

Once And For All Delivered

Earnestly Contending Beyond the Translations

by Dan Lash

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Statement on Translation usage

This book quote many translations of the Bible: King James, New King James, American Standard of 1901, The English Standard Version (2001), Young's Literal Translation, New International Version and the Greek Septuagint. All New Testament original language citings and corrections are based upon the Hodge-Farstad Majority Greek New Testament.

Acknowledgments

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I am especially grateful for Nick and Allison Borden, who enthusiastically and tirelessly continue to print these books.

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And my greatest praise goes to the Lord, who continues to pull the strings of His universe so that this ministry’s needs are always met.

Cover image features a drawing titled “Christoforo Landino of Florence” by an unidentified French art student approximately 1900 AD and depicts Christoforo Landino instructing his pupils in “scripture and poetics” in the 15th century.

Introduction

For several years now, I have been planning on writing a book on the differences between the various translations, from which both the lay person and the student of the word could benefit.

I must admit I struggled over what should be the title of this book. I mean, the verse that is referenced in the title of the book (Jude 3) is not directly a verse on a particular translation or preservation. However it is a verse on the truth which was once and for all delivered to the saint. Moreover, a faith once and for all and inerrantly delivered, supposes that the vehicle through which that faith was once delivered to us was likewise without error in its day.

This book is not meant to be exhaustive on any given topic. It, rather, samples various considerations one must take into account when approaching the question as to why there are so many translations.

Back in 2003, I wrote a book entitled “Perspective on the King James Only Movement”. I thought that I would eventually expand and update that book. This book is not an expansion of that book; it contained its own set of facts, all of which I still embrace.

This book is filled with some easily verifiable facts so that it doesn't require a history scholar, or a master of textual criticism, to verify them. Most of the facts contained in this book can be verified simply from the Scriptures themselves.

There is a great deal of internal and contextual evidence in the Scriptures themselves which contributes to our ability to judge whatever translation we have set before us. This book will point out of a few of those easily verifiable facts.

Spoiler alert! The facts presented in this book will still support what I have held to for over 25 years now: That the Byzantine Text type is the most reliable; and that the King James, New King James, Young's Literal Translation and the American Standard Version should all have their places in the library of the diligent student of Scripture.

In this book, I will also demonstrate why I believe that the children of God in the pew should be urged to be able to “lift the hood” of their pet translation and dig a little deeper into the original languages of Scripture. This would enable them to avoid the “crisis of faith” when they discover that another translation differs from their own. It would also enable them to, as Jude exhorts us, “earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints”. (Jude 1:3)

Dan Lash
June 2025

Why There Are So Many Translations

Part One

Before we get into the discussion of this issue, I want to say that today in America we have a bunch of people who are uninitiated in pursuing the truth of God from the Scriptures.

When I was first saved, I started buying the tools that I needed to effectively study the Scriptures. I think that the first four years after I was saved, I was probably spending 10 percent of my income on buying books to help me search out the Scriptures to discover the truth of God. I remember early on when people would come to our house, they would come in and see the old broken down couch, the used chairs I bought, end tables made of cardboard boxes, my old clunky cars. But, “Hey! Come back here and look at my awesome Bible reference Library.” I owned the complete 10 volume Kittle’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament before I owned a 13-inch color TV. I owned an exhaustive concordance to the Greek New Testament before I owned a couch. The first “couch” I owned was a \$10 cot I bought at an Army-Navy surplus store, covered with a homemade quilt. I was excited, very early on in my post conversion life, to be accumulating the resources which would enable me to search the Scriptures for myself.

Moreover, I hung out with friends who did the same. When I was a young man in my early twenties, my friends and I would regularly scout out Christian book stores to determine when they were going to be having their used book sales. Most of the books in my reference library are pre-owned, acquired from the estates of various pastors who

had graduated to glory. My friends and I would all pile into the vehicle which would most likely survive the 120 mile trip to Grand Rapids and hit all the Christian book stores which were having their New Year's sales.

That is what my friends and I did. Every time we traveled together to a big city, part of the trip was going to be to the big used book store in that city, to arm ourselves with the tools to make better inquiry of the Scriptures.

None of us cared much which translation the other was using. When discussing the word of God, when one friend's translation differed in reading with the other, we could discuss why. It did not create a crisis of faith because we could all get out our interlinear Bibles and discuss the differences. We did not persecute one another for having a different translation. We could compare our different translations, discuss the differences and, together, come to a Holy Spirit-illuminated consensus of faith.

Those were the friends I hung out with in my spiritual youth. Moreover, I was the only one of the group who had formal ministerial training. The rest of them were just regular guys, whose hunger for the truth propelled them to lift the hood of their favorite translation to see why it read differently from another. None of us considered familiarizing ourselves with original language helps a Herculean task. It was just a natural extension of being noble-minded children of God.

Serious seekers of the truth do not experience a crisis of faith because somebody else uses a different translation.

Quite frankly, it creates an opportunity to do a deep dive into the Scriptures, which is a good thing.

Quite frankly, the differences between the translations are usually complementary; that is, the serious student of the word of God will gain additional insight by comparing the different translations. The diligent student of the word will usually come to a greater understanding of God's truth by seeking the reason behind the differences between one translation and another. In my years of studying the King James, New King James and American Standard versions, comparing one translation with another, and then digging to discern a difference when one was found, I most generally reaped an additional harvest of understanding that I could not have gleaned from just one translation. Different translations quite often seek to bring to the English reader an additional complementary nuance that would be awkward to have communicated with just one translation.

A perfect example of this is found in Ephesians 2:8-9:

^{KJV} **Ephesians 2:8, 9:** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

⁹ Not of works, lest any man should boast.

^{NKJ} **Ephesians 2:8, 9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Now I suppose the King James person could accuse the New King James of being “straight out of the pit of hell” because the New King James in this verse could be accused

of denying the doctrine of the security of the believer. But the real reason for the King James' "For by grace ye are saved" and the New King James' "For by grace you have been saved" is simple because the word "saved", in the Greek, is a perfect passive participle.

The perfect tense in the Greek communicates action in a point in time in the past with continued results. So the King James draws out the "continued results" aspect of the perfect tense, while the New King James draws out the "point in time" aspect of the perfect tense. Both are correct and, when taken together, are complementary. I suppose, if you were looking for a really literal translation, it would be, "for by grace you have been and are saved". But, at some point, a literal translation can get awkward.

This is why serious student of the word, will often own a parallel translation of the Bible. When I study the Bible, I always have the American Standard of 1901, King James, New King James and Majority text opened in my Bible study software, with the Hebrew and Septuagint opened in the Old Testament, and Young's Literal Translation and the Geneva Bible always available at the click of mouse. When I need to do additional research, I can do a word search on a Hebrew or Greek word, or I can break out my Analytical Greek Lexicon, or Thayer Greek Lexicon if I need to do a deeper dive on a word.

King James only pastors have created, in the minds of their congregants, a justification to be uninitiated seekers of truth. Rather than setting forth the serious students of Scripture as examples to the flock, they heap scorn upon those who undertake a deep dive into the underlying text of

Scripture. Some pastors feel threatened by anyone in their churches who would dare put forth a greater effort than they do to search the Scriptures.

If we are to be totally honest, the REAL reason for the persecution of those who search for truth outside of the typical fundamentalist box is that those who do such searching might expose the ill-equipped state of the pastor who refuses to do the same. God expects pastors to labor in word and doctrine because God expects pastors to be an example for all believers, in order that we can all be equipped to defend the faith. He expects all believers to continue in word and doctrine so that Biblical truth can richly abide upon our hearts.

We have in America today a shamefully ill-equipped army of saints who have elevated the King James only movement to the ultimate test of fellowship. Serious students of Scripture hang their heads in embarrassment over just how so many people can be so ignorant and belligerent about it. I mean, it doesn't take a college professor to lay bare the error of this movement. All it takes is a simple saint with an interlinear Greek New Testament (or just a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance) who will honestly come to grips with the facts. We will demonstrate that this is the case in a later chapter in this book.

So how much does God expect the average person to become engaged in a pursuit of truth?

Here is an example from Scripture:

The rich man in the account of the rich man and Lazarus is an example of a man who had so neglected any hearing of the truth that he had no trouble stepping over a starving man left on his front door step. This was the height of callousness and mercilessness. The Jew's contemplation of truth was to have produced mercy in his life. Obviously, the rich man had none.

Luke 16:19-31: "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

²⁰ "But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate,

²¹ "desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² "So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried.

²³ "And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

²⁴ "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

²⁵ "But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented.

²⁶ 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

²⁷ "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house,
²⁸ 'for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.'
²⁹ "Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.'
³⁰ "And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.'
³¹ "But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

Notice the last verse in this account. "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

The word "hear" in this verse is a present tense verb. So we need to understand that neither the rich man nor his brothers were regularly hearing the teaching of Moses and the prophets. If they ARE NOT hearing Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.

If the rich man and his brothers had not acquired the prerequisite light needed to believe from Moses and the prophets, a man rising from the dead would not have produced that light in their souls. It would produce only an uninformed amazement.

The rich man and his brothers had not been attending a Scripture-teaching synagogue where their consciences could have been challenged and directed to hear and believe the grace of God. They had never put forth the effort to come to

the eternally important conclusions concerning the coming Christ and come to hope in His salvation.

Consequently, they missed eternity.

The rich man, and most likely his brothers, missed eternity for the same reason people miss eternity today: A refusal to give the light of the truth and the message of His grace a hearing in their consciences.

Let me ask you this: Could you come to a saving faith in Christ by a contemplation of a multitude of passages in the Old Testament concerning the sufferings of Christ? That is the degree of familiarity that God required of those who had believed before the arrival of Christ. God expects people to be regularly occupying their consciences in the contemplation of Scripture.

Contrast the lack of faith of the rich man with the faith of the apostles before they met the Lord Jesus. They had been, together, regularly acquainting themselves with the Scriptures to such a degree that when the Messiah came along, they all immediately recognized Him:

John 1:36-45: And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

³⁸ Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

³⁹ He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.

⁴¹ He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ).

⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

⁴³ The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me."

⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote -- Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Notice the content of the faith of these disciples before they ever met Jesus. They had been anticipating the arrival of the Messiah, the One of whom Moses, in the Law and the Prophets wrote.

This ragtag band of fishermen had been discussing the Scriptures and had together come to a justifying faith which was anticipating the Lamb of God, spoken of in the Law and the Prophets and prophesied by the prophet Daniel. When the Lord showed up on the scene they recognized Him because their previous deliberations in the Law and the

Prophets created in their minds the correct expectation of a suffering Lamb of God.

How many people today in our churches, having only an Old Testament, could come to a justifying faith in Christ?

Most likely, very few. Yet this IS the degree of familiarity which God expects people to have with regards to His word.

Pastors should not be dumbing down their teaching of Scripture just so that they can hold an audience of spiritually uninitiated people. Rather, those believers who model due diligence in the Scriptures should be put forth as examples of the diligence in the word which God expects of all believers.

Why There Are So Many Translations

Part Two

With this long introduction and exhortation on getting serious about truth, let's now talk about Bible translations.

Why are there so many translations and why are they all different?

There are four reasons why any given verse in one translation may read differently in another translation. Those reason are listed here in the order of greatest reasons differences exist to the least impactful reason that a difference between a translation exists.

1. The end goal of the translator with the goal of producing a more readable translation as the end result,
2. The bias of the translator
3. The resources available to the translator including the skill of the translators and updated rules of Greek syntax.
4. The underlying Greek text.

1. The end goal of the translator with reference to the readability of the end result

Some of the end goals of Bible translators are laudable; some are not. It is this end goal of the translators which is

the primary reason for variations between translations, not the underlying text.

Some translators attempt to produce a word for word equivalence from the Greek into the English. The King James, the New King James, the American Standard of 1901, the New American Standard and Young's Literal Translation are attempts at a word for word translation. These translations, even though they take more concentration for the reader to glean the original intention of the Spirit of God, are the freest from the bias of the translator. In fact Young's Literal Translation is an attempt at an English translation which follows the order of the words of the Textus Receptus, which is handy for the Greek student but impractical for most readers.

Other translations sought to produce a more readable text at the expense of an exact word for word translation. The NIV and ESV fall into this category. They are called "dynamic equivalent translations". These translations, even though they might be more readable, sacrifice precision for ease of reading. They are also more likely to insert the bias of the translator into the context.

My personal preference would be to labor a little harder in a word for word translation. There are far too many incorrect biases held by far too many modern translators to, in my opinion, trust their translations.

Word for word translations more readily lend themselves to systematic Bible study. This is because the student of Scripture can better search the Scriptures on how a particular word is used. The Bible student using a literal translation

can study an English word through the Bible and, because these words are translated more consistently, the Bible student can discover several contexts where that word is used and begin to build up his spirit with consistent Bible truth.

