

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

March, 1999

“Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Titus 1:4) It is my prayer that you have been blessed by these monthly newsletters. We are living in perilous times and it is more necessary now than ever, to have a proper relationship with God and His beloved Son. Amos warned, “Prepare to meet thy God.” (Amos 4:12)

Arizona Campmeeting Notice: “The Church at Wellhead” is having a campmeeting May 7-15 in Wellhead, Arizona (about 1½ hours Northwest of Phoenix). Campmeetings are one the most enjoyable times of the year so we hope you will plan on being there. We are certain you will gain a rich blessing by attending with your family. The first meeting will be May 7th at 7 p.m. with the remaining meetings to begin at 10 a.m. on the 8th and will continue until Sabbath evening on the 15th of May. Doug Goslin and Lynnford Beachy will be among the speakers at this campmeeting. Call (520) 442- 9868 and ask for Kim to received detailed information. I’ll see you at campmeeting!

Which Bible?

by Lynnford Beachy

God loves us so much that He gave up His only begotten Son so that we could be saved from sin. He has not chosen to leave us in darkness, but to reveal His love for us through His Word. The Bible is a very precious gift God has given us. God wishes that each of us would be able to have His Word in its most pure form, yet there are many different versions of God’s Word. When we enter a Christian bookstore in search of a Bible we are confronted with the difficulty of deciding which one to purchase. We find the NIV, RSV, ASV, NASV, The Bible in Basic English, The Living Bible, The Good News Bible, KJV, NKJV, YLT, etc....

With so many different translations, how can we know which Bible is the best for us today? Does it really matter which Bible we choose to read and accept as the Word of God? Are there any substantial differences in the many translations? Many people have been plagued by these important questions. To find out the answer to these questions it is necessary to look at the history of the Bible and the origin of some of today’s translations. By the time you finish this study you will be able to quickly distinguish which Bible is for you.

Recently a local newspaper printed an article that expressed the dilemma many face when purchasing a Bible. The article, entitled “Who has the last word?,” begins by

stating: “Gone are the days when Protestants could attend church in nearly any part of the country and expect to have the sermon text read from King James Version of the Bible.” (*Register Herald*, page 1E, Beckley, West Virginia, February 7, 1999, article: *Who has the last word?*)

With many churches using different Bible versions it makes it difficult to memorize and quote verses when the person you are quoting them to does not recognize them from their own Bible. Sadly this dilemma has caused many to avoid memorizing verses altogether. This is a sad condition, for David wrote, “*Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*” (Psalm 119:11)

Rod Carney, owner of Grace Book Shoppe in Beckley, West Virginia, said he is often confronted with questions about the different versions available. “There are a few versions that I don’t even carry in the store, because I believe there has been too much leeway in how they have translated the Scriptures,... I don’t ever try to convince people that they shouldn’t use the King James. It’s a good translation.” (*ibid.*)

Where did the Bible come from?

“Hebrew and Greek were the original languages in which biblical writings first appeared. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew; the New Testament in Greek. The Hebrew language was replaced by the Greek language because of the influence of the Greek Empire from 300 B.C. to 300 A.D.

“About 200 B.C., Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek in a translation known as ‘the Septuagint.’

“By the second century after Christ, the Scriptures were in demand to be translated into the languages of the known world.

“Although Greek was basically the universal language until the beginning of the fourth century it gave way to Latin, the official language of the Roman Empire. The need arose to translate the Scriptures into Latin. A scholar named Jerome translated the Septuagint into the Latin Vulgate, which remains the official Catholic version of the Bible. This version includes 14 books known as the Apocrypha, which were later discarded by Protestant scholars and omitted from editions such as the King James Version.

“During the Renaissance (15th and 16th centuries), many scholars sought to study the Scriptures in the original language rather than from a translation. In 1522 a Catholic cardinal in Spain produced the first Greek edition of the Bible. A Swiss printer heard about the new translation and commissioned a Dutch scholar named Erasmus to develop a Greek edition of the Bible. Erasmus completed the task in nine months, but used only six of the manuscripts at his disposal. Some scholars believe he did so to save time; others believe he rejected the validity of the other manuscripts.

