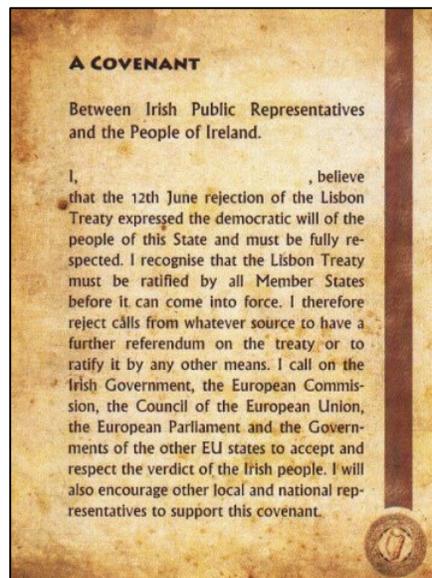


## SECTION 13

### Bible Terminology 3: “Covenant”

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A **Covenant** is an agreement, promise or pledge between two parties. You actually see it used today in legal documents, where it will often say that one party “covenants” to do something for another party. Most commonly in the Bible, a Covenant is an agreement between God and Man. Covenant is also referred to in the Bible as a “*Testament*.”



God originally had a Covenant with the Nation of Israel. He had an agreement that involved His blessings and the nation’s obedience. Israel didn’t fulfill their end of the agreement, so God brought curses upon them, and made a Covenant with a new people.

God’s New Covenant, or *New Testament* was with Non-Jews, “Gentiles” and Christ is the Mediator of this New Covenant.

## Bible Terminology (3)

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Christ's death established the Covenant:

*“Therefore he is the mediator of a **new covenant**, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at **death**, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people”*  
(Hebrews 9:15-18)

But God has not abandoned his people Israel entirely. God spoke of a change in their Covenant relationship in the Old Testament.

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me”* (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

This Covenant is our Hope, and the Hope of Israel as well!

We read in Hebrews 9:15, *“that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance.”* That is our hope, and it is only through this Covenant with God and Jesus that we have this hope!

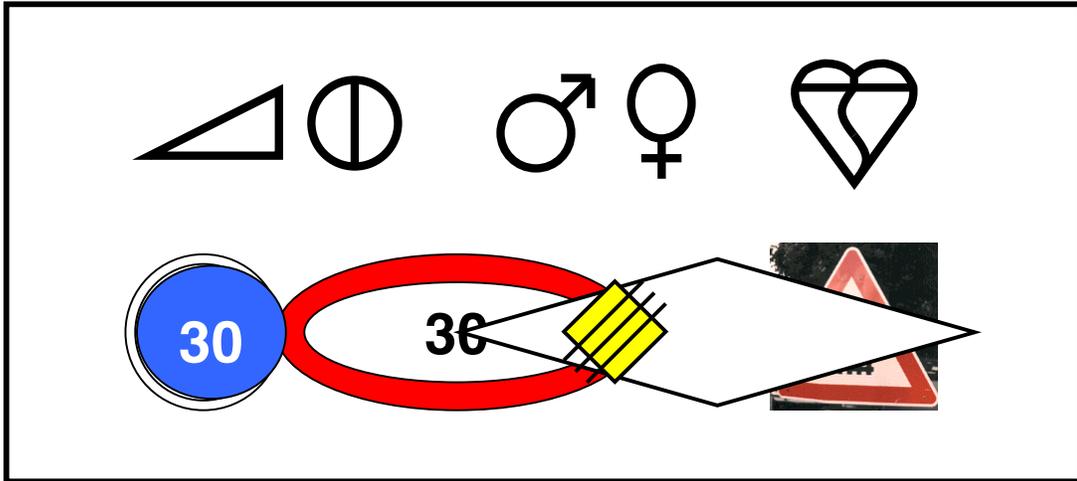
Over the years God has made Covenants with:

- Adam
- Noah
- Abraham
- Moses
- David
- AND WITH YOU!

The Hebrew Word translated Covenant in the Old Testament is **BERIT**. This word comes from the custom of **eating together**.