Let's now compare a verse in Scripture and see how each major translation lines up to it with regard to literalness of translation.

^{KJV} **Romans 8:7:** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Romans 8:7: διότι τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἔχθρα εἰς θεόν τῷ γὰρ νόμῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὑποτάσσεται οὐδὲ γὰρ δύναται

Here is the verse as it reads in the American Standard Version which most literally translates this verse from the Greek:

^{ASV} **Romans 8:7:** because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be:

The American Standard of 1901, referenced above, translates this verse most accurately. It conveys the original intent of the passage by talking about that human frame of reference with which we are born and its inability to be subject to the law of God. The ASV conveys the original intent of the Spirit, and that is that no amount of reformation can alter the fact that we are born with a frame of reference

which cannot be subjugated to the will of God. This fact should cause a person to forsake a form of righteousness based upon personal reformation and, rather, embrace a righteousness which is based upon the perfect sacrifice of Christ.

The English Standard Version translates this verse incorrectly because it introduces the possibility that the mind with which we are born, if it is not set on the flesh, might be able to be subject to God.

^{ESV} **Romans 8:7:** For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

The concept of “set on the flesh” does not appear in a literal rendering of this verse. It completely fails to take into consideration the correct definition of “the mind of the flesh”. Because of its failure to understand what “the mind of the flesh” is, that is, the frame of reference with which we are born, it completely denies the concept of total depravity. This is an example in which a dynamic equivalent translation gets it wrong.

2. The Bias of the translator

The bias of the translator enters into Romans 8:7 as well.

The ESV has a Calvinistic bias. Most Calvinists do not view the new birth as creating within a person a new man with a new frame of reference which is not able to assimilate sin. Calvinists, for the most part, believe that our existing minds simply need to be improved or reformed. That is why

a translation with a Calvinistic bias would read “a mind set on the flesh”, when the truth of the matter is that the concept of “set on” is found nowhere in the original Greek of the context.

The Bible teaches that, when we are born again, a new person who cannot assimilate sin is introduced into our person. When this new person is fed New Testament truth, he becomes the dominant frame of reference in the believer. It is that reality which enables the child of God to overcome the lusts of the flesh.

The King James and the New King James read almost identically in this text.

^{KJV} **Romans 8:7:** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

^{NKJ} **Romans 8:7:** Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Both the King James and the New King James substitute the words, “carnal mind” for the literal, “mind of the flesh”. They too, like the ESV, create the impression that we are in possession of a mind that might be able to be improved so that it is no longer carnal. The context of this passage will not support that understanding. The context is comparing the human frame of reference, with which we are born, to the spiritual frame of reference we receive in the new birth. The human frame of reference, that is, the mind of the flesh,

cannot be subjugated to the law of God. The King James and the New King James substitute the one word “carnal” for four words “mind of the flesh” and, in the process, fail to capture the original meaning of the text.

The apostle Paul already had available a word which is translated “carnal”; that word is, “σαρκικός”, which speaks of a believer who is still dominated by his flesh. He utilizes this word four times in the following context:

^{NKJ} **1 Corinthians 3:1-4:** And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.

² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;

³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?

⁴ For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?

People with minds still dominated by the flesh (carnal minds) can mature out of the flesh’s dominion. However, the mind of the flesh cannot be brought into submission to the precepts of God; rather, the child of God, with an invigorated new man calling the shots, causes the mind of the flesh to take a back seat in the decision making process within the child of God. So, in Romans 8:7, the King James and the New King James create an inaccurate understanding of “the mind of the flesh”. These two translations should have left intact the precise wording of the original text.

Let's now look at how the NIV handles this verse:

^{NIV} **Romans 8:7:** the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

The word “sinful” is nowhere to be found in the underlying Greek text. This is an attempt at a dynamic equivalence which is not at all equivalent.

By the way, all of the underlying Greek texts are the same in this verse. The TR, Byzantine and Westcott and Hort all read identically. So, the reason each of these verses read differently is either the translational approach or the bias of the translator. In this verse, it is mainly the doctrinal bias of the translator.

All of the above translations were attempting to translate the passage in an honorable way. In contrast to these translations, we have less honorable translations like the New Revised Standard Version which has, as one of its primary goals, gender neutrality. This is not a laudable goal. The New Revised Standard Version of the Bible is a deliberate corruption of the text to produce a politically correct translation.

In Romans 8:7, we see that the main reasons for the difference in the reading are the translational approach and the bias of the translator.

Here is a verse in which the Calvinistic bias of the translator is the reason for the various readings in English.

^{ASV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election,

Before we go any further, let's consider the context:

^{ASV} **1 Thessalonians 1:2-4:** We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention *of you* in our prayers;

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

⁴ knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election,

If we understand election to be unto service and not unto salvation (which is the Biblical consideration concerning election), then what Paul is doing in this context is drawing joy from savoring the remembrance of the Thessalonian's labor and growth. He is savoring, that is, he is knowing their election; election here being unto their service.

Election is unto service, not unto salvation. When we understand this, this verse makes sense. However, once again, only the American Standard of 1901 translates this correctly. All other translations interject the reformed Calvinistic bias into this context. All other translations have God doing the electing.

By the way, once again, there is not difference in the underlying Greek text. The TR, Byzantine and Alexandrian texts all read identically. Once again, the difference between all of these translations is the bias of the translator.

^{BYZ} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** εἰδότες ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι
ὑπὸ θεοῦ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν

^{STE} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** εἰδότες ἀδελφοὶ ἡγαπημένοι
ὑπὸ θεοῦ τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν

Once again the American Standard nails it.

^{ASV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** knowing, brethren beloved of
God, your election,

Young's Literal translation also correctly translates it into
English:

^{YLT} **1 Thessalonians 1:4** having known, brethren
beloved, by God, your election,

Listen to the reformed theology injected into the English
standard version.

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** For we know, brothers loved
by God, that he has chosen you,

Likewise the King James and the New King James, which
read identically, insert the fatalistic Calvinistic bias:

^{KJV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** Knowing, brethren beloved,
your election of God.

^{NKJ} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** knowing, beloved brethren,
your election by God.

In the original, the brethren are BELOVED, not elected by God.

Here is the New International Version's reading of the verse:

^{NIV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

Even though the NIV gets the “brethren beloved by God” correct, it also states that God has chosen you: A complete Calvinistic distortion of the original text.

By the way, the same Calvinistic bias can be seen in the first two verses of I Peter.

Here is how I Peter begins in the King James:

^{KJV} **1 Peter 1:1, 2:** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
² Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Compare the above to the reading of the American Standard:

^{ASV} **1 Peter 1:1, 2:** Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect who are sojourners of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

² according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

In the King James, the word “elect” is moved to the beginning of verse two and converted to a verb.

The American Standard of 1901 retains the word “elect” as a dative case noun in the position that it occurs in the original Greek.

Once again, there is no difference here in the underlying Greek text which would account for the difference between these two readings. It is simply the bias of the translator.

By way, the King James is not the first English Bible which contained this bias. The Tyndale Bible of 1526, the Great Bible of 1539, and the Geneva Bible of 1560 all insert this bias.

Likewise, Ephesians 4:18 contains what might be considered a Calvinistic bias. In this verse, the term “blindness” is substituted for the word “hardening” or “stubbornness” in the KJV and NKJV as the reason for people not having come to faith.

^{ASV} **Ephesians 4:18:** being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart;

^{KJV} **Ephesians 4:18:** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

Stubbornness is generally considered the fault of the individual; blindness is sometimes imposed upon a person by the Father. In this context, it is a hardened conscience which is to blame for their lack of relationship with God.

Once again, the ASV gets it right while the King James gets it wrong, in spite of the fact that both verses read identically in the underlying Greek text. In the above example, Young's Literal Translation, which is also based upon the Textus Receptus, translated it correctly.

^{YLT} **Ephesians 4:18:** being darkened in the understanding, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart.

One statement I often make which usually floors my KJV only Textus Receptus friends is this: If you really like the Textus Receptus, you ought to get a 1901 American Standard Version Bible (ASV). The reason that statement floors them is that the ASV is an Alexandrian text based manuscript which is anathema to a TR person. However, since the differences in translations are usually not because of the underlying Greek text, and the American Standard is more literal than the King James, it makes the American Standard a valuable resource for the Textus Receptus leaning translator.

I would also recommend that the person who prefers the King James acquire a Young's Literal Translation. It is a very helpful translation for the English only student of the word, enabling the English only student of Scripture to experience the most literal (but awkward) translation of the Textus Receptus.

So, as you can see in at least the three above examples, the ASV follows the TR more closely than the King James, in spite of fact that it is based upon the Alexandrian text.

Understand this: The underlying text is usually not the main reason for the differences in the translations. The reason I can tell a TR only person that they ought to have a copy of the ASV is because the ASV is the most unbiased translation out there, even though it is based on the Alexandrian text.

Oh, don't get me wrong; I know that the Alexandrian manuscripts leave out Acts 8:37 and I John 5:7, (but so does the Majority text). Any Bible student with a good set of Bible notes should be able to discover the variations between the manuscripts.

This is the main reason I most often use the New King James when I am teaching. Every New King James Study Bible has, in its footnotes, the major variations between its underlying texts, which are the Textus Receptus, the Alexandrian text and the Majority text. Because those notes exist only in the New King James, I regularly teach from it and encourage those in my congregation to have it in their possession. That way, when we come across a variant in the Majority text, it can be pointed out.

Quite frankly, if a King James study Bible had the Majority text contained in the foot notes I would be using that version as well.

Here is another example in which the translation in question comes down to the bias of the translator: I John 3:9. Once again, the underlying Greek text is identical in all three of our major text types.

In I John 3:9, the three most reliable literal translations get it right and the modern translations, once again, inject a Calvinistic bias into the translation.

Here is how the three literal translations of the Scriptures translated this verse.

^{ASV} **1 John 3:9:** Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin, because his seed abideth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God.

^{KJV} **1 John 3:9:** Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

^{NKJ} **1 John 3:9:** Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

In the above three translations, he “which is begotten of God” is the new man created within the believer, as an infant, at the time of the new birth. He, that is, this new man, cannot sin, because he bears and can bear only the

image of God. This new birth creates a new man created in the image of God as we see in the following verse:

Ephesians 4:24: and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

So, in 1 John 3:9, the King James, the New King James and the American Standard of 1901 properly convey the message of the verse.

Here are two, less than literal, dynamic equivalent translations of this verse:

^{ESV} **1 John 3:9:** No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

^{NIV} **1 John 3:9:** No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Okay, so what about this verse in the newer translations? What the ESV and the NIV are doing is over-emphasizing the use of the present tense of the verb “πολεω” and trying to stretch the verb into saying, “practice”.

To which I would respond as follows: There is already a word for “practice” in the Greek of the New Testament, it is the word $\pi\rho\alpha\sigma\sigma\omicron$ or $\pi\rho\alpha\chi\iota\sigma$. It is used 36 times in the New Testament. In fact, John the apostle, the man who penned this epistle, uses the word $\pi\rho\alpha\sigma\sigma\omicron$ or $\pi\rho\alpha\chi\iota\sigma$. twice in the 4th Gospel which bears his name.

John 3:20: "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

^{BYZ} **John 3:20** πᾶς γὰρ ὁ φαῦλα πράσσων μισεῖ τὸ φῶς καὶ οὐκ ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ.

John 5:29: "and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done (practiced) evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

^{BYZ} **John 5:29:** καὶ ἐκπορεύσονται οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν ζωῆς οἱ δὲ τὰ φαῦλα πράξαντες εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως

If John the apostle had wanted to say “no one born of God is practicing sin”, he could have used the word “practice” in I John 3:9 as well. But he does not. The newer translations of the Bible in I John 3:9 contain the Calvinistic bias of the translators. They have inserted into the text the Calvinistic doctrine of the perseverance of the saints.

That is why I say I do not trust the translations which have been translated in the past 40 years. They all contain the bias of Calvinists, who have dominated conservative theological seminaries for the past 50 years.

3. The resources available to the translator including the skill of the translators and updated rules of Greek syntax

Let's now look at variant in our English translations which is due to lack of familiarity with the rules of Greek syntax because those rules were not known in the day of the King James translators.

^{KJV} **1 Thessalonians 1:3:** Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

^{NKJ} **1 Thessalonians 1:3:** remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father,

In verse three, we have a variant between the King James and the New King James because of the Granville Sharp rule. In the NKJV, the ending of verse 3 reads “before our God and Father”. In the KJV, which was translated before the discovery of the Granville Sharp rule, the translation appears to be mentioning God and the Father as two different persons:

“in the sight of God and our Father”.

In the New King James and the ASV it reads as follows:

“in the sight of our God and Father”.

