the New Testament (JS Reve-
lations, 123; LDS D&C 45:61 and RLDS
D&C 45:11).

March 8 -
April 4 Revision of Matthew started
Manuscript: NT 1 (Dictated MS), 1-21;
Joseph Smith dictating
Text: Matt. 1:1-9:1 (KJV)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
Note: “March 8th 1831 A Translation of the
New Testament translated by the power of
God” (1).

March 8 Revelation for John Whitmer to keep a
regular history and assist in transcribing (JS
Revelations, 126; LDS and RLDS D&C 47).

- ca. March 8 - April 4 Revelation of Moses; Gen. 1:1-19:29 (KJV); Moses 1:1-8:30; RLDS D&C 22; Gen. 1:1-19:35 (JST) from OT 1 (1-49) copied by John Whitmer upon OT 2 (1-49).
- ca. April 4 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 49-61
Text: Gen. 19:29-24:41 (KJV); Gen. 19:35-24:42 (JST)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
Note: "April 5th 1831 transcribed thus far" (61).
- ca. April 5 Gen. 19:29-24:41 (KJV); Gen. 19:35-24:42 (JST) from OT 1 (49-61) copied by John Whitmer upon OT 2 (49-59).
- April 4-7 Matt. 1:1-9:1 (KJV) from NT 1 (1-21) copied by John Whitmer as NT 2, f. 1 (1-16).
Notes: "Kirtland Geauga Ohio April 4th 1831 A Translation of the New Testament by Joseph Smith Jr." (NT 2, f. 1, 1); NT 2 has four folios; f. 1 (1-49); with sequential page numbers in f. 2-4 (1-154).
- ca. April 7 - June 19 Manuscript: NT 1 (Dictated MS), 21-63
Text: Matt. 9:2-26:71 (KJV)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
Note: "Thus far Transcribed April 7th 1831" (21).
- ca. June-August Matt. 9:2-26:1 from NT 1 (21-59) copied as NT 2, f. 1 (16-49) by John Whitmer.
- ca. June 19 - August 27 Trip to Independence, Missouri.

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- ca. September 26 - October 11 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 2 (Dictated MS), 1-24
Text: Matt. 26:1-71 revised again; Matt. 26:71-28:20; Mark 1:1-9:1 (KJV)
Scribe: John Whitmer
Note: "September 26th 1831" (NT 2, f. 2, 1)
- ca. October 11 - February 16, 1832 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 2 (Dictated MS), 24 through f. 4 (Dictated MS), 114
Text: Mark 9:2-16:20; Luke 1:1-24:53; John 1:1-5:37 (KJV)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
Note: No date on manuscript. Text written out in full.

1832

- February 16 Vision of three degrees of glories received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon during revision of John 5:29 (JS Revelations, 186-90; LDS and RLDS D&C 76).
- ca. February 16 - March 20 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 4 (Dictated MS), 114-152
Text: John 5:37-21:25; Acts 1 through Rev. 11 (KJV)
Scribes: Sidney Rigdon and probably Jesse Gause
Note: No date on manuscript. The complete text written out discontinued on NT 2. Only changes recorded on manuscript pages. Markings in JS Bible correspond with revision of NT starting at John 6. This is known as the short method.
- ca. April 1 - June 20 Trip to Missouri
- ca. July 8 Sidney Rigdon's license taken away.

- July 20 Frederick G. Williams starts as scribe for Joseph Smith.
- ca. July 20-31 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 4 (Dictated MS), 152-54.
Text: Rev. 12-22 (KJV)
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
- July 31 Finished revision of New Testament.
- ca. July 31 - September 12 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 59-73
Text: About Gen. 24:41-50:26; Exodus-Deuteronomy (KJV)
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Notes: No date on manuscript. Markings in JS Bible correspond with revision of OT starting at Gen. 25.