### TIPS ON READING BIBLE SYMBOLS

The symbols used in the Bible can be difficult because, like all symbols, their meaning is not always obvious. Consider these symbols:



Some of these you may recognize, some may be mysteries to you if you have not traveled in England, and some, even with a wealth of international experience may remain a mystery. Sometimes you can deduce their meaning, too often you cannot!

And sometimes symbols that you think are easy to understand by themselves become confusing when placed with others:



### LESSONS FOR US

What conclusion can we draw from these examples? It is this: When you encounter Bible symbols (especially in Bible prophecies, such as those found in the book of Daniel or Revelations), **do not try to create your own interpretation**, because the meaning of symbols, by their very nature, is *not* self-evident. The Bible must necessarily interpret these symbols for us. How else could the interpretation be the same for everyone?

*“...knowing this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation**. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20-21)*

Therefore take Scripture as literal, unless the Bible itself offers a translation of the symbol.

#### **AN EXAMPLE: EATING FLESH & DRINKING BLOOD**

Here is a Bible example that will help illustrate how the Bible itself interprets symbols for us.

*“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:53-54)*

Taken on the surface this is a staggering statement! Eat a man’s flesh and drink his blood? While some have taken this literally and believe that the bread and wine found in the Christian communion magically changes into Christ’s flesh and blood, there is no need to go in this direction. The Scriptures themselves tell us how to interpret these symbols:

*“Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, “Take, eat; this is my body.” And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Matthew 26:26-29)*

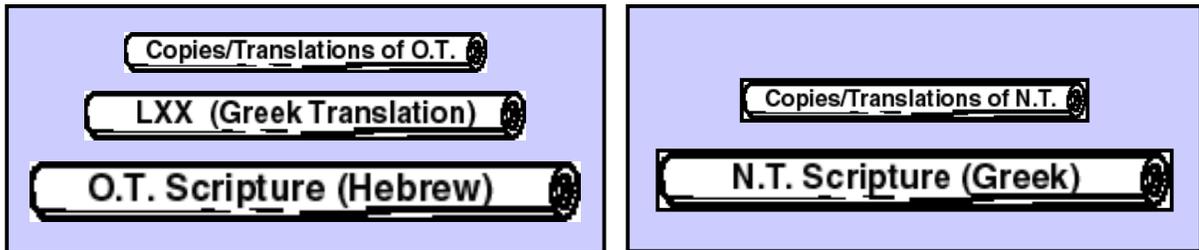
## SECTION 27

### Versions of the Bible

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#### ORIGIN OF THE BIBLE

The Bible was originally written in two different languages: The Old Testament books were written in Hebrew and the New Testament books were written largely in Greek. The OT books were written between 1500 BC to 400 BC, while the NT books were written after Christ from 40 AD to 100 AD.



#### ORIGIN OF HEBREW OLD TESTAMENT

Moses wrote down most of the first five books, followed by other prophets who wrote as God moved them:

*“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)*

*“Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son.” (Hebrews 1:1-2)*

What these men wrote was always preserved in the Jewish Tabernacle and later in the Jewish temple built by Solomon. The scroll in the Temple became the source of all copies. Later (circa 200 BC) the Hebrew OT was translated into Greek when the dominant culture of the Middle East was Greek. Other translations and copies were made over time to accommodate the needs of the Jews in their various places of captivity.

## **DEAD SEA SCROLLS**

This method of preservation was so incredibly good that one translator of the “Dead Sea Scrolls” found in the ruins of a pre-Christian period community (Essenes) stated: “No translation is offered of the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah or of the other more fragmentarily preserved Biblical manuscripts. The contents of the Bible are readily available in English...” (T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures in English Translation*, 1956). This is a wonderful testimony to the care with which God’s message in the OT has been faithfully preserved.

## **ORIGIN OF GREEK NEW TESTAMENT**

Preservation of the NT was somewhat different. There was no central repository for NT Gospels and letters. Instead, many, many copies were made of the originals, as well as translations from those copies. Indeed, one of the unique features of NT documents is their incredible abundance when compared to other first century literature. This abundance allows us to know with a high degree of certainty that the NT we read today is essentially the same they read 1900 years ago.