The Granville Sharp rule of translation states that when the definite article is present in the first person mentioned, but not the second, and the two persons are separated by the word “and”, the two persons mentioned in the context are

one and the same. And that is exactly what we have in the underlying Greek text:

1 Thessalonians 1:3” ἀδιαλείπτως μνημονεύοντες
ὑμῶν τοῦ ἔργου τῆς πίστεως καὶ τοῦ κόπου τῆς ἀγάπης
καὶ τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ
Χριστοῦ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ πατρὸς ἡμῶν

Here is another, even more obvious, verse where the Granville Sharp rule needs to be applied to the translation:

^{KJV} **Titus 2:13:** Looking for that blessed hope, and the
glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour
Jesus Christ;

^{BYZ} **Titus 2:13:** προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα
καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ
σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

^{NKJ} **Titus 2:13:** looking for the blessed hope and
glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus
Christ,

The King James translation of the above verse appears to teach that two members of the God-head are going to appear at the rapture of the church; whereas the New King James, using the Granville Sharp rule of Greek syntax, identified one Person of the God-head appearing at the rapture: our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, I suppose that a person might try to point out that God the Father is also present at the rapture of the Church from the following verse:

1 Thessalonians 4:14-16: For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

¹⁵ For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.

¹⁶ For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

Does the above verse indicate that the Father will be invisibly present at the rapture? Or does the above verse address the Lord Jesus as God? Both understandings could be reasonably concluded from the above verse. However the word “appearing” does speak of visibility. Moreover, the Scriptures teach that the Father is invisible to mortal man.

The Scriptures teach that the Lord Jesus is coming in the clouds and “every eye shall see HIM”; it does not teach that “every eye shall see THEM”.

Revelation 1:7: Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

The overwhelming evidence from the rest of Scripture leads us to conclude that the Lord Jesus alone is visible at the “appearing”, but the Father is not.

So, let’s cut each other a break. Let us not attack one another when two seeking souls desire to properly understand the teachings of Scripture. We need to stop ascribing the worst of motives to the person who understands something differently from their reading of Scripture than we do. Maybe we need to display Christian love towards those who have arrived at a different understanding than we have concerning a particular verse under consideration.

4. The underlying Greek text

Let’s now consider examples of those instances where the differences between the translations ARE due to the underlying Greek text. Most of these occurrences present very little difference in the meaning of the translation. However, in a few instances the difference is profound.

One particularly troubling occurrence of this is the distortion of the gospel message itself which is introduced into Luke 2:14 by the Alexandrian text.

Every Christmas season I am reminded of this little variant in the underlying Greek text of some Bibles, which produces a huge distortion of the free grace gospel message.

Luke 2:14 in the NIV reads as follows:

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

In the King James, Luke 2:14 reads as follows:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men”.

First things first: Why does this difference exist and which is the correct translation?

The difference in reading exists because the Greek text which underlies the NIV (Alexandrian text) contains the addition of the Greek letter sigma (equivalent to the English “s”) at the end of the word translated “good will”. This produces a genitive case noun which translates, “of good will”.

The King James and the New King James translations are based upon the Byzantine family of manuscripts, a text type which comprises 95 percent of the extant Greek manuscripts today. It omits the sigma and produces a nominative case noun, “good will”.

So which is right?

One source I often like to reference when comparing these two families of Greek manuscripts are the early church fathers. What did they quote? Every church father who wrote before the Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. quoted the Byzantine text, thus favoring the KJV and NKJV.

The internal evidence of the passage itself also favors the King James and New King James translations of this verse:

The single angel in verse 10 says that his message is a source of great joy “TO ALL PEOPLE”. His message is a universal message. However, in verse 14 of the NIV, this grace message becomes distorted into a limited “goodwill to men upon whom his favor rests”.

The peace which the angels had been sent forth to announce was a peace from God to ALL people. It was an announcement of God’s good will directed towards ALL people, in that Christ was sent to all people as an offering for ALL people’s sins.

Christ was born into this world to satisfy the demands of Divine justice for ALL people’s sins. Where there was tension with God towards the sinner because of our unsettled sin debt, there is now a Christ-brokered peace.

The peace which Christ has made concerning our sin debt can become the possession of any person, free for the believing.

In closing, the child of God needs to acquaint himself with the resources available to himself so that he can become comfortable with a discussion of why there are different translations out there; if for no other reason than to be able to explain to a person why his favorite translation reads differently from theirs. This is necessary so that believers do not experience a crisis of faith when they discover that somebody else’s translation reads differently from their own.

Complementary Bible Translations

Sometimes people like to argue over the reading of their “pet” translation of the Bible. Moreover, there are some translations which ARE better than others; to that I will admit.

However, there are some instances in which a child of God can learn a lot from comparing various translations; and, from them, glean a truth from one translation which is not found in another. Sometimes, these differences are simply due to the fact that emphasizing one truth from the original language of Scripture results in the neglect of another truth.

Unfortunately, the original Greek of the New Testament is a more precise language than any translation that we can produce from it in the English. Sometimes, in a translation, emphasizing one truth found in an underlying Greek text means neglecting another, unless we are willing to produce an English translation which is so accurate that it would be rendered very cumbersome to read.

Complementary Translations

A complement is when two or more translations can be collectively considered to produce a greater understanding of a passage than that which is available from a single translation.

I find that it is often the case that comparing various translations actually adds to our understanding of a particular passage in question.

When I am doing my own personal Bible study and preparation to teach, I always have these four Bible versions open in my Bible Study software.

1. The King James
2. The New King James
3. The American Standard of 1901
4. The Robinson-Pierpont Majority Greek text.

I also have the following texts and translations available in my drop-down menu of my Bible study software:

5. Young's Literal Translation of the Bible
6. The Textus Receptus
7. United Bible Society Nestle Aland version 27 of the Greek New Testament.

These above seven enable me to do a literal, word for word interpretation of any passage in question. In fact, the Young's Literal Translation of the Bible is the most literal translation of the Textus Receptus which is available today.

I also have available the following translations:

8. The Geneva Bible of 1599
9. English Standard Version of 2001
10. The New International Version

The Geneva Bible was one of the predecessors of the King James Bible. The last two Bibles in the above list, the English Standard Version and the New International Version are concept translations of the Alexandrian text. I generally

view the Alexandrian text as an inferior text. However, since there is no concept translation available for the Byzantine text, these translations can still come in handy, especially for understanding what the average person is today studying as the Word of God.

In the Old Testament, I also have the following Scriptures available:

11. BHS 4th edition Hebrew text
12. The Septuagint
13. Brenton's translation of the Septuagint.

My method of Bible study is as follows: I am always referencing the Majority Greek text in all of my teaching preparation. However, if I see any variant between the top three literal translations, I research why that variant exists. In the majority of cases, the variant is not because of the underlying Greek manuscripts used; rather, it exists because of the translator's approach or bias. We have already previously discussed that in this book.

However, sometimes the variant exists simply because the translator chooses to emphasize one aspect of the underlying text at the expense of another. Understand this: sometimes it is not possible to fully express in our English translation an exact translation from the Greek.

For example, in Ephesians 2:8, here is how the King James and New King James translate the text. I know I have mentioned this example in an earlier chapter of this book but it is worth revisiting:

^{KJV} **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

^{NKJ} **Ephesians 2:8** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God,

Notice that King James translated “saved” as a present reality while the New King James translated the verse as an event which occurred in the past.

Now I can just hear the arguments that could arise over these two translations.

The King James only people could attack the New King James by saying that the New King James is straight out of the pit of hell because it seeks to deny the doctrine of eternal security by not emphasizing the continuous nature of the salvation. Likewise, the New King James adherents could attack the King James as teaching that the new birth experience involves lifelong continued acts of believing.

Actually, the reason that these translations read differently is because of the use of a perfect tense participle as part of the verb structure in the sentence.

The perfect tense references an action which occurred in the past with abiding results. The truth of the matter is that both translations actually add to our understanding of the true meaning of Ephesians 2:8.

Here would be a very literal yet awkward translation of Ephesians 2:8.

“For by grace ye all have been saved and will remain saved by means of an act of faith and not because of yourselves.”

The perfect tense of the Greek references action in the past with abiding results. There is really no precise way to translate into English the full force of the perfect tense. So, BOTH the King James and New King James are true. You were saved in the past by means of an act of believing and today you remain saved because of that initial act of believing.

That is what I mean when I say that often a different translation will complement another translation. This occurs because the Koine Greek of the New Testament is a more precise language than most languages into which it is being translated.

Here is another example in which two translations actually complement our understanding of a particular passage.

^{ASV} **Philippians 2:4-7:** not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.
⁵ Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
⁶ who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,
⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;

^{KJV} **Philippians 2:4-7:** Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;

⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

For purposes of this discussion I want to focus on verse seven. In the American Standard Version, we are told that, “He emptied Himself”. In the King James verse seven reads, “He made Himself of no reputation”.

So which is true?

Actually they are both true.

The Greek word for the verb in question is “kenow”. It means to “to empty”, “to evacuate”, “to divest one’s self of one’s prerogatives”.

This above passage is a reference to the Lord Jesus’ emptying Himself of some of his pre-incarnate glory and powers and assuming the role as a Servant, relying on the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the angels, to supply His needs.

Notice neither translation above communicates all of this.

That is because, as is often the case, to produce a translation which would fully represent a concept that is communicated

in the underlying Greek would produce a translation which would be very cumbersome for the English reader.

The good news is that the English only reader can be alerted to the different possible and valid renderings of a text by consulting multiple translations. If a significant variant exists in the English translations, then the serious student of Scripture needs to do his due diligence to discover why those variants exist.

More often than not, such a pursuit will result in a greater edification than if he chooses not to pursue the reason behind a differing reading.

Some Verses that I Use to Evaluate Various Translations

Recently, somebody asked me what I thought of the MEV translation of Scripture. Before I was asked that question I had never even heard of it. However, when I examined it I found that I had two problems with it.

1. It is based upon the Alexandrian Text.
2. It maintains the staunch Calvinist bias of all modern translations.

There are four passages that I quickly turn to when somebody asks me what I think of a translation. These four places usually tell me all I need to know about a translation. One of these translations, the NKJV, for which I have high regard, was translated in the United States in 1982 and is based on the Textus Receptus.

I am a Majority text guy, for you who want to try to button hole me on what translation I use. When somebody asks me that question, my response is, “the Majority text and whatever translation best aligns with that in any given context”. While I understand that most people hate that answer, my goal in teaching is accuracy above all. This requires that all serious students of Scripture should be willing to, on occasion, lift the hood on their favorite translation and surround themselves with some basic Bible study tools which would enable them to, for themselves, research the Scriptures beyond their pet translation.

When I was first saved in the late 1970's, diligent study was pretty much standard behavior for a serious student of Scripture. The first book I was encouraged to purchase, after my Bible, was a Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. This tool enabled me to do some basic word studies, comparing Scripture with Scripture. With that and a good interlinear translation (like the new Majority Greek Testament Interlinear), a Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words and a Nave's Topical Bible, a person should be in a good position with such a reference library to start mining the riches of the word of God for themselves.

Today's Christian seems to think that such an expectation is unreasonable. They have been conditioned by other slothful believers who state that such study is "for the theologians". That is a deplorable attitude towards the word of God with which to condition new believers.

When I was newly saved, all of my college age buddies, none who were headed for the ministry, had such study helps. We regularly studied Scripture on our own and together compared notes and witnessed. None of us at the time were headed for the ministry. It was just what hungry, spirit-filled souls did.

It is my expectation that those who I teach today be expected to be willing to lift the hood of their favorite translation and not simply be persecutorial towards those who do not use the same translation that they use. Slothfulness towards Bible study is not something that the Lord has ever tolerated from His children. If you are a member of a church who teaches otherwise, find a new church. If your church does NOT encourage diligent study

of the Scriptures, you are in a church which Paul warned would be prevalent in the last days.

^{NKJ} **2 Timothy 4:1-4:** I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom:
² Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.
³ For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;
⁴ and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.

By the way, a “fable” is just another word for a fanciful story. If the sermons in your church consist of 2 verses, barely mentioned, and 35 minutes of fanciful story-telling, then you are in a church which Paul warned about in the above exhortation. Such churches usually revolve around an entertaining story teller and local hero in the pulpit who everybody reveres but who does not teach with enough depth to feed or establish a hungry soul in the faith. While the uninitiated stay entertained in such a church, souls starved for truth remain hungry.

The truth of the matter is, if such a preacher did decide to teach the word of God to the depths to which God expects, he would lose 90 percent of His congregation because most people today will not endure sound, in-depth Bible teaching. If such a story-telling pastor leaves his church, you might just as well close up the doors because, most likely, the

people are addicted to the sycophantic personality of the preacher and will not tolerate the next preacher who actually wants to do substantial teaching.

