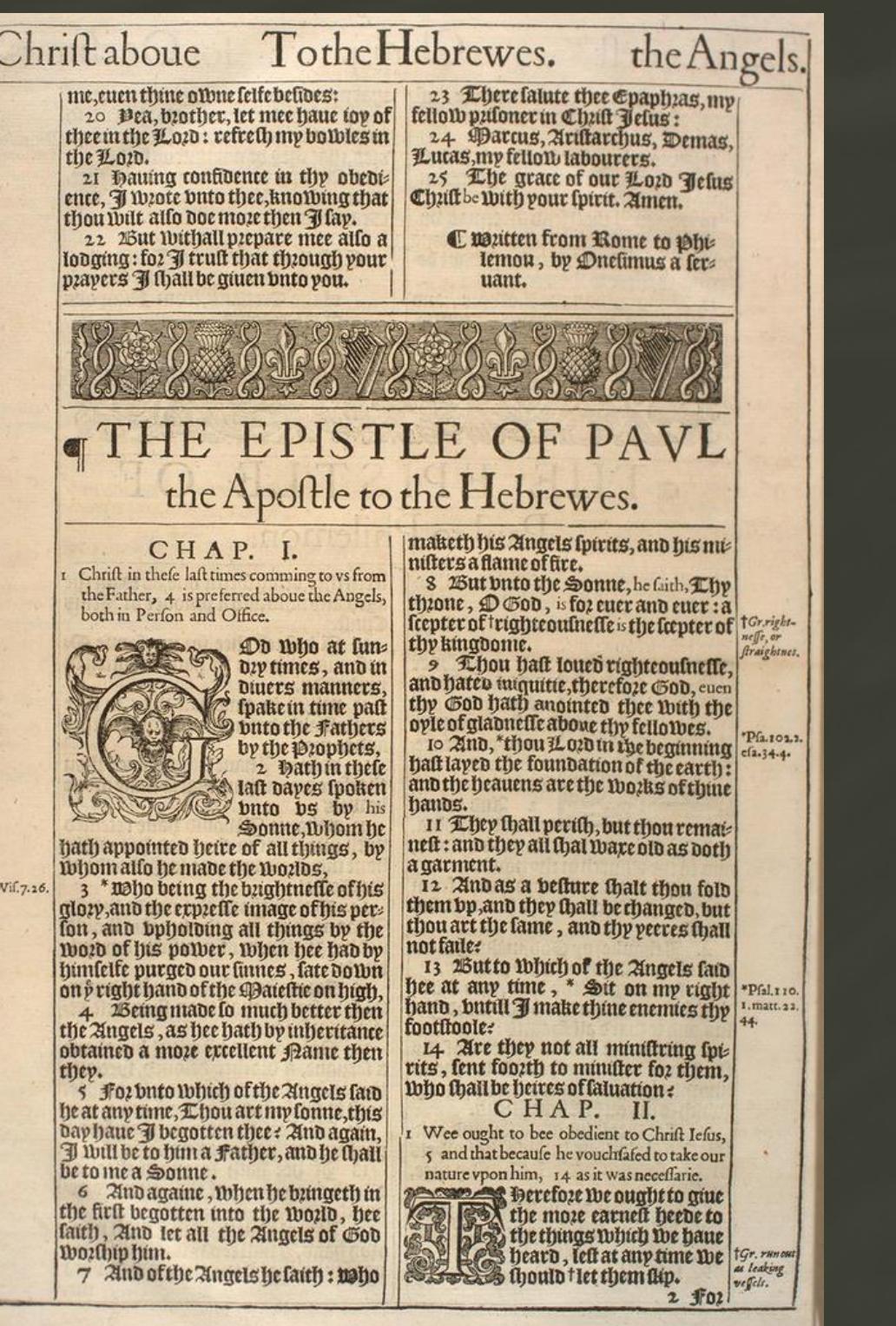


English Bible Translations Spectrum

There are now hundreds of English translations of the Holy Bible—each one having its own unique variation. It would be helpful for the reader to be educated on which translation is dedicated for a word-for-word, thought-for-thought, or paraphrase rendition of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts into the English language.

A PAGE FROM AN EARLY COPY OF THE KING JAMES VERSION



The English Bible Translation

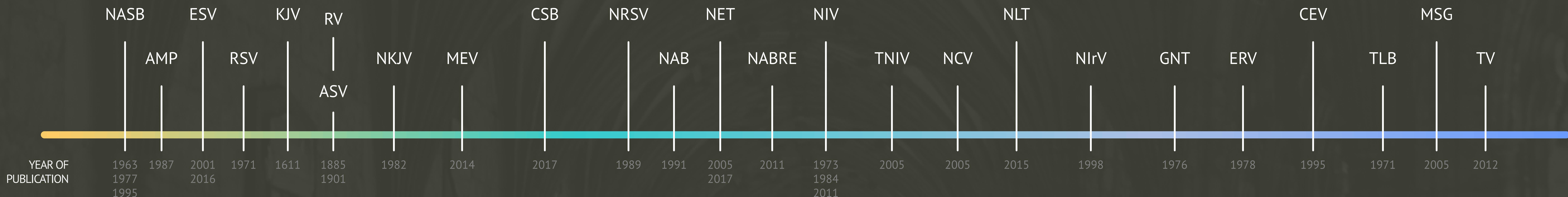
The King James Bible is considered the greatest piece of English literature ever produced. However, it was not the first English translation ever produced. Centuries before, Wycliffe translated the Latin Vulgate into English. In the time of the Reformation, the Bible was translated to different languages, such as Martin Luther's German Bible. William Tyndale dedicated his life (and his blood) to the translation of the Scriptures to the English language, which was followed by the work of his associates. In 1539, the Great Bible was published, followed by the Geneva Bible (1560), the Bishop's Bible (1568), and the King James Bible (1611). In 1885, the Revised Version (RV) was published as a revision of the KJV. This was followed by an American revision, the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901. The RSV and NASB have their roots on the ASV, while the ESV traces from the KJV-RV-ASV-RSV lineage.

The Ancient Languages

The ancient manuscripts were written in ancient languages. The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, and some in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Koine Greek. The Great Isaiah Scroll found in the Qumran Cave in 1946 was written in Hebrew from start to finish; it is the oldest complete copy of the book of Isaiah, probably made a hundred or so years before Christ.



A PORTION OF THE ISAIAH SCROLL



WORD-FOR-WORD

These translations seek to render or represent most, if not all, the words from the ancient manuscripts into the English language as accurate as possible, with the intent to match the Hebrew and Greek idioms and poetic expressions. For many modern readers, these translations can be quite challenging to comprehend.

THOUGHT-FOR-THOUGHT

These translations seek to render or represent the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts into their contextual meaning; however, some of these lose the idiomatic expressions of the ancient languages. These are translated with a special consideration for modern readers, often earning the sympathy of “easy to understand.”

PARAPHRASE

These are restatements of the Biblical text, usually without strict adherence to the idiomatic or poetic expressions of the ancient manuscripts. They are easy to read, but are prone to convey the personal ideas of the paraphraser.