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## *Language Change*

*From Ælfric to New American Standard Bible:  
A Morphological Analysis of Five Translations  
of Genesis 3:1-15 and Matthew 3:1-15*

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## **Abstract**

Nobody can argue that language does not undergo changes. The only languages that are not prone to linguistic changes are dead languages. The scope of this survey is to emphasize the various changes in morphology found in the primary material, i.e. five different translations from the Bible written in different time intervals: Ælfric, Wycliffe, Tyndale, King James Bible and New American Standard Bible. The investigation aims to shed some light upon the inflectional modifications of pronouns, verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs that the English language has undergone during the last thousand years. The results of the study show that the English language has moved from being a highly inflective, synthetic language with many endings and cases, few prepositions and no real articles, to developing into a more analytic language with fewer inflectional markers and cases, and more grammatical words that substitute the old endings.

**Keywords:** morphology – history of English – Bible – translation

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Nb. All the tables above were created by the author of this paper, except for Table 1, which was taken from van Gelderen (2006:10).

## 1. Introduction

Language is not static, it is on a path of constant change. However, changes do not happen over night. They almost always affect pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary. New words are created, old words are forgotten and still other words change in meaning. When the same word is spelled differently in different time periods, it is an indication of the fact that a change in pronunciation either has taken place or is about to do so. The study of language change is essential as it sheds light on earlier periods of human society. It provides information about the identity of people. Thus, language is a reflection of the realities of the people that lived in these societies. Moreover, language change tells us something about our own reality; it conveys what is in fashion and what is about to fall into disuse as regards language.

A way to accumulate understanding of how a language has developed throughout the course of history is to compare parallel texts that originate from different time periods. One such text is the Bible with its frequency of editions which according to Crystal (1995:59), provides “an unparalleled opportunity to view the development of the language at that time”. Since most editions tend to derive from the same original scrolls, different translations enlighten us on how English has changed linguistically from the Middle Ages until the present day. In this connection, the extent of transformation that English has undergone becomes evident when the same texts are juxtaposed:

Old English	Middle English	Early Modern English
Eac swylce seo næddre wæs geapre ðonne ealle ða oðre nytenu ðe God geworhte ofer eorðan. Ond seo næddre cwæð to ðam wife: Hwi forbead God eow ðæt ge ne æton of ælcon treowe binnan Paradisum?	But and the serpent was feller than alle lyuyng beestis of erthe, whiche the Lord God hadde maad. Which serpent seide to the womman, Why comaundide God to you, that ye schulden not ete of ech tre of paradis?	But the serpent was sotyller than all the beastes of the felde which ye LORde God had made and sayd vnto the woman. Ah syr that God hath sayd ye shall not eate of all maner trees in the garden.

It took many hundreds of years for the Bible to be translated into English. The earliest translations date back to the Old English period (from the seventh to the mid-twelfth century), when a monk of the English Church by the name of Bede translated parts of it. He wanted the Clergy to know at least some of the scriptures in English (e.g. Wegner 2000:275). The most

well-known translations used the Latin *Vulgate*, completed at the commencement of the fifth century, as their source of translation. The Church deemed the *Vulgate* to be the most authoritative translation of the Bible, and banned medieval English translations. This enabled the Church to exercise a monopoly on the language and preventing ordinary people from understanding and decipher the Scriptures. In the year 1611 King James I authorised a translation that became known as the King James Bible, which the Church of England used for a 300-year-period. As centuries proceeded, there were various other Bible translations into the modern English language (Freeborn 1996:133). Many translations are interesting from a stylistic point of view, as they display great differences in vocabulary and grammar. Some of them might be regarded as more difficult to understand than others for users of the English language, much owing to the frequent occurrence of an archaic lexis and style. Still, others may regard the newer translations as too modern and perhaps too secular.

There is an abundance of Bible editions available in English that display great variety in terms of translation style and use of translation theory.

According to Wegner (2000: 214, 277-8, 373, 400), the translation techniques that could be applied in bible translation are:

- formal equivalence
- dynamic equivalence
- paraphrase
- interlinear
- glossing

Some versions use a literal style of translation, i.e. formal equivalence (word-for-word) with the main purpose of getting as close to the original source language as possible. Other versions are written with dynamic equivalence that reflect the style, structure and idioms of English instead of the languages in which the Bible was originally written, i.e. Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic (e.g. Wegner 2000:400). Some bible texts are paraphrases while others use detailed interlinear descriptions. The translation method that was often used during the Middle Ages was glossing, which is a word-for-word translation of the text: according to Long (2001), it is “the most basic process of translation” in which the translator wrote “in smaller hand” and frequently “above the original words”. Long continues to explain that this type of

translation has proved especially valuable as regards “providing linguistic information on Old English dialects and shifts in word forms; in fact it has provided the key into Anglo-Saxon” (2001:37).

The translations that I have chosen for this investigation are three word-for-word translations: Ælfric, the King James Bible and New American Standard Bible, and two translations that use the dynamic equivalence approach: the Wycliffe Version and the Tyndale Bible. My prime aim of this study will be to answer the following questions:

*What kind of morphological modifications has the English language undergone from Old English to Modern English? How have the lexical/grammatical words changed?*

Section 3 will describe in detail how this study has been performed.

## **2. Background**

This section includes a brief definition of morphology which will then be followed by a concise historical background of the English language.

### 2.1 Definitions and terms

Morphology is the branch of grammar that studies the forms and the internal structure of words, where different types of morphemes make up the main building blocks. It also deals with the rules that are applied when meaningful elements are combined into more or less complex words, including the way new words are formed.

Grammarians distinguish between two categories of morphemes, i.e. lexical morphemes and grammatical morphemes. Lexical morphemes can stand alone and are always carriers of meaning, e.g. *tree*, *baptize*, *good*. Grammatical morphemes, for instance the plural ending *-s* or the *-er* ending added to an adjective to show comparison, on the contrary, cannot function alone but must be combined with a root morpheme (i.e. the simple core of a word without grammatical morphemes added). The grammatical morphemes have no meaning when isolated however, when they are attached to lexical morphemes they gain grammatical meaning. Grammatical morphemes can be divided into two separate groups of morphemes within the field of morphology: derivational and inflectional. The derivational morphemes build new words out of existing ones by means of affixation e.g. *refuse*, *refusal*. By contrast, the inflectional morphemes are affixes which do not have a lexical significance instead they



specify what type of use a word has in a certain sentence, i.e. what kind of grammatical function it possesses for instance tense and case: *talked* and *boy's* (Crystal 1995:453).

Below follows a brief historical background that gives an account of the main lines of development of the English language.

## 2.2 Timeline of the English Language

The table below conveys the major subperiods that English is usually divided in according to van Gelderen (2006:10).

Table 1. The main subperiods of the English language

Old English	450-1150
Middle English	1150-1500
Early Modern English	1500-1700
Modern English	1700-

## 2.3 The Old English Period

The English language is thought to have its starting point with the commencement of the Anglo-Saxons settlement in Britain. The Romans controlled Britain until 410. At that time the Celts were the native inhabitants of the British Isles, and their language, Celtic, which belongs to the Celtic language family, has given us present-day Welsh, Irish and Gaelic (Barber et al. 2009:106). The Celts also spoke Latin, which was the language of the Romans. However, during the Roman domination, many Celts were driven out of England: some fled, while others ended up in slavery (Miles 2005:35). There were hardly any Germanic tribes in Britain at that time, but they arrived soon after the departure of the Romans. The Old English period began with the settlement of the Germanic tribes in 449 and lasted for several centuries until 1150. These tribes (i.e. the Angles, Saxons, Jutes etc.) originated from north-west Germany (the Saxons) and from the Danish mainland and islands (the Angles). Scholars are not in consensus about the exact origin of the Jutes. Still, there were other Germanic groups in Britain, e.g. the Frisians from the Netherlands and the Svebi (Barber et al. 2009:108). By the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, Germanic tribes had begun to settle and occupy almost all of England. Some of the Anglo-Saxon settlers, not all, adjusted to the Celts and to the Celtic lifestyle, and as a result, the Germanic language of the Anglo-Saxons was affected by the Celtic languages and also by Latin.