God expects His children to mine the Scriptures for every nugget of truth they can get. For the non-original language student, I would study from several literal translations and then start digging every time there is a major variation between the translations you are using. Bible study should generate questions, questions which cause you to dig and dig and dig. That is how a person grows in the word. That is the devotion to the word of God spoken of in the following context:

Psalm 1:1-6: Blessed *is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.
³ He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.
⁴ The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* like the chaff which the wind drives away.
⁵ Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
⁶ For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

Notice the above passage does not start out with “blessed is the Pastor” or “blessed is the college professor” or “blessed is the Bible teacher”. It starts out with “blessed is the man” whose meditation is constantly working the truths of sacred Scripture in his or her heart.

By the way, notice the result of such a lifestyle in verse 3:

“Whatsoever he does shall prosper”.

God can prosper the truth seeking child of God regardless of the secular vocation he chooses.

Are you having trouble with your home circumstances? Check out your meditation in the word of God.

Prosperity at home is not a result of prayer; it is, rather, a result of rightly prioritizing your thought life as we see in the above context. Until your mind and affections are being transformed by the renewing of your mind in the word, God will never trust you with money.

If things are not going the right way in your life, it may be the judgment of God trying to get you to the place where Bible truth rises to the top of your daily bucket list.

One other thing: People who are comfortable “lifting the hood” of their pet translation do not enter into “crisis mode” when another brother has a different translation in his hand. Such an equipped believer already has enough resources in his simple reference library to dig a little to discover why one person’s translation does not read like his own.

Let's talk a little bit about textual criticism and the agreement between all of the underlying Greek texts.

Some group out there wants to paint the picture that the disagreement between the Alexandrian and the Byzantine based manuscripts are huge. Actually that is not the case.

Let's talk, first of all, about the differences between the Majority Text and the Textus Receptus.

Outside of the book of Revelation, the Majority text agrees with the TR probably over 99.5 percent of the time. I have seen quotes as high as 99.9 percent. (The book of Revelation is not a topic which will be discussed in this book.)

The Textus Receptus was a 16th century Greek text compiled from about a half dozen late Byzantine (Majority Text) manuscripts and the Old Latin Vulgate in places in the book of Revelation (and a few other contexts). It is the underlying Greek text of the King James, the New King James, Young's Literal Translation as well as the original Strong's Exhaustive Concordance.

By the way, notice in the previous paragraph that I linked the Byzantine Text with the Majority Text. That is because they are the same thing. The two words are used interchangeably by language students. Likewise, Alexandrian, Critical Text, Westcott and Hort, and Nestle Aland are all also used to reference to the same underlying Greek text. Likewise, Textus Receptus, Received Text and Stephanus are all reference to that 16th century Byzantine

text based upon a handful of late Byzantine texts, with just a hint of Old Latin Vulgate thrown in to “fill in the blanks”.

The differences can be summed up into three text types: Alexandrian, Majority and Textus Receptus.

I am persuaded that the Majority text best represents the original writings of the New Testament apostles and prophets. Moreover, whatever translation I have before me which best follows the Majority text is the translation I will cite in my teaching. Sometimes that is the King James, sometimes the New King James and sometimes the American Standard of 1901. These three translations are the ones I regularly cite because they are the closest you can get to a word for word equivalent. If none of them match the Majority text, I will offer the congregation a word for word equivalent the best I can.

Of course, some will question my including the American Standard of 1901 in the mix because they will rightly point out that that translation is based upon the Alexandrian text. While that is true, it is also true that the Alexandrian also agrees with the Majority Text approaching 99 percent of the time, especially when you consider that 40 percent of the differences between the Alexandrian and the Majority text are non-translatable variants, like the usage of a movable “nu”.

Even though the American Standard is based upon the Alexandrian text, it is also the most unbiased translation in existence today. It removes the Reformed or Calvinistic bias of all the other translations and provided the most word for word equivalent translation. (Young’s Literal translation

does this as well, but it is so literal, that it reads awkwardly to those who are not comfortable with the construction of an exact word for word equivalence.)

The reason I DON'T use the American Standard of 1901 from the pulpit as my primary text is because it DOES follow the Alexandrian text and, in several contexts (two that I know of so far), distorts the gospel of grace (I talk about that later in this chapter). It distorts the gospel of grace, not because it is a poor translation of its underlying Greek Text; but it is, rather, an ACCURATE translation of what I perceive to be a CORRUPT underlying text. However, where the underlying Greek text of the Alexandrian agrees with the Majority and the TR, which is 99 percent of the time, it produces the most unbiased translation, albeit in rather archaic English.

By the way, you could teach from the American Standard of 1901 to a King James only audience and they most likely would not detect the difference, until of course you got to one of those major variants like I John 5:7 or Acts 8:37, or one of the passages which corrupts the gospel.

So now, on to the topic of this chapter: The “go-to” verses I look at to evaluate a translation:

Here are four “go-to” verses that I use to quickly evaluate a translation. If these verses fail the text, the translation loses some credibility with me. To be clear, I have not found a translation which I believe passes the test since the New King James. Ironically, it and Young's Literal translation are the only other two which are based upon the

Textus Receptus (in addition to the King James), which is relatively close to the Majority Text.

I John 3:9

The first of my “go-to” verses is I John 3:9. We have already covered this in a previous chapter but, this is a crucial verse to determining just where the translators of a bible are concerning reformed theology. So we will look at this again.

Here it is in the King James which gets it correct:

1 John 3:9: Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Calvinistic translations try to stretch the present tense of the verb “do” into a statement on practicing sin.

Here is the ESV:

1 John 3:9: No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

Here is the New American Standard:

1 John 3:9: No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Here it is in the NIV:

^{NIV} **1 John 3:9:** No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Here is the verse in the Greek:

1 John 3:9: Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται

Literally it reads: “Everyone begotten out of God is not sinning, because His seed in him remains and he is not able to sin because out of God he is (perfect tense) begotten.”

What the Calvinist does in with their new, modern translations is to redefine the word “do” to say “practice”. Because the verb “do” is a present tense verb, they try to place the emphasis on the fact that the present tense is the tense of continued action and come up with the word “practice”. That way they get their beloved “perseverance of the saints” doctrine in the context.

There are several problems (at least 3) with this approach.

1. There is already a word for “practice” in the New Testament. It, in fact, is the Greek word “praxis” or “prasso” and, in fact, occurs 35 times in the New Testament. John uses the term twice in the gospel of John:

John 3:20: "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

^{NKJ} **John 5:28, 29:** "Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

²⁹ "and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil (the foul practicing), to the resurrection of condemnation.

If John wanted to say “practice” in I John 3:9, he was already familiar with the word and could have used it.

2. The “is not practicing sin” translation creates an internal contradiction in the very verse itself.

The reason the one born of God is not sinning, is that he cannot sin because he has been begotten out of the father. A being who is a result of the immediate and special creation of God cannot sin AT ALL. There is none of this, “Well, he will eventually stop sinning” here, because the one begotten out of the source of God can NEVER sin. This is precisely what the verse is saying.

There is no, “The Holiness of God will eventually overtake the individual” understanding to this verse. The inability to sin in this verse is absolute and an inherent part of the person that God creates in the new birth.

3. The “will not practice sin” translation of this verse creates a contradiction in this Epistle of I John, as well as several other remote contexts of Scripture.

1 John 1:8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If I never arrive at a place in my life where I can say, “I am no longer sinning”, that means I am still practicing sin. And, by the way, if I do think that I have arrived at the place in my maturity that I am no longer sinning, this verse says that I am “self-deceived”.

1 John 1:8: If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

The truth of the matter is, I John 3:9 is talking about the new creation, not sinning. Because the new man is made in the image of God, sin cannot originate from him. The new man is not able to sin. First John 3:9 is an absolute statement on the inability of the new man to sin; not a statement on a believer not practicing sin.

Unfortunately, very few Calvinists actually understand that concept of the new man; therefore, it is excluded from their translations.

Luke 2:14

The second verse I use to judge an English translation is Luke 2:14.

Here is an Alexandrian-based manuscript translation of that verse.

^{ESV} **Luke 2:14:** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

Here is a Majority text/ TR version of that verse.

Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

The Alexandrian based Bible translations introduce works into the gospel consideration in this verse. God did not send Jesus into the world because He was well pleased with some people. God sent Jesus into the world because we were all helpless sinners in need of salvation.

The internal evidence of Scripture in this verse demonstrates that the MT/ TR are the correct Greek manuscripts producing the correct English translation.

Let's examine the greater context:

^{NKJ} **Luke 2:10:** Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

Notice in the above verse, the announcement of the birth of Christ is a message of good tiding to all people. However in verse 14 of the Alexandrian based Bible versions, the "good will" of God is only unto those "with whom he is pleased".

So much for the universal depravity of Romans chapter three!

This difference exists because some scribe who was making a copy which produced the original Alexandrian text was either sloppy or had a bias against grace.

In the Alexandrian text, some scribe added a sigma “S” onto the Greek word for “good will” which changes it to “of good will”. Just one little Greek letter produced a distorted gospel message.

The correct and only internally consistent translation of Luke 2:14 is found in the King James and New King James translations.

Luke 2:14: "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

By the way, this is one very legitimate way in which to evaluate translations (and underlying Greek texts): The internally consistency which they produce with other contexts.

But in this context, the Alexandrian text produces an inconsistency both in the immediate context and is, in fact, a contradiction with the whole of Scripture concerning the doctrine of universal depravity.

“Peace on earth among those with whom he is well pleased”? You might as well cut Romans 3:10-19 out of your scriptures.

Romans 3:10-20: As it is written:
"There is none righteous, no, not one;
¹¹ There is none who understands;

There is none who seeks after God.

¹² They have all turned aside;

They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

¹³ "Their throat *is* an open tomb;

With their tongues they have practiced deceit";

"The poison of asps *is* under their lips";

¹⁴ "Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness."

¹⁵ "Their feet *are* swift to shed blood;

¹⁶ Destruction and misery *are* in their ways;

¹⁷ And the way of peace they have not known."

¹⁸ "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

²⁰ Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

The early apostolic Fathers also support the Majority text in this verse.

I Thessalonians 1:4

A third verse that I reference to evaluate a translation is I Thessalonians 1:4. I use this verse to test the Calvinistic bias of the translation.

Notice the Calvinism in most of the translations:

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

^{KJV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** Knowing, brethren beloved,
your election of God.

^{NKJ} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** knowing, beloved brethren,
your election by God.

The following two literal translations remove the Calvinistic bias of the verse:

^{YLT} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** having known, brethren
beloved, by God, your election,

^{ASV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** knowing, brethren beloved
of God, your election,

Incidentally, there are no variants in this verse in the underlying Greek text. In other words, the Alexandrian, Majority and Textus Receptus all read identical in the Greek.

1 Thessalonians 1:4: eivdo,tej avdelfoi.
hvgaphme,noi u`po. qeou/ th.n evklogh.n u`mw/n

In the KJV, NKJV and all the modern translations, the recipients of the epistle are “elect by God”. Only in the American Standard of 1901 and the Young’s Literal translation do we have the proper translation which states that the recipients are “beloved by God”.

Here is the literal translation from the Greek:

“Knowing brethren, beloved by God, the election of you”

Only in the American Standard Version and Young's Literal Translation, is the Calvinistic bias removed.

So what we have here is strictly a matter of Calvinistic bias. That is the translation produced in this verse is due to the bias of the translator.

In the translations with the Calvinistic bias, the recipients of this epistle are "elect by God"; however, in the underlying Greek text, very clearly the recipients are "beloved by God". So, in this particular verse, only the American Standard of 1901 and Young's Literal Translation get it right.

The ESV does get the "beloved by God" correct; although, in the rest of the verse, it sneaks the Calvinism back in.

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 1:4:** For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you,

Apparently, the translators of the American Standard Version correctly understood that election was not God choosing those who would be saved; but, rather, God choosing of those who would be His servants. Paul, in verse three, is savoring the mature service of the Thessalonian believers which he summarized, in verse four, as "your election".

^{ASV} **1 Thessalonians 1:2-4:** We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention *of you* in our prayers;

³ remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father;

⁴ knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election,

In other words, Paul, savoring the remembrance of their faithfulness in verse four, summarizes it as “knowing their election”.

Acts 2:38

Here is another example in Scripture where the Alexandrian text produces a false gospel. The corruption is found here:

^{NIV} **Acts 2:38:** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of **YOUR** sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Compare the above Alexandrian translation to the Majority Text below:

^{NKJ} **Acts 2:38:** Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The NIV inserts the word “your” (plural 2nd person pronoun) in the phrase “remission of your” sins.

It does not belong there; it, in fact, corrupts the passage and creates a false gospel presentation in the process. It

supports baptismal regeneration and, in the process, contradicts a whole lot of other passages which teach that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone.

So, let's once again break this down.

There are three lines of evidence in this verse which demonstrate inferiority of the Critical text in this instance.

1. The corruption of the phrase "remission of sins" of the Alexandrian Greek Text
2. The fact that there are evidences of older manuscripts which support the Byzantine text tradition
10. The fact that the Critical text produces a works salvation formula.