“A decade after the death of Erasmus, Robert Stephanus published four editions of the Greek New Testament, using Erasmus’ text, the Cardinal’s text in Spain and about 15 Greek manuscripts. Stephanus introduced the verse divisions. Stephen Langston, Archbishop of Canterbury, had introduced chapter divisions in the 11th century.

“From 1565 to 1604, Theodore Beza, a Protestant scholar, published nine editions of the Greek New Testament. These were similar to the works of Erasmus and Stephanus.

“Between 1624 and 1678, the Elzevir brothers, two Dutch publishers, produced several Greek New Testaments based mainly on the texts of Beza and Stephanus. In the preface of their second edition, which was written in Latin, they told their readers that they now had the ‘text now received by all.’ That one particular Greek text became known as the ‘Textus Receptus,’ or the received text. It is this Greek text that stands behind the New Testament of the King James Version of the Bible.” (*Register Herald*, page 1E, 2E, Beckley, West Virginia, February 7, 1999, article: *Where did the Bible come from?*)

Today there are many Greek manuscripts for scholars to examine. “Extant Greek manuscripts of the New Testament—complete, partial, or fragmentary—now number about 5000. None of these, however, is an autograph, an original from the writer. Probably the oldest is a fragment of the Gospel of John dated about A.D. 120-40. The similarities among these manuscripts is most remarkable when one

considers differences of time and place of origin as well as the methods and materials of writing.” (*Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia*, 1996 edition, article: “Bible”)

It is remarkable how so many different manuscripts can be collected from various parts of the globe at different times, and still be found to be almost entirely in harmony with each other. They have all been painstakingly copied out by hand. The fact they are so closely in harmony is definite evidence of the Lord’s watch care over His Word.

The Waldenses

We owe a great deal to the faithful Christians who risked their lives to retain the Scriptures in their purity through the Dark Ages (approximately 500 A.D.- 1600 A.D.). These faithful Christians who often paid for their faith with their own blood faithfully copied the Scriptures by hand. Among these Christians were the Waldenses (also called Vaudois or Valdenses), Albigenses, Huguenots, Cathari, etc. In later years some referred to all of these as Waldenses.

Benedict wrote, “In the preface to the French Bible the translators say that they [the Waldenses] have always had the full enjoyment of the heavenly truth contained in the Holy Scriptures ever since they were enriched with the same by the apostles; having in fair manuscripts preserved the entire Bible in their native tongue from generation to generation.” (Benedict, *History of the Baptist Denomination*, pages 32, 33, as quoted in *History of the Sabbath and First Day of the Week*, page 405, by J.N. Andrews)

The textbook of the Waldensian youth was the Scriptures and “they were required to commit to memory, and be able accurately to recite, whole Gospels and Epistles. This was a necessary accomplishment on the part of public instructors, in those ages when printing was unknown, and copies of the Word of God were rare. Part of their time was occupied in transcribing the Holy Scriptures, or portions of them, which they were to distribute when they went forth as missionaries.... After passing a certain time in the school of the barbes [Waldensian ministers], it was not uncommon for the Waldensian youth to proceed to the seminaries in the great cities of Lombardy, or to the Sorbonne at Paris. There they saw other customs, were initiated into other studies, and had a wider horizon around them than in the seclusion of their native valleys. Many of them became expert dialecticians, and often made converts of the rich merchants with whom they traded, and the landlords in whose houses they lodged. The priests seldom cared to meet in argument the Waldensian missionary.” (Wylie, *History of Protestantism*, book i, chap. vii, par. 5, as quoted in *Ecclesiastical Empires*, pages 472, 473, by A.T. Jones)

The Waldensian Christians cherished the Word of God and diligently copied it out from generation to generation. They preserved the Scriptures that had been written by the

apostles and prophets. Yet the papal power was not pleased to allow God's Word to be available to the common people. With the papacy in power the law of the land prohibited people from possessing a Bible. Those who were caught with a copy of the Scriptures were subject to a martyr's death. The absence of the Bible brought darkness to the hearts of the people. That time was rightly called the "Dark Ages."