The Germanic settlers spoke a language called Englisc, however it was probably similar to the languages that the settlers had been speaking in their native countries. In historical linguistics, Old English is the appropriate term for this language. Davis states that:

Old English is more than the language three tribes brought to Britain; rather it is an amalgamation of Germanic dialects mostly though not all from the western Germanic group brought to Britain and developing in Britain. (Davis 2006:73-74)

There were two Anglian dialects (Northumbrian and Mercian), one Saxon (West Saxon) and one Jutish dialect (Kentish). What is more, Britain was also the home to groups of Vikings whose language, often called Old Norse was mixed with Old English. Old Norse was constantly modified due to the steady process of trade and conquest (Baugh & Cable 2000:94). The English and the Norsemen could communicate because both their languages belonged to the same language branch, having developed from the same proto-Germanic language (Freeborn 2006:52).

Although the Danish king ruled the country for almost 20 years, Old English was used as a court language, and eventually Old Norse died out (Miles 2005:40). At the end of the eight century, numerous attacks and forays were carried out by the Danes, which ultimately led to the introduction of a geographical boundary called the Danelaw, within which Danish customs and laws prevailed. The line separated the Danes from the Saxons. The separation led to some of the distinctive dialects that we see today (Miles 2005:63-66).

#### 2.4 The Middle English Period

The Battle of Hastings in 1066 changed the language scenario in Britain. This historical event marks the start of a new linguistic era in Britain. Duke William of Normandy becomes King William I of England after having defeated King Harold. The Norman Conquest had a tremendous impact on the English language and changed the entire course of the language profoundly. However, these linguistic effects were not immediate and it would take a considerable amount of time before the consequences were visible in the language (Crystal 1995:30). The Britain that the Normans invaded was a well-established and sophisticated civilization. Needless to say, the Anglo-Saxons were not eagerly enthusiastic about the French intrusion into their country. When the Germanic tribes had invaded the British Isles, the Norse had brought with them a language that belonged to the same family branch, i.e. the West Germanic language family. The Normans in contrast, introduced an entirely unknown

language and culture. Since they took over the court, French soon became the language of the aristocracy. Furthermore, many key positions in government, administration and the church – fields where English and Latin were used – were given to the Normans. Hence, French became the official language for 200 years and as a result, all levels of English change from spelling to grammar.

Standard English had not yet developed and there were cues that English became the everyday language. It was probable that French became a necessary second language for some of the Anglo-Saxons who had career ambitions (Barber et al. 2009:145). French was considered prestigious, while English was spoken by the majority. The West Saxon dialect that in the Old English period had developed into a literary language (used in written forms) was now gradually losing its status as a “standard literary language” (2009:110,146). It would take approximately three centuries before some kind of standard norm for the English language would emerge.

In early Middle English there seem to be no standard rules that govern the language, something that impinges on the spelling and pronunciation and leads to discrepancies both in grammar and in phonology (2009:146). French influenced late Old English and Middle English vocabulary, which made Middle English look entirely different from Old English (cf. van Gelderen 2006:108). Subsequently, when the Normans lost Normandy to the French Crown, the close relationship with Normandy became severed and step by step the former Norman nobility in Britain became English. By the 14<sup>th</sup> century there is a general adaption of the English language. It becomes a literary language; literature is now written in English and French is replaced with English in grammar-schools. English once again becomes the language of administration (Barber et al. 2009:152 ff.). People who could write often wrote in Latin or French. Latin was a more fixed language, i.e. not particularly prone to changes in contrast to modern languages which were under constant change. However, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century English will succeed in gaining ground over both Latin and French (Baugh & Cable 2000:149). Several historical events had led up to the re-emergence of English. Important steps were taken to restore English to meet the competition of Latin and French (Baugh & Cable 2000:145). For instance, dialects played an important part in strengthening English. Henry III used both English and French in his court, English was used at Oxford (1349), a paraphrase of the Bible, *Cursor Mundi*, pointed out in its prologue the importance of writing in English, and after 1300 there were many texts on various subjects written in English. English once again became known by everyone.

#### 2.4.1 On the Path towards Standardization

Written language emerged from a mixture of local dialects spoken at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and has since become the acknowledged standard both in oral and written language. The dialect that played the most important role in this initial standardization process was the East Midland variety of English, i.e. the dialect of the London area (Baugh & Cable 2000:187). The West Saxon standard system of spelling and punctuation was no longer in use at that time. Thus, the new standard language did not arise from the West Saxon literary language, but it descended from the East Midland dialect (Barber et al. 2009:154). Hence, Middle English laid the foundation for the English that is spoken and written today. A striking feature of Middle English is the great presence of dialectal diversity. Writers wrote in their own dialect, yet within the same county there could be dialectal divergencies. The main dialects were: Kentish, Northern (Northumbrian in OE), West Midland (Mercian in OE), East Midland (Mercian in OE) and Southern (West Saxon in OE) (e.g. Baugh & Cable 2000:184-5). Since English had not yet become standardized spelling varieties in texts provide unparalleled occasions for understanding the pronunciation of words at that time.

#### 2.5 The Early Modern English Period

The Middle English period marked the beginning of the establishment of a standard form of written English and during the 15<sup>th</sup> century an official standard was beginning to emerge. There was a standard for spelling set in this period which has not changed ever since. Thus Modern English spelling is a reflection of the Early Modern English spelling and pronunciation. There was an important shift in pronunciation that had started several hundred years ago, the Great Vowel Shift (GVS), which entailed all the long vowels and changed the quality of the vowels. The result was a sporadic change of long vowels into short and by 1700 the GVS was more or less completed.

The Early Modern English period was a time of intellectual and cultural advancement. The process of printing was invented by the first English printer, William Caxton. Thus texts became available to a wide range of people. This led to an unprecedented boost to form a standard language as well as to a closer examination of the characteristics of the language (Crystal 1995:57). The need for spelling regularity was debated which led to spelling conformity.

A self-consciousness about language emerged as books were rapidly printed and spread to a huge audience of readers. Literacy and education became much more common also among the lower class. This was the age of the bibles: there were many efforts made to print an

English version of the Bible (van Gelderen 2006:158). During the Renaissance the aspiration to revive Latin and Greek culture flourished and there was a steady stream of Latin loans between the 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Barber et al. 2009:188).

## 2.6 The Period that Leads up to Modern English

The centuries that followed imposed restrictions on linguistic freedom. Spelling guides, dictionaries, grammars and pronunciation guides appeared. Dictionaries and word lists are natural standardisers for words, spelling and grammar, but they appeared late and did not help to standardize the spelling of Early Modern English (van Gelderen 2006:182). There was inventiveness in the use of English, especially when it came to vocabulary. However, there were still structural differences in the language that distinguished Early Modern English from Modern English as we shall investigate in the following sections (Crystal 1995:76).

## 3. Design of the present study

### 3.1 Aim

The objective of this paper is to investigate some of the inflectional changes (conjugations and declensions) that the English language has undergone during the last thousand years. The principal intention of this limited study is to investigate aspects of morphological modifications in the English language from Old English to Modern English and to try to find answers to the following questions:

*How have the inflectional markers of pronouns, nouns, verbs and adjectives changed?*

*How has the pronominal system evolved from Old English to Modern English?*

*Have there been any modifications as regards grammatical words?*

*Have there been any changes in word order and spelling?*

*What are the characteristics of a synthetic language as opposed to an analytic language?*

### 3.2 Material

The primary material in this study consists of five translations of Genesis 3:1-15 from the Old Testament and of Matthew 3:1-15 from the New Testament. Section 4 of this paper has been analysed primarily with reference to Barber et al. (2009), Crystal (1995) and van Gelderen (2006).

