

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

Joe Slater

The title of this article is the title of a book authored by the late Maxie B. Boren (grandfather of our own Rachael Durost). Rachael has made several copies available, and I would like to encourage you to take one from the sideboard in the foyer and read it.

As I write this article, I have not yet read all the way through the 191-page book. I have read enough, however, to see that Brother Boren did not come to this task with an agenda. That is to say, his goal was not to beat the drums for his favorite version, nor to blast to torment anyone who uses a version he doesn't like. His calm, reasoned approach is a breath of fresh air.

Have you ever wondered: Why are the Dead Sea Scrolls important? What does *canon* mean? What should we know about the Septuagint? Is a "version" the same as a "translation"? What is the Talmud? Which is the perfect Bible translation? – Brother Boren's book answers these and other questions.

Before dealing with English translations, the book introduces us to some basic concepts and foundational facts regarding how the books of the Bible came to be. Then, ancient translations of both Old and New Testaments into languages other than English are briefly treated.

From page 49 to the end of the book, Brother Boren reviews English translations dating from AD 640 to the present day. The changes from Old English (which we would not even recognize) to Middle English (which we might read, but only with great difficulty), to Modern English, are remarkable indeed! The Bible was first written in the language of the common person; Brother Boren's book recognizes our need for a Bible translated into the common language.

Heart Health

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. Our heart pumps at a rate of around 70 beats per minute. Though weighing only 8-10 ounces on average, a healthy heart pumps 2000 gallons of blood through 60,000 miles of blood vessels each day. Every day, the heart creates enough energy to drive a truck 20 miles. In a lifetime, that's equivalent to driving to the moon and back.

Over the course of your lifetime, your heart will pump more than one million barrels of blood. Without a properly functioning heart, you cannot live. Over \$444-billion is spent each year to treat heart disease – not including the money sent on diet and exercise to prevent it.

It is no wonder that when we talk about the spiritual and emotional sides of ourselves, we refer to them as our heart. We spend a lot of money, time, and effort on the health of our physical hearts. We should do even more for our spiritual hearts. *"Keep your heart with all diligence, for from it flows the spring of life"* (Proverbs 4:23). This is not talking about the physical heart!

So, this week, let us all give our hearts a checkup. Let us slow down and look at our lives. do our desires, passions, and activities reflect those of Christ?

Is your heart healthy? Does it belong to God? If not, seek help and get busy doing something about it!

--Luke Bower (Abilene, TX) via *Old Paths* (adapted)

How Long Should A Sermon Be?

Factors other than the clock should govern the length of a sermon. A sermon should be long enough to accomplish its desired aim. Some tasks can be completed in twenty minutes; some cannot.

I have promised, "I will quit when I get through." Having sat through some preachers who kept going long after they got through, that is a pretty good promise!

Full disclosure: one church where I preached for several years had a clock in the back of the auditorium where the preacher could see it easily. One Sunday night, following a particularly complex and unusually lengthy lesson, two deacons said, intentionally in my hearing, "Maybe we should take down Cecil's clock and put him up a calendar!"

Fuller disclosure: both deacons were good friends of mine and strong supporters of me as a preacher there. So I knew it was mostly in fun.

While there are some legitimate reasons to be concerned with time, there are more important reasons to be concerned with devotion, reverence, praise to God, and learning His word. Less important is whether or not we beat the Baptists and Methodists to the restaurants!

"Take time to be holy."

--Cecil May, Jr. (Montgomery, AL) via *Preacher Talk*

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Having forgotten his reading glasses, the preacher glanced at a note Sister Black had sent to him by an usher. The note read: "Bill Black having gone to sea, his wife requests the prayers of the congregation for his safety."

The preacher failed to observe the punctuation and startled his audience by announcing: "Bill Black, having gone to see his wife, requests the prayers of the congregation for his safety!"