Persecution of the Waldenses

The historian Lawrence wrote concerning this time, "A terrible inquisition was established to crush more perfectly the lingering seeds of heresy. Every priest and every lord was appointed an inquisitor, and whoever harbored a heretic was made a slave. Even the house in which a heretic was found was to be razed to the ground; **no layman was permitted to possess a Bible**; a reward, a mark, was set for the head of a heretic; and all caves and hiding-places where the Albigenses might take refuge were to be carefully closed up by the lord of the estate." (Lawrence, *Historical Studies*, page 49, as quoted in *Ecclesiastical Empires*, page 504, by A.T. Jones—emphasis supplied)

The bravery of these Waldensian Christians to copy the Scriptures was met by strong opposition of the papal power. To demonstrate the attitude of the papacy toward the Waldenses, look at one example of the papacy exerting her influence upon kingdoms where Waldenses flourished.

"Through a regular election by the cardinals, Urban V was succeeded by Peter Roger, a nephew of Clement VI, who took the papal name of Gregory XI, Dec. 30, 1371, to March 27, 1378.

"Since the desolation poured upon the country of the Albigenses by Innocent III, Christianity had permeated France, and was specially prevalent in the Province of Dauphine. The local officials would not execute the decrees of the Church against them. Therefore Gregory addressed to King Charles V of France the following letter:

"Prince, we have been informed that there is in Dauphiny, and the neighboring provinces, a multitude of heretics, called Vaudois, Turlupins, or Bulgarians, who are possessed of great riches. Our holy solicitude is turned toward that poor kingdom, which God has confided to you, to extirpate the schism. But your officers, corrupted by the gold of these reprobates, instead of assisting our dear sons, the inquisitors, in their holy ministry, have themselves fallen into the snare, or rather have found death. And all this is done before the eyes of the most powerful lords of Dauphiny. We order you, then, by virtue of the oath you have taken to the holy see, to exterminate these heretics; and we enjoin you to march, if necessary, at the head of your armies, to excite the zeal of your soldiers, and reanimate the courage of the inquisitors.'" (De Cormenin, *History of the*

Popes, Gregory XI, as quoted in *Ecclesiastical Empires*, page 527, 528, by A.T. Jones)

The attitude of the papacy toward all those who would not agree with her in doctrine is penned on the face of history books around the world.

De Cormenin wrote, "The Church, as the holy Leo saith, whilst it rejects bloody executions from its code of morals, does not omit them in practice, because the fear of corporal punishments sometimes causes sinners to recur to spiritual remedies. Thus the heretics who are called Catharins, Patarins, or Publicans, are so strongly fortified in Gascony, among the Albigenses, and in the territory of Toulouse, that they no longer conceal themselves, but openly teach their errors; it is on that account we anathematize them as well as those who grant them an asylum or protection, and if they die in their sin, we prohibit oblations being made for them, or sepulture being granted to them. As for the Brabancons, Arragoneses, Navarese, Basques, Cotterels, Triabechins, who respect neither churches nor monasteries, who spare neither widow nor orphan, nor age nor sex, and who pillage plains and cities, we also order those who shall receive, protect, or lodge them, to be denounced and excommunicated in all the churches at the solemn feasts; nor do we permit them to be absolved, until after they shall have taken up arms against these abominable Albigenses. We also declare, the faithful who are bound to them by any treaties, to be entirely free from their oaths; and we enjoin on them for the remission of their sins, to be wanting in faith to these execrable heretics, to confiscate their goods, reduce them to slavery, and put to death all who are unwilling to be converted. We grant to all Christians who shall take up arms against the Catharins, the same indulgences as to the faithful who take the cross for the holy sepulcher." (De Cormenin, *History of the Popes*, Alexander III, par. 10 from end, as quoted in *Ecclesiastical Empires*, pages 479, 480, by A.T. Jones)

Though the Waldenses were severely persecuted they maintained high moral standards. Though the papacy struggled to exterminate them from the face of the earth they strove to live peaceably with all men regardless of their religious beliefs.