The following five translations were selected for this survey:

- *Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament* written in Old English circa 1000. Ælfric (c. 955-1020), an abbot who is described as "a translator of Holy Scripture... and the most accomplished and prolific prose writer of his day." (Long 2001:45-6). His aim was to enable his reader to understand the scriptures as well as safeguard the reader from misinterpretation. His translation method was to use simple and obvious language; above all, he strived for clarity (Long 2001:47). He translated parts of the Old Testament into Anglo-Saxon from Latin as well as the Anglo-Saxon Gospels. N.B. his translations require glossing, as it is otherwise quite difficult to understand.
- *The Wycliffite Version* 1395. John Wycliffe's (c.1328-1384) Middle English translation was completed after his death and is considered to be the first translation of the whole Bible into the English language however, scholars are unsure whether Wycliffe wrote the translation with the assistance of his students or not. The translation is from the Latin Vulgate and it followed the original Latin word order and syntax carefully. Wycliffe's ambition with the translation was to present God's word to the lay person in a language that could be understood. He challenged the authorities of the Church and accused them of hypocrisy and as a result he was accused of heresy. His Bible was forbidden and his mortal remains were dug up and burnt (Long 2001:81). Consequently, the ban on his Bible instigated curiosity and "sparkled a desire for literacy" (Wegner 2000:284).
- *The Tyndale Bible*, 1534. William Tyndale (1494-1536), a priest and a student of Oxbridge, with excellent knowledge of Greek. He was associated with Lutheran theology and used Lutheran glosses which angered the English bishops. His intention was to create a translation for the people. His different editions came to influence many of the bibles written in the Early Modern English period. The Tyndale Bible was the first Bible that was not hand-copied thanks to the printing technology. The source text for this translation was the original Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. Tyndale was considered a heretic and was condemned to death (Wegner 2000:282).
- *The King James Bible*, (The Authorized Version of 1611), is considered by many the most important book in religion and culture. This version was a result of a committee that King James I (1566-1625) had assembled, so that a new translation of the Bible would be initiated (Norton 2011:1). There were 54 translators involved in the making of this word-for-word version. Other 16<sup>th</sup> century Bible translations were used as

source texts (Long 2001:196). The King James Bible embraced the English literary tradition of its time and it became a source text that would permeate and influence the language. It was recognized as the standard edition of the Bible (Long 2001:4).

- *New American Standard Bible* 1995 (updated edition). This is a word-for-word translation that is often used at university courses in religion. It is characterized by its trueness to the languages in which the Bible originally was written, although its main goal is to achieve an intelligible style concerning the English language (Wegner 2000:326).

Many of the words in Ælfric had to be looked up, thus the *Bosworth-Toller Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* served for this purpose. (Accessible at <http://beowulf.engl.uky.edu/~kiernan/BT/bosworth.htm>)

In the analysis that follows, the five chosen translations will be referred to as: Ælfric, Wycliffe, Tyndale, KJB (or King James Bible) and NASB

### 3.3 Method

In order to execute this investigation, the *New American Standard Bible*, i.e. the most recent bible translation, was brought in to provide the main source for the comparisons of how the target language phenomenon have changed over time.

Firstly, the five bible translations were juxtaposed verse by verse which enabled a general picture of the diversities to emerge. Secondly, as the Ælfric text was remarkably different, unintelligible, it had to be translated. Thirdly, the translations were analysed in terms of morphology with a main emphasis on inflectional morphology as regards pronouns: personal, possessive, reflexive, relative and demonstrative, verbs: tense, the infinitive, the *-ing* form, modals, mood, and the passive form, nouns: the system of nouns, adjectives: comparison, gender and forms and ultimately adverbs: the endings. Other comparisons were also made, e.g. differences in word order and in spelling. What is more, function words (prepositions and the definite article) and negations were analysed. Delimitation was necessary in order to execute this study; otherwise it would have gotten out of proportions, since the field of historical linguistics is vast. For instance, the study does not touch upon phonology or syntax.

## 4. Results

In this section the selected translations will be analysed in accordance with the methodology described in section 3.3.

Clearly, Ælfric's Old English version is the most difficult text to understand for the Modern English speaker of today. However, speakers who have a thorough knowledge of present-day German will see that there are some structural and morphological similarities. Old English was a synthetic language, highly inflectional, with many endings on nouns, verbs and pronouns which indicated the grammatical function that a word possessed. These inflectional markers have changed notably over time. Many word endings have been lost and the language has instead gained grammatical words that substitute these old endings. Hence, Modern English leans toward a more analytic type of language with considerably less endings.

### 4.1 Pronouns

The system of pronouns is much more intricate in Old English than in any other following period. In particular, the pronouns are inflected according to case (the nominative, accusative, dative, genitive and instrumental case, with the latter being used minimally only). The singular pronouns in the third person correspond to the three grammatical genders, i.e. the masculine, the feminine and the neuter. The third person always begins with the grapheme <h> (van Gelderen 2006:57).

The following table shows the personal and possessive pronouns found in the compared texts. The personal pronouns that appear in bold display the nominative form of the word, the italic typeface represents the possessive pronouns, while the word positioned after the slash is in the accusative, dative or instrumental case, depending on what function it had in the sentence from which it was taken. This applies exclusively to Old English, as this system of five cases was reduced in Modern English into the nominative (common), the objective case and the genitive case.

There is some correspondence between old and modern pronouns however, this does not apply to the third person plural *hi* (Ælfric) and *they* (NASB), where the likeness is non-existent.



Table 2. Paradigm of personal pronouns found in the five compared texts

Personal and Possessive	Ælfric	Wycliffe	Tyndale	KJB	NASB
1 <sup>st</sup> Person Sing	<b>ic</b> /me	<b>I/Y</b> /me	<b>I</b> /me	<b>I</b> /me	<b>I</b> /me
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person Sing	<b>ðu</b> / ðe/ þe <i>dine/ ðinum</i>	<b>thou</b> /thee/ye <i>thi/thin</i>	<b>thou</b> /the/ye <i>thy</i>	<b>thou</b> /thee/yee <i>thy</i>	<b>you</b> <i>your</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Sing /M/ /F/ /N/	<b>he</b> /him/hine <i>hir/hys</i> <b>heo</b> <i>hire/hyre</i>	<b>he</b> /him/hym/ <i>hir/his</i> <b>sche</b> <i>hir</i> <b>it/yt</b>	<b>he</b> /him/hym <i>hys</i> <i>hir/hyr</i>	<b>hee</b> /him <i>his</i> <i>her</i> <b>it</b>	<b>he</b> /him <i>his</i> <i>her</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> Person Plur	<b>we</b> /unc <i>us</i>	<b>we</b> /vs	<b>we</b> /vs <i>oure</i>	<b>wee</b> /vs <i>our</i>	<b>we</b> /us <i>our</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Person Plur	<b>ge</b> /eow <i>eowre</i>	<b>you</b> <i>your</i>	<b>you</b> <i>youre</i>	<b>you</b> <i>your</i>	<b>you</b> <i>your</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Person Plur	<b>hi</b> / <i>heora</i>	<b>thei</b> /hem			<b>they</b>

In Middle English there was a simplification of the pronoun system. West Saxon forms were successively lost and replaced by Scandinavian forms after the Norman Conquest (Crystal 1995:21). Middle English pronouns were affected by many changes. The third person plural which began with *h-* is substituted with *th-* although the initial *h-* can still be found in the Middle English text:

Table 3. Comparison between Old English and Middle English 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural forms

Ælfric	Wycliffe
Ond heora begra eagan wurden geopenode; <b>hi</b> oncneowon ða ðæt <b>hi</b> nacode wæron, sywodon him ficleaf, ond worhton him wædbrec.	And the iyen of bothe weren openid; and whanne <b>thei</b> knowen that thei weren nakid, <b>thei</b> sewden the leues of a fige tre, and maden brechis to <i>hem</i> silf.

As can be seen in Table 2, many of the Middle English and Early Modern English pronouns had variations in their spelling. The letter *v* as in *vs* (the objective first person plural form), as represented in Wycliffe, Tyndale and KJB in Table 2, was used in complementary ways together with the letter *u* (Crystal 1995:41). The /v/ was used in initial positions and the /u/ was used in the middle (*eury*) or at the end (*thou*) of the noun. In Early Modern English these forms were simply variants of the same letter.

A new type of feminine singular is introduced in the Middle English era, i.e. *sche/sho/she*:

*sche schal breke thin heed* (Genesis 3:15, Wycliffe). The forms of *thou* (*thee, thine, thy, thyself*) and the forms of *you* (*ye, yours, your, yourself*) are the focus of much attention when it comes to interpreting their function in Middle English texts as they disclose the personal relationship between people (Crystal 1995:71). Another change in the Middle English pronoun system is that the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular nominative form *thou* and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular accusative form *thee* become the familiar/informal form and is used in the same fashion as the French *tu*. In contrast, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular pronouns *ye/you* became the formal forms similar to the French *vous* (Crystal 1995:71).

The personal pronouns undergo an even greater loss of inflections in Early Modern English. The accusative is now united with the dative and counts as one case (cf. van Gelderen 2006:166). The distinction between the familiar and the polite form of the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular vanishes and both forms are now used in similar contexts. *You* seems to be used more often and outnumbers *thou*. Moreover, *ye/ye* will later disappear and in the 16<sup>th</sup> century they are found in merely archaic texts. Wycliffe, Tyndale and KJB use the archaic pronouns *the/thee* and *ye/ye*.