Let's examine each of these accusations in greater detail.

1. The corruption of the phrase "remission of sins" of the Alexandrian Greek Text

"The remission of sins" is the term the Scriptures use to reference the once and for all sin settling sacrifice of Christ. It is contrasted to provisional sacrifices for sin offered under the Law of Moses. The Lord's once and for all sin settling sacrifice has forever put away sin as that barrier which prohibits God from entering into a relationship with people.

There is no other place in Scripture where the term "remission of sins" is punctuated with the word "your". What's worse about the corruption of Acts 2:38 in the

Alexandrian text is that baptism, instead of the finished work of Christ, produces the “remission of sins”.

In reality, baptism unto the remission of sins, as elsewhere in the Scriptures, was the public testimony of the Jewish saint that He believed in the “remission of sins” that Jesus accomplished on the cross. The Jewish saint, through his baptism, was publicly confessing that he was no longer going to bring offerings to a priest because the once and for all remission of sins which Jesus accomplished on the cross had made his forever peace with God.

It is a faithless abomination to believe that water baptism produces that which Jesus produced on the cross.

So, what is the difference between these two translations in this context? The difference which causes this error is the fact that the NIV, as well as all other modern translations since 1982, is based upon the Critical, or Alexandrian Greek text. Having studied the underlying Greek text for many years now, I can tell you that the Alexandrian text is, **at best**, the work of a careless scribe or, worse, perhaps the work of a biased scribe. Even though the Alexandrian is purported to be older than other Greek manuscripts, many Greek scholars also recognize the inferiority of the Alexandrian text simply because of the grammar and the internal evidence of Scripture itself.

All of records of the church fathers who quoted this verse leave out the offending “your” from it.

Irenaeus quoted it without the “your” in the 2nd century A.D.

Cyprian, likewise, quotes the verse without the offending “your” in the 3rd century A.D.

All of the Byzantine texts types leave the offending “your” out of the text.

The critical apparatus in the United Bible Society Greek text (an Alexandrian text) doesn’t even comment on the insertion of the word “your”.

So in closing, there are many considerations that one needs to look into when they study Scripture. Sooner or later, the serious student of Scripture is going to have to “lift the hood” of their favorite translation and dig a little deeper.

This is a laudable effort in seeking the truth and not an effort upon which to heap disdain. It is a level of familiarity with Scripture which should be promoted in churches. With the many resources for English only students of Scripture which have been around for 80 years now, it is high time that church pastors introduce faithful saints to them.

MINING BENEATH THE SURFACE

Some Facts of Scripture You Could Not Know Without Consulting the Original Text

I can remember a day in America when anybody entering a college, for the purpose of going into the pastorate, was required to take a certain amount of New Testament Greek. The Baptist Bible college that I attended required 22 credit hours of Greek, with a prerequisite of one year of English grammar and syntax, which included mastery in diagramming sentences and an exhaustive knowledge of the parts of speech. In other words, my little Bible college made sure that the students which they turned out possessed the tools that they needed to diagram and translate from the Greek. I remember that the conservative Lutheran seminaries back in the day required that as well.

In those days, the value of a pastor having a degree of comfort in original language skills was recognized because it would eventually prove beneficial in his personal studies and sermon preparation.

The most cherished cognitive skill I possess today is the ability to mine the riches of the word of God in the language in which it was inspired. I am continually discovering new truths which the Lord has seen fit to place there for the diligent student of the word.

^{NKJ} **Proverbs 2:1-5:** My son, if you receive my words,

And treasure my commands within you,

² So that you incline your ear to wisdom,

And apply your heart to understanding;
³ *Yes, if you cry out for discernment,*
And lift up your voice for understanding,
⁴ *If you seek her as silver,*
*And search for her as *for* hidden treasures;*
⁵ *Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,*
And find the knowledge of God.

These truths are not discovered by the uninitiated student of the word;
rather, they are treasures that are discovered by those who are willing to dig and mine the Scriptures for all they are worth.

What we are going to do in this chapter is to simply point out a few truths in the Scriptures that would go unnoticed unless you were willing to research beyond the English text.

Are you asleep or are you asleep?

Here is a passage in the Scriptures that, if you do not research beyond the English, you are most likely going to miss entirely. The following context is actually one of the most powerful passages on eternal security in the Scriptures; however, if you did not “lift the hood” of your favorite translation, you would never catch it. The following passage, when properly translated, demonstrates that a lack of watchfulness on the part of the child of God does not result in forfeiture of an eternal home in heaven:

1 Thessalonians 5:9, 10: For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁰ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

The key to understanding what the above verse is actually saying is to understand that, in the Greek, there are two words used in I Thessalonians which, in our English Bibles, are translated “sleep” or “asleep”. Those two words are “κοιμάομαι” and “καθεύδω”. (koimaoma and kathudo). The first word in our list, “κοιμάομαι” is used to speak of a person having died. It is found in the following context.

1 Thessalonians 4:15: For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep (koimaoma).

The second word translated “sleep” in I Thessalonians is “καθεύδω” (kathudo). This other Greek word for sleep simply means “to fail to be spiritually alert”. It is found in verse 10 of the following context:

1 Thessalonians 5:5-10: You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness.

⁶Therefore let us not sleep (kathudo), as others *do*, but let us watch and be sober.

⁷For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night.

⁸But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation.

⁹For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ,

¹⁰who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep (kathudo), we should live together with Him.

This passage is not a contrast between being alive and having died. Rather, the above context is a contrast between being spiritually alert in your earthly deportment and having lived a careless life. With that in mind, let's consider again verse 10:

1 Thessalonians 5:10: Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

1 Thessalonians 5:10: τοῦ ἀποθανόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν
ἵνα εἴτε γρηγορώμεν εἴτε καθεύδωμεν ἅμα σὺν αὐτῷ
ζήσωμεν

The word “wake” in this verse is the Greek word “γρηγορέω” which means “to be watchful”. It is a commonly used word in the Bible, occurring 23 times in the New Testament. This is in contrast to (kathudo) in this verse which means “to be spiritually reckless in your walk”. The resultant meaning is that believers, whether they have been watchful or reckless in their earthly deportment before the Lord, all are, nonetheless, going to live together with Christ.

By the way, this does not mean that all believers will be promoted equally in the age to come. Faithful, watchful believers will receive rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, resulting in eternal distinction. But all believers, whether they were watchful or reckless in their earthly deportment, will forever enjoy living in the presence of the Lord.

By the way, you would not have come away with this understanding of this passage unless you had been observant of the two distinct words translated “sleep” in this context. Truly, it is necessary to “mine” the Scriptures beyond your favorite English translation to discover these precious gems. (Unless you do not care to know God’s word to the degree that He has revealed it!)

My four sons

There are at least four words in the original Greek which refer to a male child.

Here are those four words and what they mean:

νήπιος, - a baby, infant, child; immature; innocent; under age (Galatians 4:1)

τεκνίον, - A child by virtue of birth and paternal affections

παιδία^ε A child who is being instructed

υἱός^ε A son by virtue of birthright and inheritance

It is instructive that the epistle of First John follows the frequent use of two of the words in the Greek for children: “teknon” (**τεκνίον**) and “paidia” (**παιδία**). These two words are used in the same context below.

^{NKJ} **1 John 2:12-14:** I write to you, little children,
Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

¹³ I write to you, fathers,

Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,

Because you have overcome the wicked one.

I write to you, little children,

Because you have known the Father.

¹⁴ I have written to you, fathers,

Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.

I have written to you, young men,

Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,

And you have overcome the wicked one.

BYZ **1 John 2:12-14:** Γράφω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ

¹³ γράφω ὑμῖν πατέρες ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ ἀρχῆς γράφω ὑμῖν νεανίσκοι ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν γράφω ὑμῖν, παιδία ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα

¹⁴ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν πατέρες ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ ἀρχῆς ἔγραψα ὑμῖν νεανίσκοι ὅτι ἰσχυροί ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν

Notice that, in I John 2:12-13 in our English Bibles, it appears that John twice addresses “little children”. In the Greek, however, while it is true that he addresses children once in each verse, he uses a DIFFERENT word in each verse, in addressing these children. In verse 12, he uses the word (teknia) “τεκνία “ to address them. In this verse, John is addressing these children from the perspective of their birth into the family. Because they are born into the family of God, they are no longer identified as being in their sins. That aspect of their relationship has been forever dismissed.

However, in verse 13, John again addresses the “little children”; only, this time, he addresses them with a different word (paidia) “παῖδιά “ which speaks of their progress in the faith. He states that they have known the Father: That is to say, they have experienced some training in the faith and possess some basic skills toward nurturing a relationship with God.

Now why would the Holy Spirit inspire John to choose two different words for “child” in the same context? Moreover, if the Holy Spirit did think it was important enough to use both words, should it not be important to us to understand why?

Understand that this nuance in I John could never have been recognized unless somebody was willing to investigate the Scriptures beyond the English text.

If was important enough to the Holy Spirit to change the word for “children”, it should be important for us to seek to discover why or even recognized that the wording has changed.

If you would have only matured in your fellowship: The pluperfect tense of John chapter 4

The pluperfect is a rather rare tense of verbs in the Greek. It is used to speak of actions which were occurring and completed in the past.

The Lord uses this rare form of verb in his conversation with the woman at the well.

Contrary to popular opinion, the woman at the well bears evidence that she is a backslidden saint who had begun in the truth but had, long ago, abandoned it. She had become a brazen hussy who apparently enjoyed the company of the men of Sychar more than she enjoyed the company of the ladies. However, in her conversation with the Lord, she IS the first person in the conversation to bring up the concept of the Messiah.

John 4:25, 26: The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, He will tell us all things."

²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He."

If this woman were looking for the coming of the Messiah, she could only have obtained that knowledge from Daniel 9:24-26, the only context in the Old Testament which speaks of the Messiah, a context which contains a great deal of gospel truth.

To further demonstrate her previous acquaintance with gospel truth, notice her initial report to her male companions.

John 4:29: "Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

Not only was the woman at the well acquainted with Daniel 9:24-26 in the Hebrew Scriptures; she also was acquainted with the Septuagint account of Daniel 9:25-26, in that the Septuagint does not refer to the coming Lord as "Messiah" but, rather, "Christ".

Just because this woman was very backslidden upon her first meeting of Christ, does not mean that she was NEVER acquainted with grace.

The reason that believers today assume that people, such as the woman at the well, could have never been acquainted with the grace, is simply because we have, for our entire lives, been bombarded with the Calvinists' doctrine of the perseverance of the saints: That is, the belief that, if a person does not persevere in Holiness, then he was never saved to begin with.

This is, however, not the evidence we have concerning the backslidden female evangelist at the well.

John 4:10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

^{BYZ} **John 4:10** ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Εἰ ἣ δεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τίς ἐστὶν ὁ λέγων σοι Δός μοι πλεῖν, σὺ ἂν ᾔτησας αὐτὸν καὶ ἔδωκεν ἅν σοι ὕδωρ ζῶν

The key to understanding the Lord's response to this woman is His use of the rare pluperfect tense of the verb “ ἣ δεις” (knew). The pluperfect tense is used to refer to actions which had been occurring and were completed in the past.

A literal, but awkward, translation of John 4:10 would be as follows, “If you had continued to have known the gift of God unto being established (in grace), you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water”. In other words, the woman at the well, at one time, knew the gift of God, but she did not continue to abide in that truth. Consequently, the faith of her past had all but vanished from her conscience.

So, the Lord is saying that, if you had known the gift of God; that is, if you had continued unto maturity in a faith that you once possessed, you would now know who it is who is speaking to you. The Lord here is addressing a lost sheep who had, in her distant past, stopped contemplating the gift of salvation.

It is very common for young people to grow up in church, become genuine believers in their youth, walk away from their faith in their rebellious years, fall into an addiction, and spend the rest of their lives under the power of that addiction.

For some people, that addiction may be alcohol; for others, gambling, or any of a number of things. For the woman at the well, it was, apparently, turning the heads of men.

Understand that, when people walk away from the Lord, it leaves an emptiness in their soul which needs to be filled with something else. For pretty young girls who walk away from the Lord and find the need to fill the void, quite often that addiction becomes the attention of lustful men.

Apparently, that was the case with the woman at the well. She had so many husbands that, after husband number 5, she stopped marrying them.

She once was a head-turner; but, as she is getting older, we see her having to carry her OWN water pot to the well. As she is growing older, and the flower of her youth is fading, she is probably looking for her “keeper” man.

But, the Lord saw the faith of her past and is going to bring it screaming back to the forefront of her conscience.

Because of the use of the rare pluperfect tense in this verse, we understand exactly the point that Jesus is making in His conversation with the woman at the well. “If you would not have abandoned the faith of your youth, right now you would know who I am”, was the point that the Lord was making.

As we can see from the three above examples, mining the Scriptures beneath the surface of our English translations can provide a wealth of insight into the Scriptures. Such an endeavor should be encouraged for pastors and by pastors to their congregations.