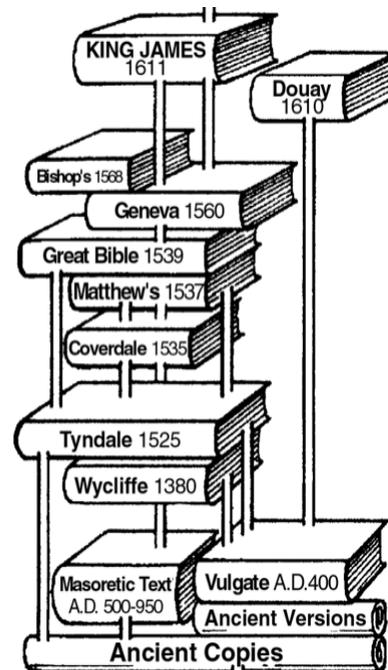
## **HISTORY OF OUR ENGLISH BIBLE**

This background helps us understand the development of our present English Bible. To make a little more sense out of the many modern versions available though, we need to take a little closer look at this history. Two “textual traditions” (i.e. how the underlying texts were formed) emerge that have affected some aspects of the Greek NT text. The differences are not great, and the explanation somewhat technical, but it does help explain why some passages in the NT are missing in some Bible translations.

## **THE MAKING OF OUR ENGLISH BIBLE**

The graphic to the right shows the first textual tradition leading up to the 1611 King James Version of the Bible. It began with the available ancient copies of the Old and New Testament. It also utilized the Latin translation of the OT and NT. By this means a faithful copy of the underlying text, both Hebrew and Greek, was put together. The underlying NT text is often called the “Majority” text because most of the available NT documents follow this text.