Of the Albigenses, or Cathari, St. Bernard, who was the principal preacher of one of the chief crusades against them, says: "If you interrogate them, nothing can be more Christian. As to their conversation, nothing can be less reprehensible; and what they speak they prove by deeds. **As for the morals of the heretic, he cheats no one, he oppresses no one, he strikes no one**: his cheeks are pale with fasting, he eats not the bread of idleness, his hands labor for his livelihood." (De Cormenin, *History of the Popes*, Lucius III, p. 101, as quoted in *Ecclesiastical Empires*, page 487, by A.T. Jones—emphasis supplied)

The Waldenses faced the threat of entire extinction by the hand of the papal power. Although they were constantly

under attack, the Lord allowed them to preserve the Word of God throughout the Dark Ages. God never allowed the light of His Word to go out completely. As noted earlier, there are approximately 5000 Greek manuscripts available today. This was made possible, to a large degree, by the work of these faithful Waldenses in copying by hand the sacred pages of Scripture. God designed that His Word would be kept pure from corruption even during the darkest time of this earth's history.

Satan, however, was not asleep through all of this. He endeavored to corrupt the pure Word of God by altering important verses and deleting phrases and verses entirely. This purpose was accomplished by the production of two Greek manuscripts that stand in variance with all the rest of the Greek manuscripts in several thousand instances. These two Greek manuscripts are said to be the oldest and most reliable, however much of their history is unknown. These two Greek manuscripts are known as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (otherwise known as Codex B and Codex Aleph, respectively).

The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts

Regarding the Vaticanus manuscript, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* states, "VATICANUS, CODEX is said to be the oldest extant vellum manuscript. It and the Codex Sinaiticus are the two oldest uncial manuscripts. They were probably written in the fourth century. The Vaticanus was placed in the Vatican Library at Rome by Pope Nicolas V in 1448, its previous history being unknown." (*Easton's Bible Dictionary*, article: "Vaticanus, Codex")

It is claimed that the Vaticanus manuscript was probably written in the fourth century, but that cannot be proven since there is no known history of that manuscript until 1448 when it appeared in the Vatican Library at Rome.

The Sinaiticus manuscript has a similar history being found in the convent of St. Catherine in 1859; its previous history remains unknown.

Regarding the Sinaiticus manuscript, *Easton's Bible Dictionary* states, "SINAITICUS, CODEX usually designated by the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is one of the most valuable of ancient MSS. of the Greek New Testament. On the occasion of a third visit to the convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, in 1859, it was discovered by Dr. Tischendorf." (*Easton's Bible Dictionary*, article: "Sinaiticus, Codex")

It is very interesting to note the time in which these manuscripts first appeared, especially in light of the fact that they stand at variance with the rest of the Greek manuscripts in thousands of significant places. Just 68 years before the Vaticanus was discovered John Wyckliffe translated the first complete Bible into English in A.D. 1380. (See *Revised Easton's Bible Dictionary*, article: "Version"). The strange

appearance of the Vaticanus manuscript has caused some to question its origin and validity.

There are basically two types of Greek Bibles from which we get all of our English Bibles today—those that agree with the two Catholic manuscripts (the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus), and those that agree with the "Textus Receptus" (Received Text). The "Textus Receptus" is the name given to the majority of Greek manuscripts which are almost entirely in harmony with one another.

Maurice A. Robinson, Ph.D., Department of Biblical Studies and Languages, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary wrote the following introduction for the Online Bible computer software concerning the Stephens 1550 edition of the "Textus Receptus":

"The Stephens 1550 edition of the so-called 'Textus Receptus' (Received Text) reflects a general agreement with other early printed Greek texts also (erroneously) called by that name. These include editions such as that of Erasmus 1516, Beza 1598, and (the only one actually termed 'Textus Receptus') Elzevir 1633. Berry correctly notes that 'In the main they are one and the same; and [any] of them may be referred to as the Textus Receptus.' (George Ricker Berry, *Interlinear Greek-English New Testament*, page ii, New York: Hinds & Noble, 1897.)