Once and For All Delivered The Fundamental Error of Some in the King James Only Movement

By the way, when I talk about the fundamental error of the King James only movement, do not for a second accuse me of taking issue with the King James Bible.

You will never hear me badmouth the King James. It is always open in my Bible study software as one of three translations for which I have a high regard in my Bible study and sermon preparation. It is one of three literal translations of Scripture for which I have very high regard and it has stood the test of time. It is a very accurate translation based upon a superior family of underlying Greek manuscripts: the Byzantine text type or, as it is also known, the Majority text type.

Contrast this fact with modern translations which are based upon an inferior Alexandrian text type and are descendants of the Westcott and Hort Critical Text.

The Critical Text is a sloppy underlying Greek text. In my 46 years of study of the original Greek of the New Testament, I can tell you that the Alexandrian text is, at best, a sloppy idiosyncrasy of the manuscript text tradition. In more than one place, it distorts the gospel of grace. In this, and in other ways, the internal evidence of the Alexandrian text demonstrates itself to be an inferior text type.

On top of that, I quite frankly cannot, and do not, trust any modern translations simply because of the theology of the people who are behind those translations. We today do

not have theologians of the caliber of men like C. I. Scofield, Merrill F. Unger, Charles Hodge or other students of the word from the past. Most every modern translation today is the product of a reformed theological bias; moreover, this bias comes out in their translations.

So, I agree that the King James only people are right to find fault with the modern translations which are being produced today.

Within the King James only movement there are various positions concerning the existence of the King James. There is one variation of the King James only movement that believes that God re-inspired His word in 1611. This is the most extreme form of the King James Onlyism.

There is another group which believes that the text of the King James is the “preserved word of God”, which still exalts a translation to be on equal standing with the original manuscripts.

Then there is another group, which quite frankly I have no trouble with, which states they use the King James because they believe it is the best translation based upon the best manuscripts. I actually have no problem with that statement. To me, the King James and New King James have their own strengths and weaknesses which, to me, make them a toss-up. Some in this last group teach that translations into other languages should be based on the Textus Receptus rather than the King James, which moves these people even farther away from believing in the re-inspiration of the Bible in 1611. Moreover, since the Textus Receptus so closely aligns with the Majority Text (which is

my persuasion), my differences with the last two groups I have discussed in this paragraph are not worth quibbling over.

Having said all of that, the first class of people in the King James only movement, which believe in some form of re-inspiration of Scripture in 1611, are operating from a fundamental departure of the biblical principle of God's chain of authority concerning the dissemination of Scripture to the child of God.

The chain of authority of persons who were authorized to authoritatively administer the word of God ceased with the death of the last apostle. The apostles' and prophets' authoritative teachings were permanently fixed into Scripture in the first century.

There is not going to arise, in this world, another person who has the authority to add to, or to correct, what was delivered to the saints in the first century until Christ Himself returns.

Therefore, the most extreme King James only advocates claim a re-authorization of Scripture without the apostolic authority to do it.

What apostolic authority do these advocates have to dogmatically assent that a particular translation of what was originally inspired by God retains the authority of the original document?

Any translation can be said to be the word of God only to the degree that it agrees with what was originally inspired by the apostles and prophets.

That chain of authority of the delivery of Scripture is expressed in the following exhortation of Jude.

Jude 1:3: Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.

In the above verse in Jude, we read that the faith; that is, the inspired truth that we need at our disposal to know God, was, once and for all, delivered over to the saints in Jude's day.

So God, once and for all, through the pens of the apostles and writing prophets, delivered His authoritative sacred truths to the saints in the first century A.D.

“Once and for all”, means an event which is never to be repeated.

If the event is never to be repeated, then it is assumed that God got His word complete and correct in the first century.

If God got it correct in the first century, then all efforts to discern His truth must focus our attention on what was written in Jude's day.

The faith was not “twice” delivered to the saints: Once in the first century A.D. and again in the 17 century A.D.

It is the faith that was delivered in the first century, at the hands of the apostles and prophets, for which believers are ordered to earnestly contend.

If this is the case, it is really pointless to argue about the history of the English translations of the Bible, which Bible descended from which translation, or if one’s pet translation is 70 percent Tyndale and 30 percent Church of England.

That sort of discussion resembles an “endless genealogy” which causes disputes.

The primary purpose of the office of apostle was to teach and pen scripture with the authority of Christ. Christ gets His authority from God the Father, who is the decreeing agent of the Godhead.

By the way, we can see this chain of authority originating with God the Father in the following verse:

Revelation 1:1: The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John:

Notice the chain of authority of the word of God.

The chain of authority of authoritative revelation is this: The Father dispenses to the Son; the Son dispenses to an apostle or prophet; a first century apostle or prophet, who

had been ordained as a pen of God, permanently inscribed that revelation as Scripture. Period.

That is how the word was once and for all delivered to the saints. It was permanently and authoritatively transferred to pen and paper in the first century A.D. by a writing apostle or prophet.

No additional revelation will be given until Jesus returns. There is no authority to declare that some other writing or translation bears the authority of Christ.

Notice the divine lock on Scripture that the Holy Spirit puts on the last book of the Bible:

Revelation 22:18-20: I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book:

¹⁹ and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book.

²⁰ He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus.

I can hear a King James only jihadist screaming right now, “Dan you changed the words of Scripture, verse 19 does not say tree of life, it says book of life.”

Well, you say that because you are contending for the wrong authority. My authority is that which was once and for all delivered to the saints, not a translation of it.

Let me tell you why I read it like I did. Out of approximately 307 extant Greek manuscripts which contain the book of Revelation, around 300 of those manuscripts contain the words “tree of life” just like I read it. It is not some conspiracy theory; it is, rather, a fact of the manuscript evidence. The Majority text and the Alexandrian text both contain the reading I have just read. That is a fact. Any reputable textual commentary of the Greek New Testament will demonstrate that to be the case. When Erasmus produced the Textus Receptus, He did not have in his possession the last 6 verses of the book of Revelation, so he translated Jerome’s Latin Vulgate into Greek.

There was nothing wrong with what he did; he was doing all he could with the sparse number of manuscripts he possessed at the time. Since his day, however, the church now possesses about 307 Greek copies of the Book of Revelation, comprised primarily of the Majority text type which came down to us from discoveries all over the Byzantine empire, which was the cradle of the early church.

So, I quoted it like I did because I am persuaded by the overwhelming evidence to the true wording of the text. When BOTH the Alexandrian text and the Byzantine text agree, which account for 99.9 percent of all the extant Greek manuscripts, there is little room for doubt.

The first century authority to pen Scripture was granted to the apostles by Christ. This authority could also be extended by an apostle to a writing prophet, an act which was one of the non-transferable gifts which God could

extend in order that a person could become a writing prophet, through the laying on of hands by an apostle.

For example, Luke, who wrote the greatest volume of Scripture in the New Testament, undoubtedly received his authority to pen Scripture through the laying on of hands by the Apostle Paul. However, since Luke was not an apostle, he could not have empowered another with the gift.

Here are some verses which talk about apostolic authority, that is, how the apostles of the New Testament taught with the authority of Christ. Christ's authority was extended to the church and the church age through the office of apostle.

John 15:27: "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

2 Corinthians 12:12: Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.

Hebrews 2:3, 4: how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

The apostles alone were authorized by Christ to extend the authority of Christ into the church age. There were only,

and would only, be twelve of them. And that authority, in a final way, took the form of their writings.

There were only twelve apostles, with Paul, and not Mathias, being the twelfth apostle. Why? Because not even the apostles had the authority to choose another apostle; only Christ could do that. The eleven did not have the authority to do what they did in Acts chapter one. We know this is the case because, in the book of Revelation, we see that only twelve apostles' names are written on the walls of the heavenly city:

Revelation 21:14: Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

If the twelfth apostle was Paul (and he was), then Matthias could not have been an apostle.

Jesus taught that the apostles would be His authoritative spokesmen upon this earth.

John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

John 15:27: "And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.

Furthermore, their authority was transferred to inspired Scripture, so that what they authored under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit became the sole authority of God.

1 Corinthians 4:6: Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other.

1 Corinthians 14:37: If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

2 Peter 1:15: Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.

The inspired writing of the apostles and prophets alone speaks with the authority of God.

Believers are to contend earnestly for the faith that the Holy Spirit moved those men to record for the world. No other man, or men, have the right to decree what constitutes the words of God. If we want the words of God for us today, we must contend for what Christ's apostles and prophets originally authorized.

So there is everything right about examining the Scriptures in the language in which it was once and for all delivered to the saints. There is everything right about Bible students examining the extant manuscript evidence in an attempt to discern, with the greatest accuracy possible, what was contained in the original autographs of the New Testament text.

Here is a novel idea which seems to have escaped most people who want to be divisive on this issue of Bible translations:

How about comparing your favorite translation to that which the apostles and prophets inspired in the language in which they inspired it?

How about earnestly contending for the faith in the same language in which God inspired it?

Here is the fundamental error of the militant King James only adherents. They are earnestly contending for the wrong document. They are earnestly contending for a 17th century translation instead of earnestly contending for that which God once and for all delivered to the saints in the first century A.D.

They will list all the ways in which another translation differs from the King James and then condemn that other translation on that basis. What they should be doing is examining all translations and comparing them to what they believe to be the best underlying Greek manuscripts.

“But that would mean I would have to learn NT Greek!”
“That would mean I would have to dig beyond my favorite translation!”

So? How important is it to you that you, with certainty, possess the knowledge of God? How important is it to you that you not become another man’s parrot? How important is it to you not to have pit one preacher against other; but,

rather, you yourself develop a certainty and a comfort level about that which you claim to believe?

If you are indeed concerned that you accurately understand the Scriptures, is that too much to ask? Instead of spending hours a week on social media maligning those who do not ascribe to your position, get ahold of “New Testament Greek for Beginners” by J. Gresham Machen, and begin learning Greek for yourself. Develop the skills needed to study the Scriptures in the language that the apostles and prophets penned it. It will reap a lifetime of rewards, clarity and, certainty, in regards to your approach to Scripture.

Those who have a degree of comfort in the original language of Scripture are appalled by the KJV only people’s fabrication of half-truths just to defend their position. Those of us who are familiar with the original Greek of the New Testament do not get all bent out of shape over the different readings of the various translations, because we can lift the hood of those translations and discover for ourselves why there exist different readings in the various translations and discuss them, without experiencing a crisis of faith. The crisis of faith would cease if people were given the tools that English-only students of the word have at their disposal to examine the differences for themselves. After all, those helps have been available to the English only student of Scripture for the past 80 years.

Maybe pastors need to set the example to their congregations of having a solemn regard for the sacred text of Scripture; then the people in the pew will likewise put forth a wholehearted effort to investigate the Scriptures in

the language in which it was originally penned. Maybe the people in the pew themselves need to become acquainted with the skills needed to have such a discussion, instead of maligning those who are comfortable with having such a discussion. I mean, when the men of the church can freely discuss the dynamics of their favorite sports team, but have no idea of the tools that are available for them to lift the hood of their favorite English translation, they may need to hear a rebuke from the pulpit concerning their worldliness.

Understand this: Every translator of Scripture is supposed to seek to faithfully translate what the apostles and prophets originally penned, because that IS the authority unto which the Christian is to submit.

Every false cult in the world claims an authority which cannot trace its chain of authority back to the first century apostles. We should not be one of them.

Many groups today try to claim the same authority as the apostles.

For example, Pentecostals believe that they today receive revelation from God with authority which is equal to the apostles.

Roman Catholics today believe in something called apostolic succession; that is, their popes today decree with the authority of God.

Mormons believe that their founder has added to the Scriptures of the first century apostles and prophets.

Extreme King James only advocates believe that God re-inspired His word in 1611 such that one need not consult what the apostles and prophets wrote, in the language in which they wrote, because God again delivered His word to the saints in the 17th century.

On whose authority do the King James only advocates make that claim? Who authorized them to be the final arbiters of Scripture? Where is the chain of apostolic authority which must accompany all authoritative claims of divine inspiration? Who authorized them to break that chain of authority? Unless they believe in apostolic succession, then they need to seek authoritative teaching from what the first century apostles and prophets penned.

If God ONCE AND FOR ALL delivered the faith to the saints in Jude's day, He did not deliver it again in 1611; but, rather, has committed the saints to refer back to what He delivered back in Jude's day as their authority.

And that IS the underlying error of the extreme King James only movement.

They are fixated on earnestly contending for the wrong book.

All of their arguments are designed to defend a translation, not reference their translation back to what God once and for all delivered to the saints.

Several months ago on Facebook, I commented on a nuance of a particular verse of Scripture from the underlying Greek. One of these King James only jihadists jumped me

on it and asked me why I didn't trust the King James and use it.