### **MAJORITY TEXT**

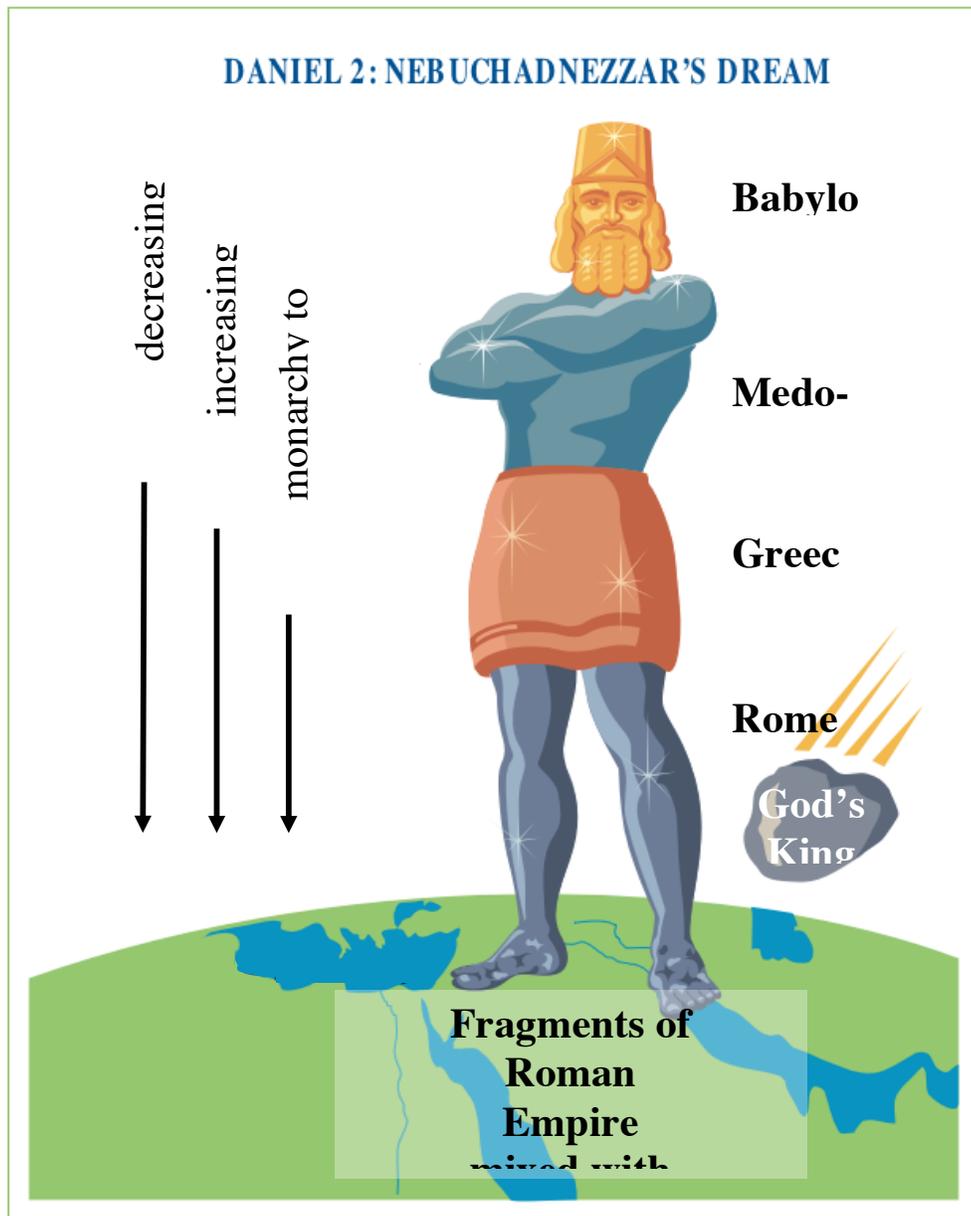


## The Role of Prophecy

hard, and brittle, as concrete. Nothing short of a crushing blow can alter these kingdoms.

Second, notice that the final dominant power is actually a confederacy, *not* a single empire. It is composed of national elements from the fragments of the old Roman Empire mixed with another element.

Finally, notice from Daniel 2:44 that here we are confronted with that “overarching theme” of the Bible: The restoration of God’s earth and the people on it to the world as God intended it! (See Isaiah 2:1-4; 11:1-9; 65:17-25 where you find the mountain that grows from the stone explained.)



### THE MOST REMARKABLE DETAIL

There are two vitally important questions to ask about the image Nebuchadnezzar saw:

1. What do these five powers have in common?
2. Why are there only five?

When you examine historically the kingdoms of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome, you will find that they were in their own right large and very powerful empires, *but they were not the only empires existing on our planet at the time*. Two hundred years before Christ, the Chinese had a great empire. The powerful Olmec civilization in Central America existed from 1200 to 400 BC. And there was the sophisticated Hittite Empire from 1340-1200 BC. Why not one or all of these? What makes the Babylonians, Medo-Persians, Greeks and Romans so special? What do they share that marks them out as participants in this Divine drama?

Daniel gives us the answer when we read the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> chapters of his book. ***These four empires are significant because each one, in their turn, dominated and controlled the Land of Israel & its People.***

Rome was the last power to have dominion & control over *both* land & people. Later the Arabs and then the Turks, and even the British, would have control over the Land, but in their days there was no Jewish nation or people. Why? Because Rome in 70 AD completely blotted out Israel's national existence and dispersed the Jews to the four winds of heaven. Effectively, Rome made it impossible for any other nation or empire to play the same role as Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece or Rome.

From AD 70 to AD 1948, therefore, no other power has been capable of either fulfilling or disproving this prophecy. Not until the twentieth century have the conditions existed for the final act of this prophecy: The existence of the nation Israel with her people back in their historic land. The emergence and destruction of the fifth and last power to dominate the nation of Israel and the Jewish people, a confederacy of 10 nations that arise from the still-remaining remnants of the old, authoritarian Roman empire, has yet to occur, but now it can! It is suggested here that the fifth power will come from the merging of the powers of **Western Europe and Eastern Arab Muslims**. Time will prove out the truth or otherwise of this particular suggestion, but what we should be looking for in terms of a political and military entity is clear.