"All these early printed Greek New Testaments closely parallel the text of the English-language Authorized (or King James) version of 1611, since that version was based closely upon Beza 1598, which differed little from its 'Textus Receptus' predecessors. These early 'TR' editions generally reflect (but not completely) the 'Byzantine Textform,' otherwise called the 'Majority' or 'Traditional' text, **which predominated throughout the period of manual copying of Greek New Testament manuscripts.**

"The user should note that the Stephens 1550 TR edition does NOT agree with the Wescott-Hort Greek text nor with modern critical editions such as that published by the United Bible Societies or the various Nestle editions. All those editions follow a predominately 'Alexandrian' Greek text, as opposed to the Byzantine Textform which generally underlies all TR editions. **Note, however, that 85%+ of the text of ALL Greek New Testament editions IS identical.**" (*Specialized Introduction: The Stephens 1550 edition of the Textus Receptus*, Online Bible Version 6.13, March 20, 1995, file: Gnt.doc, prepared by Maurice A. Robinson, Ph.D.—bold emphasis supplied)

It may be somewhat comforting to realize that all the Greek New Testament editions are identical 85% of the time. Yet that indicates that some editions vary 15% of the time. The Greek editions Robinson referred to as varying from the Textus Receptus 15% of the time are evidently the two Greek manuscripts known as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

Robinson continues: “One should also recognize that NO printed Receptus Greek edition agrees 100% with the aggregate Byzantine manuscript tradition (Majority/Traditional Text), nor with the Greek text presumed to underlie the Authorized Version. However, **all printed Receptus texts DO approximate the Byzantine Textform closely enough (around 98% agreement) to claim a near-identity of reading between those Receptus forms and the majority of all manuscripts.**” (*Ibid.*—bold emphasis supplied) It is amazing how the Lord preserved His Word to such a high degree of accuracy.

The 1881 Westcott - Hort Greek text

In 1881 Brook Westcott and Fenton Hort produced their *New Testament in the Original Greek*. This Greek text had a considerable influence upon the production of the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the American Standard Version (ASV), along with many of the new translations.

Maurice A. Robinson, Ph.D. wrote the following introduction for the Online Bible computer software concerning the Westcott-Hort Greek text: “The Westcott-Hort text presented in the Online Bible database was constructed from a collation published in 1889 by William Sanday. Sanday’s collation presents with a high degree of accuracy **the approximately 6000 significant alterations** between the Westcott-Hort text of 1881 and the Stephens 1550 Textus Receptus edition. [See William Sanday, ed., ‘Appendices ad Novum Testamentum Stephanicum jam inde a Millii Temporibus Oxoniensium Manibus Tritum,’ Part I: ‘Collatio Textus Westcottio-Hortiani (jure permissio) cum Textu Stephanico Anni MDL’ (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), pp.1-92].” (*Specialized Introduction: 1881 Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament*, Online Bible Version 6.13, March 20, 1995, file: Gnt.doc, prepared by Maurice A. Robinson, Ph.D.—bold emphasis supplied)

The Westcott-Hort Greek text has approximately 6000 significant alterations. That is very disturbing considering the fact that many of the newer translations are based upon the Westcott-Hort Greek text.

Robinson continues, “Westcott and Hort opted in regard to many orthographical variants to **follow the specific spellings of Codex Vaticanus and/or Codex Sinaiticus even if such manuscripts stood virtually alone in the peculiarity of their spelling....** Westcott and Hort... relied primarily on joint testimony of Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) and Codex Vaticanus (B) in contradistinction to the assimilation of readings from manuscripts of other texttypes.” (*Ibid.*—bold emphasis supplied)

This statement is extremely significant when we consider that these two manuscripts (the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) stand alone with over 6000 significant alterations as compared to over 5000 other Greek manuscripts

which are almost entirely in harmony with one another. That is a ratio of 2 to 5000, and Westcott and Hort chose to side with the two Greek manuscripts rather than using the testimony of 5000 other Greek manuscripts that differed with these two manuscripts.