The use of *thou* continues until the present day in some regional dialects in the northern and western parts of England (e.g. Nevalainen 2006:79). The trend is toward less variation in the personal pronoun system. The Early Modern English system of noun inflection is similar to the one that we have today, although there are still some variation in the formation of the endings of plural nouns. The possessive form *its* (the third person singular) is introduced in Early Modern English and substitutes the old form *his*.

Reflexive pronouns did not exist in Old English, instead regular pronouns were used, as shown in the following table:

Table 4. A comparison of the first person reflexive pronoun

Ælfric	Wycliffe	Tyndale	KJB
for ðam ðe ic eom nacod, ond <b>ic</b> behyde <b>me</b> .	for Y was nakid, and <b>Y</b> hidde <b>me</b> .	because <b>I</b> was naked and therfore hyd <b>myselfe</b> .	because I was naked, and <b>I</b> hid <b>my</b> <b>selfe</b> .

First person reflexive pronoun such as *myself* and third person reflexive pronoun such as *himself* were non-existent in Old English instead regular pronouns were used as the table above indicates (**ic...me**.) In the example from Wycliffe, the reflexive is not used, although **hem silf** appears in other places in the text. In the Early Modern English texts (Tyndale and

KJB), **myselfe** is used in the way that Modern English uses the reflexive, albeit there is a divergence in spelling.

Relative pronouns were not used in Old English instead the relative particle *þe* which was not declinable, was used. What is more, the demonstrative pronoun *se, þæt* and *seo* functioned as the relative pronouns *that/which*. In Middle English the old demonstratives did not have such function, and instead developed into relative markers. The type of declension the demonstrative had was governed by the grammatical gender of the noun (cf. (b-c) in Table 5 showing the nominative and dative case respectively of the demonstrative). In Old English there are no real definite/indefinite articles instead the demonstrative pronouns are used in the same way that our modern definite article is. The “definite article” in Old English had three genders: *se* (masculine), *seo* (feminine) and *þæt* (neuter) and they were the “same” grammatical words as the demonstratives. The demonstrative and the “definite article” were used interchangeably depending on the context (e.g. van Gelderen 2006:60).

Table 5. (a) Relative and (b-c) demonstrative pronouns and (d) the definite article in Old English and Middle English

Ælfric	Wycliffe
ond of ðæs treowes wæstm(e) (a) <b>þe</b> is on middan neorxnawange	of the fruyt of the tre,(a) <b>which</b> is in the myddis of paradis
Hwi dydestu (b) <b>þæt</b> ? On (c) <b>þam</b> dagum	Whi didist thou, (b) <b>this</b> thing? (c) <b>tho</b> daies
(d) <b>seo</b> næddre	(d) <b>the</b> serpent

There is one uncommon article in Ælfric viz. *la* as in *la næddre* ‘the snake’ which is the Romance definite article. This Romance article was lost together with the marking of gender in the Old English; the only way to express the definite article in Middle English is by means of *the*. The Tyndale translation puts sometimes *ye* as a definite article: *ye axe put vnto ye rote of ye trees* ‘the ax is laid at the root of the trees’ NASB. *Ye* is also used as a relative pronoun in Tyndale’s text: *but he ye cometh* ‘but he that comes’.

Other pronouns that were found in the translations were the indefinite pronouns *all* and *every*. Ælfric: *eal, eallum*, Wycliffe: *al, alle, ech* ‘each one’, Tyndale: *all*, KJB: *all*  
Ælfric: *ælc, ælcon* ‘each, any, ever, all’ Wycliffe: *euery*, Tyndale: *every*, KJB: *euery, every*. Typical grammatical inflections are added to the indefinite pronouns in the Ælfric text. In the Middle English text as well as in the KJB spelling varieties can be detected. Note also in this

context that *all* and *every* can function as other word classes depending on the contextual situation.

#### 4.2 Nouns

In Modern English, there are two remaining cases: a common case with no ending of the noun and a genitive case which is formed by the addition of an *-s* to the noun to show ownership to the noun. Old English nouns display information about three linguistic data: number, i.e. singular or plural, case, i.e. nominative, accusative, dative and genitive, and finally gender, i.e. the nouns can be marked masculine, feminine and neuter. The endings of the nouns depend on whether they are subjects or objects in a clause. All nouns have the ending *-um* for dative plural and most have *-a* for genitive plural (Barber et al. 2009:124). The most common noun ending belongs to the masculine singular class (van Gelderen 2006:60).

The noun determines what gender the preceding adjective or demonstrative will have:

*of þysum stanum* `of these stones´, masculine, dative, plural

*of eallum/þam dagum* `in all/those days´, masculine, dative, plural

*ælc treow* `every tree´, masculine, nominative, singular

*of ðæra treowa* `of these trees´, masculine, genitive, plural

*ðam wīfe* `that woman´, feminine, dative, singular

*ðære næddran*, `that snake´, feminine, dative, singular

*of ðæs treowes wæstm* `the fruit of the tree´, masculine, genitive, plural

In Middle English, there is a substantial reduction of the inflectional system due to the similarity of English and Scandinavian words however, the way in which these words were inflected differed. Many of these changes were results of the phonological changes that took place during this era. The vocabulary looks totally different from Old English as a result of the influence of French. However, Scandinavian plays an important part when it comes to grammar. Word formation is very creative and Germanic and Romance suffixes provide a wealth of new synonyms.

The system of case endings is simplified and reduced: the endings *-a*, *-u*, *-e* became *-e*, the endings *-as* and *-es* became *-es*, and the endings *-an*, *-on*, *-un*, *-um* all became *-en* and later *-e* in Middle English. Subsequently, the final *-e* disappeared itself around the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The Old English masculine *stan* `stone´ with all its suffixes *-es* (gen), *-e* (dat) in singular and

-as (nom), -a (gen), -um (dat) and -as (acc) in plural would become *stoone* in singular and *stones* in plural in Middle English. Eage `eye´ and *eagan* became *eye* and *eyen*.

This loss of endings makes Middle English appear more modern. Still, there are some remaining dative endings, especially after a preposition: *yaf to hosebande*. `gave to her husband´ NASB. Furthermore, there is also a loss of gender on nouns: *of these stones, of the tree*.

The system of noun inflections of Early Modern English is practically the same as that of Modern English. There are only two cases, the common case and the genitive case, although some flexibility can be found.

Table 6. Some orthographic variations of nouns in the texts from Middle English and Early Modern English

Wycliffe	Tyndale	KJB
erthe	felde	field
fruyt	frute	fruite/fruit
heuenes	heue	heaven
liif	lyfe	life
kingdom	kyngdome	kingdome
brechis	apurns	aprons

The variations of spelling between the above texts shed light upon the inconsistency in English orthography in those days. The spelling seemed to be arbitrary. One logical explanation for this is that spelling conventions as such had not yet developed. Note also that the KJB text which is the latest of the three translations is also the text with the least spelling divergences.

#### 4.3 Verbs

The verbal system in Old English was a system of two tenses, present and past. There were three main types of verbs: strong, weak and modals. The strong verbs changed their stem vowels in the past tense and in the past participle, e.g. *beon* `to be´. Past tense *ic wæs* and past participle *gebeon*. The weak verbs were inflected with *-d* in the past tense, e.g. *fulligan* `to baptize´: *ic fullige* `I baptized´ and the past participle *gefullod* `baptized´. The ending *-d* is a forerunner of the Modern English inflection *-ed* in the past tense. The verbs were inflected in accordance with person, tense, number and grammatical mood (indicative, subjunctive, imperative).

There is a person distinction in the indicative singular **present tense** however, this does not apply to the plural forms:

*ic eow fullige* `I baptize you´

*neom ic wyrðe to berenne* `I am not worthy to bear´

*ic seege* `I say´

*ðu gæst* `you go´

*ðu sywst* `you bruise´

*he//heo/hit ys* `he/she/it is´

*we/ge/hi habbað* `we/you/they have´

*we/ge/hi etað* `we/you/they eat´

**The past tense** with illustrative examples from Ælfric:

*ic wæs/ætt* `I was/ate´

*we wæron* `we were´

*ðu cwætest* `you said´

*ge ne æton* `you did not eat´

*he andwyrde* `he answered/said´

*hi sywodon* `they sewed´

*seo næddre cwæð* `the snake said´

*hi oncneowon* `they knew´

*he aferomað* `he cleansed´

*hi gehyrdon* `they heard´

*he forbærnd* `he burned up´

**The infinitive** in Old English is formed with the morphological suffix *-ian* and *-an* added to the root: *andettan* `to confess´, *aweccean* `to awake from death´, *geferan* `to travel´, *gefyllan* `to fulfill´ and *witeg(i)an* `to prophesy´ were found in Ælfric.