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- September 22-23 Revelation concerning the city New Jerusalem and the two priesthoods, mentions priesthood of OT Moses and Aaron. (JS Revelations, 212-17; LDS D&C 84; RLDS D&C 83).
- ca. October 1 - November 6 Trip to Albany, New York City, and Boston.
- November 6 Joseph Smith III born.
- ca. November 7-27 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 73-81
Text: About Joshua through Nehemiah 10
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Note: No date on manuscript.
- ca. November 27 Account of Joseph Smith's early visionaries experiences recorded by Frederick G.

- Williams and Joseph Smith in Letterbook 1. Kirtland Revelations Book started.
- November 27 Letter to Independence, Missouri, copied into Joseph Smith Letterbook 1 refers to Ezra 2:61-62 (JS Revelations, 220; LDS D&C 85:12). Joseph Smith starts his first journal.
- ca. November 27 - December 5 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS) 81-83
Text: Nehemiah 11-13; Esther, all chapters correct; Job, Psalms 1-10
Written by Joseph Smith
- Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 83-86
Text: Psalms 11-15
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
- Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 86
Text: Psalms 16
Written by Joseph Smith
- December 1 Joseph Smith “wrote and corrected revelations” in Kirtland Revelations Book.
- ca. December 3 Kirtland Council Minute Book started.
- December 5 Joseph Smith copies “letters and translating.”
- ca. December 5-6 Review of Matt. 1-13 on NT 2. Additional revisions written as notes. The notes were pinned onto the appropriate manuscript page.
- December 6 Revelation as an explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matt. 13 (JS Revelations, 220-21; LDS D&C 86;

RLDS D&C 84).

ca. December 6-31,
1832-ca. Jan. 1833

Review of Matt. 14 through about John 21
on NT
Additional revisions on notes pinned to
manuscript pages. One pinned note written
by Joseph Smith.

December 27-28

Revelation for the first elders, mentions
another comforter recorded in testimony of
John (JS Revelations, 222; LDS D&C 88:3;
RLDS D&C 85:1).

1833

ca. January-
February 2

Review about Acts 1 through Revelation 22
on NT 2. Pinned notes written by Frederick
G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon.

February 2

Completed translation and review of New
Testament.

ca. February 2 -
May 6

Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 86-111
Text: About Psalm 17 to about Isaiah.
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Notes: "The Songs of Solomon are not
Inspired writings"

8 March

Commandment including instructions "when
you have finished translation of th[e] proph-
ets" to preside over the church and school
(JS Revelations, 234-35; LDS D&C 90:13;
RLDS D&C 87:5).

March 9

Revelation on Apocrypha, between OT &
NT in JS Bible, "mostly translated correct"

(JS Revelations, 236; LDS D&C 91; RLDS D&C 88).

- May 6 Revelation with instructions to hasten to translate scriptures (JS Revelations, 239; LDS D&C 93:53; RLDS D&C 90:12).
- ca. May 6 -
July 2 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 111-19
Text: About Jeremiah through Malachi
Scribes: Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon
Notes: "Finished on the 2d day of July 1833" (119). Lamentations, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephariah, Haggai, and Malachi considered correct.
- July 17 Review of revelation of Moses and revision of Gen. 1:1-11:17; classifying different subjects and review by church presidency on OT 2 (1-34). An index was prepared that included references to the scriptures on the order of the High Priesthood, the Priesthood after the order of Aaron, the Sabbath day, baptism, repentance, and covenants was made. The index pages are scattered in the Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Joseph Smith Journal 1835-36 and the 1839 draft of the Manuscript History.
- July 20 *The Evening and the Morning Star* printing press destroyed at Independence, Missouri
- October 5 -
November 4 Trip to Canada

1834

February 26 - March 28	Trip to New York to obtain volunteers for Zion's Camp.
May 5 - August 1	Trip with Zion's Camp to Missouri.
ca. October 16-30	Trip to Michigan

1835

February 14 - April 26	Twelve Apostles chosen and ordained.
April [28-30]	Instructions concerning two priesthoods in the church (JS Revelations, 267-73; LDS D&C 107; RLDS D&C 104).
June 15	Letter soliciting funds to print New Translation.