To which I responded, "Why don't you trust the underlying Greek manuscripts in this verse from which the King James was translated? Let's look at what the TR says, or Majority text says, or the Alexandrian manuscripts say concerning this verse, YOUR CHOICE." (I knew all of the underlying Greek manuscripts were in agreement!)

So his accusation immediately moved to my skills as a student of Greek: "So what makes you think you can do a better job than the King James translators; are you trained in Greek?"

To which I responded, "The King James Bible is an excellent translation and, yes, I do have 22 credit hours of former training in Koine Greek and have been translating the New Testament for forty-four years. So yes, I do have a high comfort level in discussing the Scriptures in the original language of the apostles. I would be willing to share with you the reason that I say what I do about the particular verse in question".

Crickets...

No further discussion.

I have yet to have corresponded with a King James only jihadist who, when I offered to discuss with them the underlying Greek text of any particular verse in question, from any text tradition, I have yet to be taken up on the invitation. They just go and find someone else whom they

can bully in their ill equipped way to handle the word of God in the language in which God once and for all delivered it to the saints.

Before a person starts badmouthing my love for the text which God originally inspired and my study of that text, just maybe he ought to develop a familiarity and respect for it, so that he can actually HAVE a discussion over it before he begins to malign it.

I mean, how can a person be hypercritical of a translation when he cannot for himself read the language from which the translation is derived?

The sad truth in this discussion is that the King James Bible has actually gotten a bad rap over all this strife. The dishonesty and half-truths of some of these extreme King James only adherents has cause the translation which bears its name to fall out of favor with a whole host of people. And that is very unfortunate.

When I counsel people today as to what translation they should study, the King James is always at the core of my list of reference Bibles for the serious student of Scripture. The King James retains aspects of the original manuscripts which very few other translations maintain.

Do not let this present controversy dissuade you from a wonderful translation which has born the test of time. Do not despise the King James Bible just because some who name the name of Christ have used it in order to bludgeon those who wish to study the Scriptures in the language in which the Holy Spirit originally inspired it. It is a

wonderful translation and deserves the reverence which it has obtained through the centuries.

The “Gotcha” Questions of the Extreme King James Only Adherent

There are a number of “gotcha” questions or statements with which the extreme King James only adherents will seek to entrap you.

Here is a passage that they use to support their King James only position: Psalms 12:6-7

What Psalms 12:6, 7 really means:

Psalm 12:6, 7: The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

⁷ Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

This is one of those passages where context is important. However, the King James only people rip this verse right out of its context and try to make it say something that it really does not say.

What they attempt to say is that the King James is the preserved word of God.

What the verse is actually saying is that God promises to preserve forever the oppressed people of whom the context speaks. First of all, let’s look at the context of this passage.

^{KJV} **Psalm 12:5-8:** For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the

LORD; I will set *him* in safety *from him that* puffeth at him.

⁶ The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

⁷ Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

⁸ The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.

Here it is in the New King James:

^{NKJ} **Psalm 12:5-8:** "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,

Now I will arise," says the LORD;

"I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns."

⁶ The words of the LORD *are* pure words,

Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,

Purified seven times.

⁷ You shall keep them, O LORD,

You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

⁸ The wicked prowl on every side,

When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

A key to understanding the proper meaning of this context is to simply follow the gender of the pronouns used in verse 7, in order to see what nouns are their antecedents.

Pronouns must be the same gender and number of the noun to which they refer. For example, you would not say "Dan writes a lot of books. Many of the books she writes defend grace". The problem with these two sentences is the pronoun "she" is in the wrong gender, for Dan is not a "she".

Similarly, with reference to “the words of the Lord” in verse 6 above, “words” is a feminine, plural noun in the Hebrew. Likewise, in the Septuagint, “words” is a neuter, plural noun.

However, in verse 7 of our context, the two pronouns “them” are masculine plural in the Hebrew and in the Septuagint. So, the pronoun “them” of verse 7 cannot have as its antecedent the “words” of verse 6.

The nearest masculine plural noun in our context is “the poor and the needy” of verse 5. They are the ones, according to this context, which the Lord here promises to preserve forever. Therefore, we can safely conclude that this context is teaching that the Lord is going to forever protect and preserve his persecuted poor and needy saints.

So then, the next “gotcha” question you are going to be asked is, “if God did preserve His word, then where is it today?” (That is assuming that they got you on the previous question in this chapter).

To the question, “where is the preserved word of God today?” I would respond that the Scriptures command us to earnestly contend for the faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Jude 1:3: Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

If the faith was once and for all delivered to the saints in the first century A.D. (which it was), then we should contend for that faith in the language in which it was originally inspired.

The next question may be, “where is the word of God for the English speaking people today?”

To which I would respond, “in the original language in which it was inspired”. God did not inspire an English translation. He inspired New Testament apostles and prophets to write in Koine Greek. If there is any question as to whether or not your favorite translation lines up with the language in which the Scriptures were originally inspired, refer back to the second sentence in this paragraph.

Now then, we come to the legitimate question, “what ancient Greek family of manuscripts deserves the highest regard?”

Now that is a legitimate question.

To that question, let me answer as follows: My strong persuasion is the Majority Text type, which is the text from which the Textus Receptus came into being (refer back to the “Why are there so many translations?” chapter of this book). There are several lines of evidence that one could pursue to establish the superiority of a particular manuscript. My favorite line of evidence is the internal evidence of the Scriptures themselves.

In a previous chapters of this book, I discussed two places where the Alexandrian text corrupts the gospel of grace. In

fact, the corrupting of the gospel of grace in Luke 2:14 is the verse that swung me in the direction of the Byzantine/Majority Text type.

Here is another piece of internal evidence in Scripture as to why I believe the Majority Text is superior. The Majority Text type comprises approximately 95 percent of the extant Greek manuscripts (which is why it is called the Majority Text). By the way, what I am about to cite will upset you Textus Receptus folks, because the TR and the Alexandrian agree on this point. It is one of the places where the Textus Receptus does not follow the Majority Text. But this is an example of where the internal evidence of Scripture demonstrates the superiority of the Majority Text family of Greek manuscripts.

In the book of 2 Thessalonians, Paul ends his letter as follows: "The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you all."

Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, states here that every one of his epistles is going to end with his handwritten salutation of "Grace to you" in one form or another. Look for yourself; at the end of every one of Paul's epistles is this salutation of grace. Go ahead, start with the epistle of Philemon and work your way back through the epistles of Paul and you will find each and every epistle ends with the salutation which Paul made with his own hand, "Grace to you", in one form or another, EXCEPT in the Book of Romans.

Now wait a minute. Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that it would be a sign in every one of his epistles, that each of them would end with the "Grace be with you" salutation. However, we do not see one at the end of Romans chapter 16!

Romans 16:25-27: Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began²⁶ but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith –²⁷ to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

HMMM!

In the Majority Text, the book of Romans, verses 25 through 27 of chapter 16, appear at the end of chapter 14 which, by the way, fits the context.

Here is what the end of Romans chapter 14 looks like in the Majority Text:

Romans 14:20-27: Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed *are* pure, but *it is* evil for the man who eats with offense.²¹ *It is* good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.

²² Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

²³ But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is* not from faith is sin.

²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

²⁶ but now has been made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures has been made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith –

²⁷ to God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

Paul, at the end of Romans 14, is talking about believers growing past the doubtful self-condemnation of the weaker brother. He states, beginning in verse 25 (transferred from chapter 16), that God is able to establish the weaker brother solidly in grace so that he will no longer be a weaker brother filled with doubt. Clearly, Romans 16:25-27 fits the context at the end of Romans chapter 14.

But notice what else happens when the last three verses of Romans chapter 16 is moved to the end of Romans chapter 14.

Voila! There is our “grace to you” salutation which Paul said WOULD be at the end of every one of his epistles right there in Romans 16:24!

^{NKJ} **Romans 16:22-24:** I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.
²³ Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. ²⁴ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Now, I know that the evidence which I have just provided for the superiority of the Majority Text is probably troubling to many, but if 95 percent of extant Greek manuscripts read as I have just presented in the book of Romans, what are we to think?

What we all need to come to grips with is the fact that we need to become comfortable in discussing the word beyond a casual acquaintance with our English translation. Such discussion, which I have just had here, should not be causing a “crisis of faith” in the believer’s life. If the standard were an expectation for the average church goer to consider these sorts of discussions, not only would a different translation not create a crisis of faith, but the person in the pew would actually be equipped to defend the faith in an academically honorable way.

The child of God needs to be equipped to handle all the doubts and attacks that the devil’s crowd throws our way. We need to sanctify the Lord in our hearts and to be ready to always give a rational and reasoned response to anyone who has honest questions about our faith (I Peter 3:15).

The problem with so many believers today is that the Lord God is not sanctified in their hearts. They have so many worldly cares crowding out the truth in their lives, that

they bristle at the very suggestion that they themselves ought to be able to have these types of conversations about the word. Moreover, they are looking to their pastors to justify such obstinance.

Don't YOU be that pastor!

Paul in Romans chapter 14 is offering instruction concerning weak Christians who need to be established in the faith. The last three verses of Romans chapter 16 are an encouragement to Christians who need to be established. So, clearly, the Majority Text alone contains the correct ending to the book of Romans.

Places Where the King James Bible Does Not Follow the Textus Receptus

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader a defense against the King James only extremist who wants to assert that the King James Bible is inerrant.

This chapter is not meant to be an attack on the King James Bible. I could have easily written a chapter concerning any other translation of the Bible, pointing out how it, too, does not always follow its underlying text. But, such a chapter is not necessary because, generally speaking, other people do not seek to claim re-inspiration for their favorite translation.

Over the past several years, I have been compiling a document which contains places where the King James does not follow the Textus Receptus, adding to it as I ran across another verse in which this is the case. That document is now 40 pages long. This chapter will cite several pages of those examples.

Hopefully, this chapter will underscore the need to consider the fact that Greek manuscripts, and not a translation of those manuscripts, possess the greater authority to which we need to submit.

Note: In the examples below, translations are indicated with the following designations which precede the verses in superscript:

ASV – American Standard Version of 1901

BYZ – Byzantine (or Majority) Text
ESV – English Standard Version
KJV – King James Version
NIV – New International Version
NKJ – New King James
STE – Textus Receptus
YLT – Young’s Literal Translation

FIRST EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} **James 2:24:** Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

^{NKJ} **James 2:24:** You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

^{STE} **James 2:24:** ὁρᾶτε τοίνυν ὅτι ἐξ ἔργων δικαιοῦται ἄνθρωπος καὶ οὐκ ἐκ πίστεως μόνον

^{ASV} **James 2:24:** Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith.

^{YLT} **James 2:24:** Ye see, then, that out of works is man declared righteous, and not out of faith only;

In the King James and the New King James, the adverb “only” is placed in the order of the sentence so that it looks like it is modifying “faith”. However, adverbs never modify nouns; they modify verbs, adverbs and adjectives. The American Standard corrects this error by placing the adverb “only” in closer proximity to the verb “justified”, which it modifies. Young’s Literal Translation also corrects this

error (albeit not as well as the ASV), which is found in most modern translations.

This verse in James is actually teaching that there are two justifications under consideration in this context: A justification before God through faith alone, and a justification before man on the basis of our works. The King James and New King James make it appear that there is one justification based on a synthesis of faith plus works.

A literal translation of this verse would be as follows:
“You see that, out of works, a man is justified and not only out of faith.

The American Standard of 1901 and Young’s Literal Translation catch this and reflect this truth in their translations.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} **Colossians 3:17:** And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

^{STE} **Colossians 3:17:** καὶ πᾶν ὃ τι ἂν ποιῇτε ἐν λόγῳ ἢ ἐν ἔργῳ πάντα ἐν ὀνόματι κυρίου Ἰησοῦ εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ δι αὐτοῦ

Here is another example where the King James was translated before language scholars had discovered the Granville Sharp rule of Greek syntax. Notice the King James has us giving thanks to two different decreeing agents of the God-head: God and the Father. The American

Standard and the New King James get this right, applying the Granville Sharp rule to the newer translations:

^{NKJ} **Colossians 3:17:** And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

^{ASV} **Colossians 3:17:** And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

“Study” or “be diligent”?

^{KJV} **2 Timothy 2:15:** Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

^{NKJ} **2 Timothy 2:15:** Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

^{STE} **2 Timothy 2:15:** σπούδασον σεαυτὸν δόκιμον
παραστήσαι τῷ θεῷ ἐργάτην ἀνεπαίσχυντον
ὀρθοτομοῦντα τὸν λόγον τῆς ἀληθείας

The word “study”, as it appears in the King James, is actually a holdover from the middle English word “studie” which at that time meant “to be diligent”. It does not mean “to pursue knowledge”, even though being diligent to present yourself to God would certainly include gaining knowledge.

The above difference between the translations is simply the result of the evolution of the English language past 16th century middle English. Ironically, the person who believes the word means to “study” to be approved has not, in fact, studied to be approved.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

Sharing the gospel with your cat?