**The past participle** is usually formed by the addition of the prefix *ge-* to the root:

*genam* `took´, *geseah/geseh* `seen´, *gegaderað* `gathered´, *geswutelode* `taught´ or `warned´, *gecweden* `said´, *gehyrdon* `heard´, *gefullod* `baptized´.

**The -ing form** in Old English is constructed with the inflection *-ende*:

*cumende* `coming´ of *cumen* `to come´.

Two **modal verbs** were found in the Ælfric translation: *he mæg aweccean* `he is able to rise up´ and *ic sceal* `I must´.

**The subjunctive** in Old English was a much more common mood than in other periods. It did not get as many endings as the indicative. The mood is recognizable since the plural forms of the subjunctive present tense have an *-en* ending: *forcorfen* `cut down´ and *aworpen* `thrown´ (Crystal 1995:21). In the singular forms they get an *-e* ending to the root: *forcorfe*, *aworpe*. As in the indicative the verbs in the subjunctive are inflected in agreement with person, tense and number.

In Modern English **the passive** is constructed with be + the past participle. In Old English it was constructed in the same fashion with the auxiliary verb *beon* + the past participle form of the verb, e.g. as in Matt 3:7 *Ond heora begra eagan **wurden geopenode*** ‘And the eyes of both of them *were opened*’ NASB. The form resembles the Modern German passive form: *Und ihre Augen **wurden geöffnet***.

In Gen 3:5 there is an example of **future** action:

Table 7. Comparison between Old English and Modern English regarding the future

Ælfric	NASB
Ac God wat soðlice ðæt eowre eagan <b>beoð geopenode</b> on swa hwylcum dæge swa ge etað of ðam treowe	For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes <b>will be opened</b>

The inflectional system in Middle English looks much more like that of Modern English. The complicated endings that were typical of Old English are simplified and there is a reduction of forms. The subjunctive form which was used frequently in Old English is gradually replaced by modals or infinitives. As explained above we saw that Old English divided the verbs into a strong and a weak category. This categorization continues in Middle English however, van Gelderen points out that “strong verbs are on the way out, since the language is moving towards regularity” (2006:125). Almost a third of the strong verbs died out during the Middle English period.

Although **word order** belongs to the field of syntax and not to morphology it is interesting to notice that in Middle English, the word order of a verb combined with a negation is different from that of Modern English. Baugh & Cable claimed that the word order of Middle English was similar to that of Old English, but that “the inflectional system looked much like that of Modern English” (2000:163).

Table 8. Placement of the negation and the verb in a relative clause in Old English, Middle English and Modern English

Ælfric	Wycliffe	NASB
ælc treow þe góðne wæstm <b>ne bringð</b> . byð forcorfen	euery tree that <b>makith not</b> good fruyt, shal be kit down	every tree that <b>does not bear</b> good fruit is cut down

The above examples illustrate the position of the negation. In the Old English text the verb has a final position in the clause (cf. Modern German *Jeder Baum, der keine gute Früchte bringt wird umgehauen*). In the Middle English text the negation is placed after the verb and in Modern English the negation is placed between the auxiliary verb and the main verb. However, in Wycliffe's translation modern word order is more predominant than the free word order of Ælfric's translation: *Ðine stemne ic gehire* (Object+Subject+Predicate; Old English) and *Y herde thi vois* (Subject+Predicate+Object; Middle English).

The verbal endings did not undergo any dramatic change in Middle English as seen in the paradigm below:

Table 9. Forms of the present tense and the past tense in Middle English

Present tense	Past tense
I(Y) schal	I(Y) herde, hidde, eet
thou schalt, comest	thou yauest, didist, schuldist
he/she/sche/it schal	he/she/sche/it hadde, wente, answerede,
we/you/they dien, han	we/you/they herden, hidden, schulden

Several examples of the progressive **-ing form** were found in the Wycliffe text: *comynge* 'coming', *goynge* 'going' and *seyinge* 'saying'.

There is no remnant of the Old English **past participle** *ge-* as shown in these two examples: *thou hast ete* and *which the Lord God hade maad* (cf. Old English *ðe God geworhte*).

Once verbs lost their endings the use of **modals** was the only alternative way to go in terms of expressing possibility, obligation, necessity etc. In Wycliffe several examples could be found of modals, e.g. *shal clense* and *ye schulen be as Goddis*. In Old English, subjunctive forms were used to mark these moods.

In Early Modern English, there is flexibility in the use of constructions and forms which distinguishes this period from the Modern English period. Modern English is more fixed or prescriptive as regards verb inflections. In Early Modern English, writers had a choice between using the more archaic forms or the new more modern constructions. Genesis 3:1 illuminates the variations between the use of the old and the new forms of writing:



Table 10. Alternative spelling in Early Modern English

Tyndale	King James Bible
But the serpent was sotyller <i>than</i> all the <i>beastes</i> of the <i>felde</i> which <i>ye LORde</i> God <b>had</b> made and <i>sayd</i> vnto the woman. Ah syr that God <b>hath</b> <i>sayd</i> ye shall not <i>eate</i> of all maner trees in the garden.	Now the serpent was more subtyll <i>then</i> any <i>beast</i> of the <i>field</i> , which <i>the LORD</i> God <b>had</b> made, and he <i>said</i> vnto the woman, Yea, <b>hath</b> God <i>said</i> , Ye shall not <i>eat</i> of euery tree of the garden
cometh	commeth
doth	doeth
toke	took
dye	die
fulfyll	fulfill
gavest	gauest

Baugh & Cable state that spelling was an important issue in this period, and eagerly debated however, there was no fixed or uniform system (2000:203). The publication of spelling guides in the 17<sup>th</sup> century prompted to the introduction of new spelling regulations and in the 18<sup>th</sup> century English spelling was standardized (cf. Crystal 1995:67).

The Early Modern English inflection *-eth* was foremost used in formal writing. In the texts from the period several different verbs were found with this inflectional morpheme, for instance: *hath*, *bringeth*, *becommeth*. The Early Modern English second person singular ending *-est* as in *shouldest* and *gavest* vanishes in Modern English as a result of the disappearance of the second person singular pronoun *thou*. *Thou wast* became *you were* and *Hast thou eaten?* became *Have you eaten?* The third person singular ending *-th* was transformed into the *-(e)s* morpheme in Modern English: *God hath said* becomes *God has said*. However, there is great variation in the use of these morphemes during the Early Modern period. As seen in Table 10, there is no consistency in the way that these endings were used; the Early Modern translations fluctuate in the use of *has* and *hath* and use the forms randomly.

Another change that occurred in Early Modern English was the introduction of the “dummy auxiliary” *do*. Genesis 3:5:

Tyndale	King James Bible
But God <i>doth knowe</i> that whensoever ye shulde eate	For God <i>doeth know</i> , that in the day ye eate thereof

What is more, a verb form that increases in use is the progressive **-ing form**. It appears in the KJB as *walking* and *knowing good and euill* however, in the Tyndale text the form is not

present instead the past tense or the present tense of the verb is applied: *he walked* and *doth knowe both good and evell*.

#### 4.4 Adjectives

In Old English, grammatical gender is marked on adjectives. The adjective follows the gender of the noun, i.e. if the noun is feminine the adjective will automatically agree with the noun. Thus the masculine forms of adjectives are used before masculine nouns, the feminine forms of the adjectives are used before feminine nouns and finally the neuter forms of the adjectives are used before neuter nouns: *fellenne gyrdel* ‘leather belt’ (masculine, accusative), *gódne wæstm* ‘good fruit’ (feminine, genitive), *medemne wæstm* ‘worthy fruit’ (feminine, accusative) and *únadwæscenlicum fyre* ‘unquenchable fire’ (feminine, dative).

The endings of the adjectives are divided into two categories, strong and weak endings; the type of ending the adjective will get depends on whether a demonstrative precedes the adjective or not (van Gelderen 2006:62). If the adjective is not preceded by a demonstrative, the adjective will get a strong ending to compensate for this lack, e.g. *he eow fullað on halgum gaste* ‘he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit’. If the adjective is preceded with a demonstrative, the adjective will get a weak ending, e.g. *ælc treow þe gódne wæstm ne bringð* ‘every/that three that does not bear good fruit’.