Many Byzantine readings, or “Textus Receptus” Greek manuscripts, are “(now shown to be ancient by many early papyri)... these supposedly ‘late’ readings (so deprecated by Westcott and Hort) are now proven to be early thanks to their discovery in various early papyrus documents.” (*Ibid.*)

It is clear that the Westcott and Hort Greek text strongly follows the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus even though they stand alone with over 6000 significant alterations as compared to the large majority of Greek manuscripts. It is claimed that these two unique Greek manuscripts are the oldest, yet their history is veiled in secrecy and their origin is questionable. The Textus Receptus is the closest Greek manuscript to the original writings of the apostles and prophets.

Within the last 150 years we have seen the emergence of dozens of new translations and paraphrases. Almost every new translation is based on the Westcott and Hort Greek text, which is based on the two questionable, and from the evidence we have seen the two most unreliable, Greek manuscripts (the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus).

How reliable are the new translations?

One of the most popular of the new translations is the New International Version (NIV). This version was completed in 1978 by a committee of scholars who consulted many Greek manuscripts but relied heavily upon the Westcott and Hort Greek text which was based upon the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

The translators of the NIV inserted a note after Mark 16:8. The note reads as follows: “The two most reliable early manuscripts do not have Mark 16:9-20.” It is obvious where the translators of this new version placed their trust when they made this translation. They claimed that the two most reliable early manuscripts are the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

The translators of the New American Standard Version (NASV) inserted a note after Mark 16:8 similar to the note inserted in the NIV. The note reads as follows: “Some of the oldest mss. omit from verse 9 through 20.” The translators of the NASV claim that some of the oldest mss. omit this portion of scripture but they would have been more accurate to state “two” rather than “some.” Two Greek texts in comparison to 5000 can hardly be interpreted as “some.”

Jay P. Green Sr., editor of several Greek-English Interlinear Bibles notes the following concerning Mark 16:9-20: “The NIV says: The most reliable early manuscripts, and other ancient witnesses, do not have Mark 16:9-20 but they are putting their mere opinion before the reader when they

say most reliable. Since only 2 Greek MSS. lack these verses, they rest entirely on Aleph and B [Sinaiticus and Vaticanus] (with 2,877 and 3,455 omissions respectively in the Gospels alone), can they be called reliable? Then lacking no other Greek evidence, they must bring in other ancient witnesses something they will not allow opposing critics to do. The critics refuse to credit the witness of thousands of Greek MSS. and lectionaries.” (*Textual And Translation Notes On The Gospels*, on Mark 16:9, by Jay P. Green, Sr.)

Notwithstanding the questionable nature of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Greek manuscripts, many translators today regard them as the final authority regardless of the fact that thousands of other Greek manuscripts disagree with them thousands of times. This should cause us to take serious consideration before we select a translation.

Green continues regarding the questionable nature of the Vaticanus in Mark 16:9: “Codex B [Vaticanus] is written in three columns and upon completing a book it normally begins the next book at the top of the next column. But between Mark and Luke there is a completely vacant column, the only such in the codex, a space that would accommodate the missing verses. Considering that parchment was expensive, the ‘wasting’ of such a space would be quite unusual. Why did the copyist do it?” (*Ibid.*)

“As for Codex Aleph [Sinaiticus], the folded sheet containing the end of Mark and beginning of Luke is, quite frankly, a forgery. Tischendorf, who discovered the codex, warned that those four pages appeared to be written by a different hand and with different ink than the rest of the manuscript. However that may be, a careful scrutiny reveals the following: the end of Mark and beginning of Luke occur on page 3 (of the four); pages 1 and 4 contain an average of 17 lines of printed Greek text per column (there are four columns per page), just like the rest of the codex; page 2 contains an average of 15.5 lines of printed text per column (four columns); the first column of page 3 contains only twelve lines of printed text and in this way v. 8 occupies the top of the second column, the rest of which is blank (except for some designs); Luke begins at the top of column 3, which contains 16 lines of printed text while column 4 is back up to 17 lines. On page 2 the forger began to spread out the letters, displacing six lines of printed text; in the first column of page 3 he got desperate and displaced five lines of printed text, just in one column! In this way he managed to get two lines of v. 8 over onto the second column, avoiding the telltale vacant column (as in B). That second column would accommodate 15 more lines of printed text, which with the other eleven make 26. Verses 9-20 occupy 23.5 such lines, so there is plenty of room for them. It really does seem that there has been foul play, and there would have been no need for it unless the first hand did in fact display the disputed verses.” (*Ibid.*)