^{KJV} **Colossians 1:23:** If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

^{NKJ} **Colossians 1:23:** if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister.

^{STE} **Colossians 1:23:** εἶγε ἐπιμένετε τῇ πίστει τεθεμελιωμένοι καὶ ἑδραῖοι καὶ μὴ μετακινούμενοι ἀπὸ τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου οὗ ἠκούσατε τοῦ κηρυχθέντος ἐν πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει τῇ ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανὸν οὗ ἐγενόμην ἐγὼ Παῦλος διάκονος

The discrepancy in this context is found in the King James and the New King James. In those translations, it says that the gospel was preached to every creature under heaven. The correct translation is the gospel was preached

in all the creation under heaven. It really would not make sense for the gospel to be proclaimed to animals who cannot comprehend the message of the gospel. Animals do not possess the faculties of reason to assimilate the message of grace. The American Standard most closely follows the Textus Receptus in this context, as does Young's Literal Translation.

ASV Colossians **1:23**: if so be that ye continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye heard, which was preached in all creation under heaven; whereof I Paul was made a minister.

^{YLT} Colossians **1:23**: if also ye remain in the faith, being founded and settled, and not moved away from the hope of the good news, which ye heard, which was preached in all the creation that *is* under the heaven, of which I became -- I Paul -- a ministrant.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} John **5:44**: How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?

^{STE} John **5:44**: πῶς δύνασθε ὑμεῖς πιστεῦσαι δόξαν παρὰ ἀλλήλων λαμβάνοντες καὶ τὴν δόξαν τὴν παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ οὐ ζητεῖτε

^{NKJ} John **5:44**: "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that *comes* from the only God?

In this verse, the word “only” is an adjective modifying “God”; it is not an adverb. The King James attempts to translate “only” as an adverb; and, in the process, results in a misplaced modifier, ending the sentence with an adverb. If “only” had been an adverb, then the King James should have read, “....not seek the honor that comes only from God”. But, because in this verse “only” is an adjective, the NKJV has it correct.

By the way, it is unfortunate that newer translations did not bring forward the archaic, but plural, pronouns as the King James and American Standard do. The newer translations should have left them in place. It is usually important to know if the Lord is addressing an individual or an audience. In John 5:44, the exhortation is to Israel collectively which is why we see the plural “ye” in the King James. For this reason alone, the King James needs to be in every English student’s parallel Bible study collection.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} **Galatians 6:11:** Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

^{STE} **Galatians 6:11:** Ἰδετε πηλίκοις ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ

^{NKJ} **Galatians 6:11:** See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

^{ASV} **Galatians 6:11:** See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand.

In this verse, Paul is talking about the closing salutation which characterized every epistle that he wrote. Since Paul, for all practical purposes, was legally blind, he dictated his epistles to a scribe. However, at the end of every genuine epistle of Paul, he would have his scribe hand the pen to him, and Paul would write his closing salutation in his own handwriting.

In the close of the letter of II Thessalonians, Paul states that this is a hallmark, or security token, of every epistle that he wrote:

2 Thessalonians 3:17, 18: The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every epistle; so I write.

¹⁸ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all.
Amen.

Back to Galatians 6:11: The King James translation appears to say that Paul wrote an individual letter, or perhaps the entire epistle, in his own handwriting.

^{KJV} **Galatians 6:11:** Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.

In the King James, the word “letter” is singular even though, in the Greek, it is a dative plural noun. So the correct translation is found in the New King James which reads as follows:

^{NKJ} **Galatians 6:11:** See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!

NEXT EXAMPLE:

In the King James, the definite article “the” is absent from the phrase “great tribulation” in Revelation 7:14. This is also true of the Geneva Bible. By the way, the construction in the Greek is very clear. It is talking about THE great tribulation. It is the only place in the Bible where THE great tribulation is mentioned. There is one other passage (Matt. 24:21) which mentions “great tribulation” without the definite article. I wonder why the King James translators went out of their way to exclude the definite article in Revelation 7:14?

^{KJV} **Revelation 7:14:** And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

^{YLT} **Revelation 7:14:** and I have said to him, 'Sir, thou hast known;' and he said to me, 'These are those who are coming out of the great tribulation, and they did wash their robes, and they made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb;

^{NKJ} **Revelation 7:14:** And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

^{ASV} **Revelation 7:14:** And I say unto him, My lord, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they that come of the great tribulation, and they washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

^{STE} **Revelation 7:14:** καὶ εἶρηκα αὐτῷ Κύριέ σου οἶδας καὶ εἶπέν μοι Οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἐρχόμενοι ἐκ τῆς θλίψεως τῆς μεγάλης καὶ ἔπλυναν τὰς στολὰς αὐτῶν καὶ ἐλεύκαναν στολὰς αὐτῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι τοῦ ἀρνίου

NEXT EXAMPLE:

The distributed gifts

^{KJV} **Hebrews 2:3, 4:** How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*;

⁴ God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

^{NKJ} **Hebrews 2:3, 4:** how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard *Him*,

⁴ God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

^{ASV} **Hebrews 2:3, 4:** how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which having at the first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard;

⁴ God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders, and by manifold powers, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.

^{STE} **Hebrews 2:3, 4:** πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευζόμεθα
τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας ἥτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα
λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς
ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη
⁴ συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ θεοῦ σημείοις τε καὶ
τέρασιν καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσιν καὶ πνεύματος ἁγίου
μερισμοῖς κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν

The problem with the above verses in all three of our literal translations is that they all omit the word “distributions” in verse four. The English Standard version of 2001 and the NIV actually have a better translation of verse four, in that, they do not completely omit the word “distribution”; albeit, because they are concept translations, they do change the noun to the verb “distributed”.

^{ESV} **Hebrews 2:4:** while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit **DISTRIBUTED** according to his will.

^{NIV} **Hebrews 2:4:** God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit **DISTRIBUTED** according to his will.

Young’s Literal Translation gets it correct by translating “distributions” as a plural noun.

^{YLT} **Hebrews 2:4:** God also bearing joint-witness both with signs and wonders, and manifold powers, and **DISTRIBUTIONS** of the Holy Spirit, according to His will.

The omission of the word “distributions” I would consider to be a serious omission. This verse is a reference to the early charismatic gifts in the church through which authoritative truth was delivered to a local assembly, in the absence of an apostle and before the completed canon of Scripture.

The second observation in this verse is the tense of the word “bearing”. All of our translations, which we would normally consider “literal”, translated “bearing” in the present. While the participle “bearing” is a present participle, a basic rule of Greek syntax is that the tense of the participle relates to the tense of the principle verb in the sentence. The principle verbs in the sentence are found in verse three: “spoken” and “confirmed”. Both words are aorist (past tense) verbs. This means that the action of the participle “bearing” is simultaneous with the tense of the verbs. Even though “bearing” is correct, in that the event of the “bearing witness” took place during the speaking and confirmation of the apostles, the ESV and NIV take the additional step of translating the participle in the past tense (bore) to underscore that the “bearing witness” happened in the past. So in this context, the ESV and the NIV most accurately translate this passage.

The KJV, ESV, and NIV translations best support cessationism.

Cessationism is the belief that the sign gifts of the early church were temporary in nature and ceased with the completion of the canon of Scripture. The King James supports cessationism by adding the pronouns “*him*” in

verse three and “*them*” in verse four. Even though these words are in italics, they are needed for clarity.

The ESV and the NIV defend cessationism by including the word “distributed” and by getting the syntactical action of the participle “bore” correct. With “bore” being in the past tense, this verse would suggest that the gifts of which this verse speaks had ceased by the time of the writing of the book of Hebrews.

The word “distributed” hearkens back to how the sign gifts functioned in the early church. Authoritative teaching was accomplished in the pre-canon assemblies through the distributed sign gifts. Paul makes mention of this in I Corinthians chapter 13.

1 Corinthians 13:9, 10: For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

The phrase “in part” in the above context is based on the same Greek root as the word “distributed” in Hebrews 2:4. It is a reference to the means of how authoritative teaching was delivered to the early assemblies in the absence of an apostle and before the canon was completed. In the early church, the Holy Spirit had established a checks and balances system through which authoritative teaching (which was accompanied by the apostolic sign gifts) was delivered. When the individual “parts” of the local assembly were functioning in these gifts (tongues, interpretation of tongues, prophecy and miracles), then they

were assured that teaching with the authority of God was being delivered.

That is why the word “distributed” is important in Hebrews 2:4 and should not have been left out of our most literal of the translations.

Likewise, the participle “bore” in Hebrews 2:4 correctly indicates that these miracles were associated with that which took place in the assemblies in the past, from the perspective of the timing of the writing of the book of Hebrews.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} **1 Peter 4:10:** As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

^{NKJ} **1 Peter 4:10:** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

^{ASV} **1 Peter 4:10:** according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God;

^{STE} **1 Peter 4:10:** ἕκαστος καθὼς ἔλαβεν χάρισμα εἰς ἑαυτοὺς αὐτὸ διακονοῦντες ὡς καλοὶ οἰκονόμοι ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ

The King James inserts the definite article “the” before the word “gift” where there is not a definite article. This verse, in the Greek, is actually teaching that God has distributed a unique gift, not the same gift, to each individual member in the local body of Christ. The ASV and NKJV correctly translate this. By the way, the internal evidence of the verse itself demands the omission of the definite article. The “manifold” grace of God implies that the gifts were numerous in diversity, not all one in the same gift.

NEXT EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} **1 John 2:3:** And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

^{NKJ} **1 John 2:3:** Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

^{YLT} **1 John 2:3:** and in this we know that we have known him, if his commands we may keep;

^{BYZ} **1 John 2:3:** Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν

The Young’s Literal Translation is best. As we can see from the Greek, the first “know” is present tense and the second “know” is perfect tense. Therefore, our translation must account for the perfect tense. Young’s Literal Translation does that here. This is a verse on consistent fellowship leading to maturity. The maturing believer, that

is, the believer who has been consistent in his fellowship, prioritizes consistently obeying God. “We know that we have known him” suggest a consistency in fellowship which has produced a consistency in walk.

LAST EXAMPLE:

^{KJV} **Romans 5:11:** And not only *so*, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

^{NKJ} **Romans 5:11:** And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

^{BYZ} **Romans 5:11:** οὐ μόνον δέ ἀλλὰ καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ δι οὗ νῦν τὴν καταλλαγὴν ἐλάβομεν

The word in the Textus Receptus is not “atonement” but, rather, “reconciliation”.

Reconciliation “καταλλαγή” means “to bring two parties, who were previously at odds with one another, back into harmonious relations”.

The other word in this context, that impacts our understanding here, is the word “λαμβάνω”; which here is translated “received”. It is the verb of personal appropriation.

This verse is thanking God, for not only providing the means of reconciliation through the sacrifice of Christ, but also for going further in enabling the sinner to comprehend and appropriate to himself that offering of Christ and thus experience being fully reconciled to God.

The word “atonement” is never used in the New Testament to refer to the sacrifice of Christ. Christ did not atone for sin (“atone” meaning “to cover them up” as that which was accomplished in the OT sacrifices). Christ **TOOK AWAY** sin as that barrier which prevents God from entering into a relationship with man.

John 1:29: The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

I have read KJV only advocates trying to defend translating “καταλλαγη” as “atonement” by citing several OT passages which talk about the atonement of those sacrifices and then making the point that Christ is the fulfillment of those sacrifices. While that is certainly a true observation, it is not the truth that Romans 5:11 is teaching.

^{NKJ} **Romans 5:10, 11:** For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Romans 5:11 is teaching that God not only provided Christ to die for the ungodly (which, of itself, was an act of reconciliation), but He went further in, by means of the gospel, enabling our consciences to receive that love and to experience that reconciliation in our lives. We are rejoicing in the God who not only provided for our reconciliation, but also enabled us to receive it.

Conclusion

It is my hope that this book has been used to encourage the children of God to investigate the Scriptures beyond their favorite translation because, quite often, it is during those efforts that many of the precious truths of Scripture are discovered.

I also hope that this book has provided the reader a greater understanding as to why so many translations exist and why those translations read differently one from another.

As you can see from the information in this book, the serious student of Scripture has the resources he needs to discern why these differences exist, to do his own research, and to exercise his own discernment towards the word of truth.

In the history of the saints, the truth has never been the possession of the spiritually uninitiated. The person who has allowed the cares of this life to choke out of his soul the much needed contemplation of the word of God has never had a satisfying experience in the word of God. Only those who consistently engage their minds in the truth of Scripture experience its edifying and liberating power in their lives.

As the Apostle Peter exhorted us to do, we need to “gird up the loins of our minds” (I Peter 1:13). That means we need to prepare our hearts for some serious work in the word of God.

John 8:31, 32: Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed;

³² And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

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