Table 11. Comparative of the adjective in the five Bible translations

Ælfric	Wycliff	Tyndale	KJB	NASB
geapre	feller	sotyller	more subtill	more crafty
strengra	strongere	myghtier	mightier	mightier

In Old English, as well as in Modern English, inflected forms – a typical feature of synthetic languages – were used to express comparison: *streng* ‘strong’ (positive), *stengra* ‘stronger’ (comparative) and *strengost* ‘strongest’ (superlative). However, the comparative construction *more*, *most* which frequently occurs with adjectives that have two or more syllables was not typical in Old English. The KJB uses both forms as seen in the table above.

Most of the Old English adjective endings had disappeared by the end of the Middle English period. The only remaining inflection was the *-e* ending which was used for both the singular and the plural: *alle lyunge thingis* ‘all living things’. The ending was not always used in Middle English texts: *good fruyt*. Tyndale however, uses the *-e* ending: *goode frute*. As time progresses the *more* and *most* constructions are used more regularly. This shows that

English moves from a language with many synthetic attributes toward a language with predominantly analytic features. And as a result, the final *-e* was lost at the end of Middle English (e.g. Barber et al. 2009:171).

During the Early Modern English period the adjective had no remaining endings and thus did not show differences in gender, number or case. In the two Early Modern English translations there were variations in how the comparative and superlative were written; the Tyndale text uses the inflection in forming the comparative: *sotyller* and the KJB uses the more modern way to construct the comparative: *more subtile*.

#### 4.5 Adverbs

In Old English, adverbs were formed from adjectives by the addition of the endings *-e* or *-lic/e/*. Some examples of adverbs in the Ælfric text: *witodlice* `as for`, *eft* `again`, *hwær, ða* `then`, *soðlice* `for`, *eornustlice* `therefore`, *eallunga* `now`, *ac* `for` and *ðonne* `that`. In Middle English, the ending *-lic* was reduced to *-ly* and the ending *-e* disappeared. The adverbs in the Wycliffe text do not differentiate from modern adverbs.

In Early Modern English, the most common way to create an adverb is to add the suffix *-ly* to an adjective, although there are more adverbs without suffixes in this period than in Modern English (Nevalainen 2006:99). Since most of the adverbs are grammatical words they do not have a tendency to change remarkably in contrast to lexical words such as nouns, verbs and adjectives that are more likely to change in the course of history.

#### 4.6 Prepositions

Although these are grammatical words that do not change or get morphological inflections they are still worth to mention. Prepositions are frequent in analytic languages. Thus, the Old English text does not have a large amount of them. For instance, instead of a prepositional phrase the Ælfric translation uses a genitive attribute in the following example: *treowe neorxnanwonges* `trees of the garden` or `paradisal trees` (my translation). Some prepositions however, were used in this period. For instance, together with the verb *cweðan* `to say`: *he cwæt to him* `he said to them`. The preposition *between* has gone through an interesting spelling development as seen when comparing the texts: *betweox* (Ælfric), *bitwixe* (Wycliffe), *betwene* (Tyndale) and *betweene* (KJB). In Middle English, more and more prepositions come into use. The *of*-construction gains ground and is found in Wycliffe's text: *a vois of a crier* and *the face of the Lord God* are just some examples. In Old English the genitive is used

instead of a preposition: *clypiendes stefn* and *Godes gesihðte*. The latter phrases are the equivalent phrases to the former Wycliffe phrases.

## **5. Discussion and conclusion**

The principal intention of this limited study was to investigate aspects of morphological change in the English language from Old English to Modern English. In this perspective, it does not take long to draw the conclusion, based merely on a glance at the translations, that Old English was the language period in which most of the morphological changes occurred. While this is also certainly true, it is still the case that all periods display modifications, although the closer we get to our own language period, the fewer modifications there are.

By comparing all the five translations from the Bible and juxtaposing the parallel texts, several tentative patterns emerged, showing how the language changed in terms of morphology, structure and vocabulary. The Old English language, distinguished remarkably from the other periods, mainly by being a highly inflected language.

Further, as a result of the comparison of the translations, it became evident also from the present data that word order in Old English was much more flexible. This corresponds to the fact that Old English was basically a synthetic language with cases and inflections, as opposed to a more analytic language which has fewer cases, less endings, more prepositions and articles and a more bound and constrained word order. The overall trend in Middle English was clearly towards an analytic type of language with fewer inflections and cases. As commonly noted, it was greatly influenced by French and Latin.

With regard to Early Modern English, finally, the analysis reveals that there were ongoing changes in morphology also in this period. On one hand, creativity in spelling flourished, on the other hand, grammar became more restricted.

The study emphasizes morphology solely. To examine phonological changes would add another layer to the paper, but for reasons of space it is beyond the scope of the present study. Yet, such an investigation would give the reader a more complete picture of how the English language has evolved in the course of history. After all, phonology is not only closely related to the pronunciation of words: it is also linked to the spelling of words. Old English for instance, was a purely phonetic language.

Through the process of writing this paper, I have learnt a great deal about the history of English, and it has made me aware that language change is happening at this very moment. It also makes me wonder what the language will look like in several hundred years from now.

To conclude then, I would like to quote the thoughts of Crystal (2007:157) concerning language change:

Languages do not improve or deteriorate. They change, like the tides. Yesterday's tide is no better or worse than today's or tomorrow's. On Tuesday one part of the beach is more affected; on Wednesday it is another. Words come and go. Grammar fluctuates. Pronunciations alter.

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## Appendix

The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis. Edited by S.J. Crawford, 1922

Heafod 3

Eac swylce seo næddre wæs geapre ðonne ealle ða oðre nytenu ðe God geworhte ofer eorðan. Ond seo næddre cwæð to ðam wife: Hwi forbead God eow ðæt ge ne æton of ælcon treowe binnan Paradisum?

<sup>2</sup> Pæt wif andwyrde, "Of ðæra treowa wæstmne ðe synd on Paradisum we etað; <sup>3</sup> ond of ðæs treowes wæstmne þe is on middan neorxnawange, God bebead us, ðæt we ne æton, ne we ðæt treow ne hrepodon ði læs we swelton."

<sup>4</sup> Ða cwæð seo nædre eft to ðam wife, "Ne beo ge nateshwon deade, ðeah ðe ge of ðam treowe eton. <sup>5</sup> Ac God wat soðlice ðæt eowre eagan beoð geopenode on swa hwylcum dæge swa ge etað of ðam treowe, ond ge beoð ðonne englum gelice, witende ægðer ge god ge yfel."

<sup>6</sup> Ða geseah ðæt wif ðæt ðæt treow wæs god to etenne, be ðam ðe hyre ðuhte, ond wlitig on eagam ond lustbære on gesyhðe, ond genam ða of ðæs treowes wæstmne ond geæt ond sealde hyre were: he æt ða. <sup>7</sup> Ond heora begra eagan wurden geopenode; hi oncneowon ða ðæt hi nacode wæron, sywodon him ficleaf, ond worhton him wædbrec.

<sup>8</sup> Eft ða ða God com, ond hi gehyrdon his stemne ðær he eode on neorxnawange ofer midne dæg, ða behyde Adam hine, ond his wif eac swa dyde, fram Godes gesihðe on middam ðam treowe neorxnawanges. <sup>9</sup> God clypode ða Adam, ond cwæð "Adam, hwær eart ðu?"

<sup>10</sup> He cwæð, "Ðine stemne ic gehire, leof, on neorxnawange, ond ic ondræde me, for ðam ðe ic eom nacod, ond ic behyde me."

<sup>11</sup> God cwæð, "Hwa sæde ðe ðæt ðu nacod wære, gyf ðu ne æte of ðam treowe ðe ic ðe bebead ðæt ðu ne æte?"

<sup>12</sup> Adam cwæð, "Ðæt wif ðe ðu me forgeafe to geferan, sealde me of ðam treowe, ond ic ætt."

<sup>13</sup> God cwæð to ðam wife, "Hwi dydestu þæt?  
Heo cwæð, "Seo nædre bepæhte me ond ic ætt."

