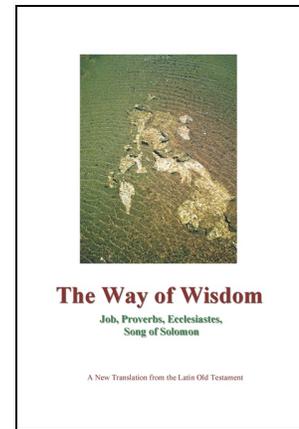


**John Cunyus**  
[www.JohnCunyus.com](http://www.JohnCunyus.com)  
[WisdomLit@JohnCunyus.com](mailto:WisdomLit@JohnCunyus.com)  
214-662-5494  
5634 Ledgestone Drive  
Dallas, Texas 75214-2026 USA

**Searchlight Press**  
[www.Searchlight-Press.com](http://www.Searchlight-Press.com)  
*Who Are You Looking For?*  
PO Box 482  
Glen Rose, Texas 76043-0482  
888-896-6081



**Learner's Guide**  
**The Way of Wisdom:**  
**Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon**  
ISBN 978-0-9644609-7-3; \$25.99

See [www.JohnCunyus.com/wayofwisdomlatin.html](http://www.JohnCunyus.com/wayofwisdomlatin.html)  
Available at all major online booksellers.

### Comments

“What really pleases me as I read your translation is the way you have set it up and the beautiful way in which you have caught the essence of each verse with elegant English (simple and understandable).”

– **Rev. Dr. Robert Gartman, Retired Minister, Dallas, Texas.**

“I welcome the translation of the Vulgate and the emphasis on Wisdom Literature. The Latin language and particularly the Vulgate have had an enormous impact on the Christian Church and our liturgical and theological formation. Be assured that I will forward the second copy to the Holy Father.”

– **Daniel Cardinal DiNardo, Archbishop of Galveston-Houston**

“John, thank you for Psalms! What a refreshing work! I appreciate your point about Christ in the Psalms being key to the early

church . . .”

– **Rev. Dr. Larry Ross, Area Minister, NTA, CCSW**

As I've said before, you've always been the consummate scholar and an incredibly rich thinker. The books that you're authoring are welcomed additions to the ongoing world of biblical studies – thanks for using your considerable gifts and talents to continue pointing people toward a fuller understanding of God's Eternal Word!

– **Major Stephen George, Chaplain, US Army, Afghanistan**

## Outline of Program One

### Opening Prayer

#### Introduction of the Translation Project.

What the project is. Who I am. How this project got started.

See <http://www.johncunyus.com/files/WoWPublicity.pdf>

#### Brief description of the book/s:

**Consensus Wisdom Literature** from what my religious community calls the **Old Testament**.

**Four major religious groups** have a version of what we call the Old Testament:

1) Jews; 2) Orthodox Christians; 3) Catholics; and 4) Protestants.

**Orthodox and Catholics** have more wisdom books in their Old Testament than Protestants and Jews.

**These four books** – Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, are the consensus books, the books all four consider canonical.

**Job** – why do bad things happen to good people? Where is God in this?

**Proverbs** – how to succeed, whatever the endeavor.

**Ecclesiastes** – what lasts and what doesn't.

**Song of Solomon** – what does true love look like?

#### Dates of Composition

**As Facebook would put it, “It’s complicated.”**

**Job** – internal evidence suggests when the story took place. When it was actually written is more difficult to discern. Couldn't have been later than the Septuagint translations.

**Internal aspects** pointing to date of story setting, if not composition:

1) Omissions: temple, Jew, Israel, centralized worship, Jerusalem, Kings of Israel and Judah.

2) Semi-nomadic way of life; similar to the way Abraham is described as living. Predates Israel's entry into Canaan.

3) Interior of Near East, fertile crescent locations: Yemen; Northwest Arabia, near present day Eilat; present day Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia. These places remain well-known to us today, obviously.

**Dialogue format** may suggest a later date: format made famous by Plato, 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE; standard form of philosophical discourse among the Greeks.

**Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon** – unlikely to have been earlier than Solomon's era; could not have been later than Septuagint translation, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE.

**How does a book** come to be considered canonical?

**How long does it take** for a book to be accepted as canonical? Paul's letters as examples: between date of composition and 100 years, depending on the source.

**Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon** written sometime between 1000 and 300 BCE.

#### Authors

**Job** – unknown.

**Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon – traditionally, Solomon.**

Many modern scholars disagree with the tradition.

Whether he was or not, his life story helps us understand what wisdom is.

**Solomon's life as backdrop** to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

**David and Bathsheba** as parents.

**Amnon rapes Tamar.**

**Absalom kills Amnon.**

**Absalom's exile**, restoration, rebellion, and death.

**David's failures** as “home front” ruler and as father

**The perils of royal succession** in ancient societies.

Cases in point: Solomon's brother, Adonijah, and his uncle, Joab.

**Wisdom tradition grows out of the age-old human desire** to make things easier for our children. Solomon gave this impulse a literary boost, if nothing else. In Israel's wisest king, a deep, questioning trust in God deepened the already existing spring of the Wisdom tradition.

**In some views, God is the author**, having inspired writers to say exactly what God needed them to say.

## **Original language and transmission**

**Hebrew**

**Copied by hand.**

**Scholars were conscious of the perils** of manuscript transmission by at least the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE.

Books could be lost or destroyed.

Books could be miscopied.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century CE, **the great Christian scholar Origen**, created the *Hexapla*.

Six column, carefully compared and written version of scripture, as Origen knew it, in a variety of languages: Hebrew, Greek, phonetic Hebrew in Greek characters, among them.

*Hexapla* was eventually lost, as were many other ancient texts (including all the “autograph” manuscripts of the Bible.).

**Jerome** used it as starting point for much of his work.

## **Translations**

**Septuagint**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE.

**Hebrew and Aramaic** into **Greek**, commissioned by one of the Ptolemies in Egypt; executed by rabbis in Alexandria, Egypt.

**Vulgate**, late 4<sup>th</sup> Century, CE.

**Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek** into **Latin**.

**Who was Jerome?**

**What is “The Vulgate”?**

See [www.JohnCunyus.com/vulgatetranslations.html](http://www.JohnCunyus.com/vulgatetranslations.html)

Vulgate, from “vulgar”, or “common” Latin, as opposed to literary Latin.

Jerome translated the Bible into the common language of his day.

## Why Work from the Latin text?

**I don't mean to denigrate** in the least the power of the work in the original languages!  
**Nevertheless, there are some reasons** for studying the Vulgate, as well.

**Jerome had access to texts** that have been lost, like Origen's *Hexapla*.

**Oldest extant Bible is in Latin.** *Codex Amiatinus*, 7<sup>th</sup> Century CE, vs *Codex Aleppo*, 10<sup>th</sup> Century CE.

**The Bible in Latin shaped Western Christianity** more than any other version.

**Makes some things clearer: Christological emphasis** of the Book of Psalms, for instance.

**Question: which version of the Word is the "real" Word?**

## Principles of Translation

### Accuracy

Words must be translated according to commonly-accepted definitions; no esoteric translations.

### Readability

Those words need to be intelligible to contemporary readers; avoid "stained-glass language," meaningful to some, but incomprehensible to most.

Example: see "Word List."

### Am I "making up my own Bible?"

Some have expressed concerns that I might be "making up my own Bible."

**I make every effort to avoid that, using the following guidelines.**

I use **Alexander Campbell's "fair, stipulated, and well-established" rule:**

*The words of the Bible contain all the ideas in it. These words, then, rightly understood, and the ideas are clearly perceived. The words and sentences of the Bible are to be translated, interpreted, and understood according to the same code of laws and principles of interpretation by which other ancient writings are translated and understood; for, when God spoke to man in his own language, he spoke as one person converses with another – in the fair, stipulated, and well-established meaning of the terms.<sup>1</sup>*

I translate with **dictionary in hand.**

I check my translation using the **1899 Douay-Rheims** translation of the Vulgate, which was officially authorized by the Roman Catholic Church.

I add **footnotes clarifying persons and events** cited in the biblical text, where possible.

I add **footnotes containing wording from the Revised Standard Version**, where the Latin translation is difficult to understand.

## Is This a "Literal" Translation

---

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Campbell, The Christian System in Reference to the UNION OF CHRISTIANS and a Restoration of PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY as Plead in the Current Reformation, Fourth Edition, Ayer Company Publishers, Salem, New Hampshire, Reprint Edition, 1988, pg 15.