<sup>14</sup> God cwæð to ðære næddran, "For ðan ðe ðu ðis dydest, ðu bist awyrged betweox eallum nytenum ond wildeorum: ðu gæst on ðinum breoste ond etst ða eorðan eallum dagum ðines lifes.

<sup>15</sup> Ic sette feondrædene betwux ðe ond ðam wife ond ðinum ofspringe ond hire ofspringe; heo tobrytt ðin heafod ond ðu syrwest ongean hire ho."

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Anglo-Saxon Gospels  
Manuscript 140, Corpus Christi College  
circa 1000 by Aelfric (Old English)

Matthew Chapter 3

Mat 3:1 On þam dagum com iohannes se fulluhtere. & bodude on þam westene iudee.

Mat 3:2 & cwæð; Doþ dæd-bote. soðlice genealæceð heofona rice;

Mat 3:3 Ðis ys sé be þam þe gecweden ys. þurh esaïam ðone witegan; Clypiendes stefn wæs on westene. gegearwiað drihtnes weg. doþ his siðas rihte;

Mat 3:4 Se iohannes witodlice hæfde reaf of olfenda hærum & fellenne gyrdel embe hys lendenu. & hys mete wæs gærstapan. & wudu-hunig;

Mat 3:5 Ða ferde to him hierosolim-waru. & eal iudea-ðeod. & eal þt rice wið-geondan iordanen.

Mat 3:6 & hi wæron gefullode on iordané fram him. & hi andettan hyra synna;

Mat 3:7 Soðlice þa he geseh manega þæra sunder-halgena & þæra riht-wisendra to his fulluhte cumende. he cwæð to him; La næddrena cyn. hwa geswutelode eow to fleonne fram þan towardan yrre;

Mat 3:8 Eornostlice doþ medemne weastm þære dæd-bote.

Mat 3:9 & ne cwepað betwux eow. we habbað abraham us to fæder; Soþlice ic secge eow þt god ys swa mihtig þt he mæg of þysum stanum aweccean abrahames bearn;

Mat 3:10 Eallunga ys seo æx to ðæra treowa wurtrumum asett; Eornustlice ælc treow þe góðne wæstm ne bringð. byð forcorfen & on fyr aworpen;

Mat 3:11 Witodlice ic eow fullige on wætere to dæd-bote; Se þe æfter me tówerd ys he ys strengra þonne ic; Ðæs gescý neom ic wyrðe to berenne; He eow fullað on halgum gaste. & on fyre.

Mat 3:12 Ðæs fann. ys on his handa. & he afeormað his þyrscel-flore. & he gegaderað hys hwæte on his bern. þa ceafu he forbærnd on únadwæscendlicum fyre;

Mat 3:13 Þa com se hælend fram galilea to iordané to iohanne. þt he hine fullode;

Mat 3:14 Iohannes þa soðlice forbead him & cwæð; Ic sceal fram þe beon gefullod. & cymst ðu to me;

Mat 3:15 Ða andswarode se hælend him & cwæð; Læt nu. þus unc gedafnað ealle rihtwisnesse gefyllan. þa forlet he hine;

Mat 3:16 Soþlice þa se hælend gefullod wæs. hrædlice he astah of ðam wætere. & him wurdon þærrichte heofenas ontynede & he ge-seah godes gast niþer-stigende swa swa culfran. & wunigende ofer hine;

Mat 3:17 And soðlice þa com stefn of heofenum. & þus cwæð; Her is min se gecorena sunu on þam me gelicode;

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<http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles/corpusanglosaxongospels/matthew/3.html>



Wycliffe Bible  
1395 by John Wycliffe (Middle English)

Genesis Chapter 3

Gen 3:1 But and the serpent was feller than alle lyuyng beestis of erthe, whiche the Lord God hadde maad. Which serpent seide to the womman, Why comaundide God to you, that ye schulden not ete of ech tre of paradys?

Gen 3:2 To whom the womman answerde, We eten of the fruyt of trees that ben in paradys;

Gen 3:3 sothely God commaundide to vs, that we schulden not eate of the fruyt of the tre, which is in the myddis of paradys, and that we schulden not touche it, lest peraventure we dien.

Gen 3:4 Forsothe the serpent seide to the womman, ye schulen not die bi deeth;

Gen 3:5 for whi God woot that in what euere dai ye schulen ete therof, youre iyen schulen be opened, and ye schulen be as Goddis, knowyng good and yuel.

Gen 3:6 Therefore the womman seiye that the tre was good, and swete to ete, and fair to the iyen, and delitable in bi holdyng; and sche took of the fruyt therof, and eet, and yaf to hir hosebande, and he eet.

Gen 3:7 And the iyen of bothe weren openid; and whanne thei knowen that thei weren nakid, thei sewden the leeuves of a fige tre, and maden brechis to hem silf.

Gen 3:8 And whanne thei herden the vois of the Lord God goyng in paradys at the wynd after myddai, Adam and his wijf hidden hem fro the face of the Lord God in the middis of the tre of paradys.

Gen 3:9 And the Lord God clepide Adam, and seide to hym, Where art thou?

Gen 3:10 And Adam seide, Y herde thi vois in paradys, and Y drede, for Y was nakid, and Y hidde me.

Gen 3:11 To whom the Lord seide, Who forsothe schewide to thee that thou were nakid, no but for thou hast ete of the tre of which Y comaundide to thee that thou schuldist not ete?

Gen 3:12 And Adam seide, The womman which thou yauest felowe to me, yaf me of the tre, and Y eet.

Gen 3:13 And the Lord seide to the womman, Whi didist thou this thing? Which answerde, The serpent disseyued me, and Y eet.

Gen 3:14 And the Lord God seide to the serpent, For thou didist this, thou schalt be cursid among alle lyuyng thingis and vnresonable beestis of erthe; thou schalt go on thi brest, and thou schalt ete erthe in alle daies of thi liif;

Gen 3:15 Y schal sette enemytees bitwixe thee and the womman, and bitwixe thi seed and hir seed; sche schal breke thin heed, and thou schalt sette aspies to hir heele.

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<http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles/wycliffebible/genesis/3.html>

Wycliffe Bible  
1395 by John Wycliffe (Middle English)

Matthew Chapter 3

Mat 3:1 In tho daies Joon Baptist cam, and prechide in the desert of Judee,

Mat 3:2 and seide, Do ye penaunce, for the kyngdom of heuenes shal neie.

Mat 3:3 For this is he, of whom it is seid bi Ysaie, the prophete, seyinge, A vois of a crier in desert, Make ye redi the weies of the Lord; make ye riyt the pathis of hym.

Mat 3:4 And this Joon hadde clothing of camels heeris, and a girdil of skynne aboute hise leendis; and his mete was honysoukis, and hony of the wode.

Mat 3:5 Thanne Jerusalem wente out to hym, and al Judee, and al the cuntre aboute Jordan;

Mat 3:6 and thei weren waischun of hym in Jordan, `and knowlechiden her synnes.

Mat 3:7 But he siy manye of the Farysees and of Saduceis comynge to his baptyng, and seide to hem, Generaciouns of eddris, who shewide to you to fle fro the wraththe that is to come?

Mat 3:8 Therfor do ye worthi fruyte of penaunce,

Mat 3:9 and nyle ye seie with ynne you, We han Abraham to fadir; for Y seie to you, that God is myyti to reise vp of these stoones the sones of Abraham.

Mat 3:10 And now the ax is put to the roote of the tree; therefore euery tree that makith not good fruyt, shal be kit doun, and shal be cast in to the fier.

Mat 3:11 Y waische you in water, in to penaunce; but he that shal come after me is strongere than Y, whos schoon Y am not worthi to bere; he shal baptise you in the Hooli Goost and fier.

Mat 3:12 Whos wynewing cloth is in his hoond, and he shal fulli clense his corn flore, and shal gadere his whete in to his berne; but the chaffe he shal brenne with fier that mai not be quenched.

Mat 3:13 Thanne Jhesus cam fro Galilee in to Jordan to Joon, to be baptised of hym.

Mat 3:14 And Joon forbode him, and seide, Y owe to be baptised of thee, and thou comest to me?

Mat 3:15 But Jhesus answeride, and seide to hym, Suffre nowe, for thus it fallith to vs to fulfille al riytfulnesse.

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<http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles/wycliffebible/matthew/3.html>

Tyndale Bible  
1534 by William Tyndale (Early Modern English)

Genesis Chapter 3

Gen 3:1 But the serpent was sotyller than all the beastes of the felde which ye LORde God had made and sayd vnto the woman. Ah syr that God hath sayd ye shall not eate of all maner trees in the garden.

Gen 3:2 And the woman sayd vnto the serpent of the frute of the trees in the garden we may eate

Gen 3:3 but of the frute of the tree yt is in the myddes of the garden (sayd God) se that ye eate not and se that ye touch it not: lest ye dye.

Gen 3:4 Then sayd the serpent vnto the woman: tush ye shall not dye:

Gen 3:5 But God doth knowe that whensoever ye shulde eate of it youre eyes shuld be opened and ye shulde be as God and knowe both good and evell.

Gen 3:6 And the woman sawe that it was a good tree to eate of and lustie vnto the eyes and a pleasant tre for to make wyse. And toke of the frute of it and ate and gaue vnto hir husband also with her and he ate.

Gen 3:7 And the eyes of both them were opened that they vnderstode how that they were naked. Than they sowed fygge leues togedder and made them apurns.

Gen 3:8 And they herd the voyce of the LORde God as he walked in the garde in the coole of the daye. And Adam hyd hymselfe and his wyfe also from the face of the LORde God amonge the trees of the garden.

Gen 3:9 And the LORde God called Adam and sayd vnto him where art thou?

Gen 3:10 And he answered. Thy voyce I harde in the garden but I was afrayd because I was naked and therfore hyd myselfe.

Gen 3:11 And he sayd: who told the that thou wast naked? hast thou eaten of the tree of which I bade the that thou shuldest not eate?

Gen 3:12 And Adam answered. The woman which thou gavest to bere me company she toke me of the tree ad I ate.

Gen 3:13 And the LORde God sayd vnto the woman: wherfore didest thou so? And the woman answered the serpent deceived me and I ate.

Gen 3:14 And the LORde God sayd vnto the serpet because thou haste so done moste cursed be thou of all catell and of all beastes of the feld: vppo thy bely shalt thou goo: and erth shalt thou eate all dayes of thy lyfe.

Gen 3:15 Morover I will put hatred betwene the and the woman and betwene thy seed and hyr seed. And that seed shall tread the on the heed ad thou shalt tread hit on the hele.

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<http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles/tyndalebible/genesis/3.html>

Tyndale Bible  
1534 by William Tyndale (Early Modern English)

Matthew Chapter 3

Mat 3:1 In those dayes Ihon the Baptyst came and preached in the wildernes of Iury  
Mat 3:2 saynge; Repet the kyngdome of heue is at honde.  
Mat 3:3 This is he of whom it is spoken by the Prophet Esay which sayeth: The voyce of a cryer in wyldernes prepare the Lordes waye and make hys pathes strayght.  
Mat 3:4 This Iho had hys garmet of camels heer and a gerdell of a skynne aboute his loynes. Hys meate was locustes and wylde hony.  
Mat 3:5 The went oute to hym Ierusalem and all Iury and all ye regio roudede aboute Iorda  
Mat 3:6 and were baptised of him in Iorda cofessynge their synnes.  
Mat 3:7 When he sawe many of ye Pharises and of ye Saduces come to hys baptim he sayde vnto the: O generacio of vipers who hath taught you to fle fro the vengeauce to come?  
Mat 3:8 Brynge forth therefore the frutes belongynge to repentaunce.  
Mat 3:9 And se that ye ons thynke not to saye in your selues we haue Abraham to oure father. For I saye vnto you that God is able of these stones to rayse vp chyldern vnto Abraha.  
Mat 3:10 Euenowe is ye axe put vnto ye rote of ye trees: soo that every tree which bringeth not forthe goode frute is hewe doune and cast into ye fyre.  
Mat 3:11 I baptise you in water in toke of repentaunce: but he ye cometh after me is myghtier then I whose shues I am not worthy to beare. He shall baptise you with ye holy gost and with fyre:  
Mat 3:12 which hath also his fan in his hod and will poure his floure and gadre ye wheet into his garner and will burne ye chaffe with vnquecheable fyre  
Mat 3:13 Then cam Iesus from Galile to Iordan vnto Ihon to be baptised of hym.  
Mat 3:14 But Ihon forbade hym saynge: I ought to be baptysed of the: and comest thou to me?  
Mat 3:15 Iesus answered and sayd to hym: Let it be so now. For thus it becommeth vs to fulfyll all rightwesnes. Then he suffred hym.

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King James Version  
also called Authorized Version  
1611 Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson, editors (Early Modern English)

Genesis Chapter 3

Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtile then any beast of the field, which the LORD God had made, and he said vnto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of euery tree of the garden?

Gen 3:2 And the woman said vnto the serpent, Wee may eate of the fruite of the trees of the garden:

Gen 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eate of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Gen 3:4 And the Serpent said vnto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.

Gen 3:5 For God doeth know, that in the day ye eate thereof, then your eyes shall bee opened: and yee shall bee as Gods, knowing good and euill.

Gen 3:6 And when the woman saw, that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she tooke of the fruit thereof, and did eate, and gaue also vnto her husband with her, and hee did eate.

Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, & they knew that they were naked, and they sewed figge leaues together, and made themselues aprons.

Gen 3:8 And they heard the voyce of the LORD God, walking in the garden in the coole of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselues from the presence of the LORD God, amongst the trees of the garden.

Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called vnto Adam, and said vnto him, Where art thou?

Gen 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid my selfe.

Gen 3:11 And he said, Who told thee, that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eate?

Gen 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gauest to be with mee, shee gaue me of the tree, and I did eate.

Gen 3:13 And the LORD God said vnto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eate.

Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said vnto the Serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed aboue all cattel, and aboue euery beast of the field: vpon thy belly shalt thou goe, and dust shalt thou eate, all the dayes of thy life.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmitie betweene thee and the woman, and betweene thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heele.

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<http://www.lookhigher.net/englishbibles/kingjamesversion1611/genesis/3.html>

King James Version  
also called Authorized Version  
1611 Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson, editors (Early Modern English)

Matthew Chapter 3

Mat 3:1 In those daies came Iohn the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Iudea,

Mat 3:2 And saying, Repent yee: for the kingdome of heauen is at hand.

Mat 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying, The voyce of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Mat 3:4 And the same Iohn had his raiment of camels haire, and a leatherne girdle about his loynes, and his meate was locusts and wilde hony.

Mat 3:5 Then went out to him Hierusalem, and all Iudea, and all the region round about Iordane,

Mat 3:6 And were baptized of him in Iordane, confessing their sinnes.

Mat 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his Baptisme, he said vnto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Mat 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.

Mat 3:9 And thinke not to say within your selues, Wee haue Abraham to our father: For I say vnto you, that God is able of these stones to raise vp children vnto Abraham.

Mat 3:10 And now also the axe is layd vnto the root of the trees: Therefore euery tree which bringeth not fourth good fruite, is hewen downe, and cast into the fire.

Mat 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water vnto repentance: but he that commeth after mee, is mightier then I, whose shoes I am not worthy to beare, hee shall baptize you with the holy Ghost, and with fire.

Mat 3:12 Whose fanne is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floore, and gather his wheat into the garner: but wil burne vp the chaffe with vnquenchable fire.

Mat 3:13 Then commeth Iesus from Galilee to Iordane, vnto Iohn, to be baptized of him:

Mat 3:14 But Iohn forbade him, saying, I haue need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

Mat 3:15 And Iesus answering, said vnto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becommeth vs to fulfill all righteousnesse. Then he suffered him.

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Genesis Chapter 3

3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; <sup>3</sup> but from the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" <sup>4</sup> The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! <sup>5</sup> For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and 'you will be like God, knowing good and evil.'" <sup>6</sup> When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. <sup>7</sup> Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

<sup>8</sup> They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. <sup>9</sup> Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" <sup>10</sup> He said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." <sup>11</sup> And He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" <sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman whom You gave to *be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate." Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" And the woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." <sup>14</sup> The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; <sup>15</sup> And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." <sup>16</sup> To the woman he said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you."

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Matthew Chapter 3

**3:1** Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup> For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said,

“THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,  
MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,  
MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!”

<sup>4</sup> Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was <sup>5</sup>locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan; <sup>6</sup> and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance; <sup>9</sup> and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham for our father’; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>10</sup> The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

<sup>11</sup> “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus arrived from Galilee at the Jordan *coming* to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to prevent Him, saying, “I have need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?” <sup>15</sup> But Jesus answering said to him, “Permit *it* at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he permitted Him.

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