**Several issues** to speak to in answering:

**Punctuation:** Latin, Greek, and Hebrew lacked it during the ancient era; must be added by a modern translator to make sense of the text for a modern reader.

**Spacing between words:** lacking in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew texts of the ancient era; must be added to make sense.

**Lack of certain words:** often, “to be” verbs; articles (definite and indefinite) in Latin; all must be added to make sense.

**Lack of vowels:** unpointed Hebrew original. Must be added to make sense of the original.

**Example:** consonant string: **b t t r**

**How “literal” do you want it? Do you mind if I use vowels?**

**I have followed the King James Version** in italicizing words in the English translation that are not present in the Latin text.

**Why New Translations?**

**“You know, they’ve been translated already.”**

**Originals don’t change, but our language does.**

**Meaning of words** in modern languages changes: “suffer,” “prevent,” and “gay.”

**Shades of meaning** of words found in the ancient texts:

**Example from The Lord’s Prayer:** give us this day our daily bread:

Matthew 6:11 τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον

Luke 11: 3 τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δίδου ἡμῖν τὸ καθ’ ἡμέραν

ἐπιούσιον appears twice in Greek New Testament.

Jerome translates ἐπιούσιον with two different words:

Matthew 6:11: *supersubstantialem*

Luke 11:3: *cotidie*

This gives us the range of meanings of the word, in the understanding of a late 4<sup>th</sup> Century CE scholar.

**Why the Wisdom books?**

These books will never be the favored scriptures of those who always win.

These books become priceless for those who know about loss, pain, grief, and unfairness.

## Outline of Program Two

Opening Prayer

Key Words

Discuss each word; find contexts; explore understandings; consider how word applies to the present.

*aeternum* – eternity, without beginning or end. Compare to *sempiternum*, everlasting, lasting forever.

*Deus* – God; translates Hebrew words *El* and, more frequently, *Elohim*, meaning “God.” *Elohim* is the plural of *El*, yet is most often translated as the singular, God. Christian Tradition understands the plural as an acknowledgment of God’s Triune nature.

*Dominus* – the Lord; substituted for formal, Hebrew given name; God’s proper name, Y-H-W-H, was considered too holy to speak aloud by the time the Septuagint was translated.

*homo* – man, human being, humanity, an individual man. When used generically, is understood to include *mulier*, woman.

*impius* – lawless; those with an insufficient reverence for God or gods. Compare to *iustus* (see below.)

*inferno* – inferno, place of blazing destruction; destination of all who die, in Book of Job.

*iniquitas* – treachery, betrayal, iniquity, wickedness.

*insipiens* – empty-headed, fool; a stupid person.

*iustitia* – fairness, justice. Combined with *miseriordia* (see below) as fundamental attributes of God in relationship to human affairs.

*iustus* – fair, just, law-abiding; merciful and fair.

*malum* – disaster, misfortune, calamity, harm, evil.

*miseriordia* – mercy.

*parabola* – comparison.

*rectus* – right, upright, unashamed, not guilty.

*saeculum* – time, age, generation, people born during one period of time. Often appears as *saeculum saeculi*, “age of age,” or, more frequently, “age of ages.”

*sapiens* – wise, understanding.

*sapientia* – wisdom.

*Satanas* – Satan, adversary, accuser, in Book of Job.

*simplex* – simple, straightforward, truthful, honest.

*stultus* – fool; someone who is unteachable; stubbornly ignorant, despite obvious lessons.

*vanitas* – pointlessness, vanity; action that serves no lasting purpose.

### **Outline of Program Three**

Opening Prayer

Readings from Job

Discussion

Closing Prayer

### **Outline of Program Four**

Opening Prayer

Readings from Proverbs

Discussion

Closing Prayer

### **Outline of Program Five**

Opening Prayer

Readings from Ecclesiastes

Discussion

Closing Prayer

### **Outline of Program Six**

Opening Prayer

Readings from Song of Solomon

Discussion

Closing Prayer

©2009, John G. Cunyus

All Rights to the English Translation and Commentary Reserved

[www.JohnCunyus.com](http://www.JohnCunyus.com).