It is very sad that people would attempt to make alterations to the Word of God. John solemnly warned against this when he wrote, “*For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.*” (Revelation 22:18, 19)

Green sums up the evidence, stating, “not only is Mark 16:9-20 vindicated, but codices B and Aleph [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] stand convicted of containing poison. They also contain the poison (mentioned above) in Matthew 1:7 and 10, Matthew 1:18, Mark 6:22, Luke 3:33 and Luke 23:45, John 1:18 and 1 Corinthians 5:1. Does this not diminish their credibility as witnesses?” (*Ibid.*)

Green concludes, “Only a cultic belief in the value of the Egyptian manuscripts can explain the willingness of the critics and new versionists to cast out words contained in all other manuscripts. Yet these manuscripts which they have elevated to the role of supreme judges of authenticity have no known history. Who wrote them? Under what conditions were they written? What was their motivation for leaving out thousands of words (a total ejection of some 8 pages of Greek), and for adding, transposing, and otherwise altering passages contained in all of the other manuscripts? Without such a cultic belief, any unbiased, thinking person must reject the Egyptian manuscripts [Vaticanus and Sinaiticus] which fly in the face of all the manuscript, version, and patristic evidence. For a full and complete discussion of all the evidence, and all the attempts to discredit these precious verses, see *Unholy Hands*, Vol. I, pp. C-1 to C-177, a complete book by Dean John W. Burgon.” (*Ibid.*)

How to test a Bible translation

As before noted, there are two types of Greek texts. One type agrees with the majority, or “Textus Receptus” Greek manuscripts, and one type that agrees with the two questionable Greek manuscripts—the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. Every translation of the Scriptures comes from one or the other of these types of Greek manuscripts. There are a few verses you can use to determine whether a version is reliable or not. This is a very simple test and can be applied to any Bible version.

In this test we will simply compare the NIV with the KJV (King James Version). We will use Romans 8:1 for our test. The KJV reads: “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*” The NIV reads: “*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*” Notice that half the verse is missing. The translators

insert a note for this verse which reads, "Some later manuscripts *Jesus, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*" They would be more accurate to have said, "5000 manuscripts" rather than "some manuscripts." The NASB note on Mark 16:9 calls the two corrupt Greek manuscripts (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) "some," and the NIV calls the remaining 5000 Greek manuscripts "some." This usage is very misleading.

It is easy to determine if a Bible version follows the two corrupt Greek manuscripts (the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) or the remaining 5000 Greek manuscripts collectively referred to as the "Textus Receptus." If the Bible version you are examining contains only half of Romans 8:1 you know it is following the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts, and it has thousands of other errors in it. We have a list of over 200 of these significant alterations which you may obtain by contacting us and requesting the *200 Omissions* pamphlet.

Another easy test is found in Revelation 22:14. Again we will compare the NIV with the KJV. The KJV reads, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.*" The NIV reads, "*Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.*" There is a vast difference between doing God's commandments, and washing robes. This alteration conveniently eliminates the requirement of doing God's commandments to enter into the holy city and eat of the tree of life. Each of these translations of Revelation 22:14 are true to a type of manuscript, the KJV follows the "Textus Receptus," while the NIV follows the two corrupt manuscripts known as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

If the translation you are using begins with using corrupted Greek manuscripts there are bound to be many errors contained therein.

Another easy test is found in John 1:18. In this test we will compare the NASV with the KJV. The KJV reads, "*No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*" The NASV reads, "*No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*" The translators included a footnote stating, "Some later mss. read, *Son.*" Again, the translators refer to the testimony of 5000 manuscripts as "some" in comparison to the two corrupted Greek manuscripts the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. They also state that these 5000 manuscripts are "later." Later than what? Later than the supposed date that the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus were written, which date we cannot be sure of due to their questionable origin and unknown history.

It is a serious thing to remove Christ as "*the only begotten Son of God.*" This fact is the believer's assurance of overcoming the world. John wrote, "*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*" (1 John 5:5)

The translators of the NIV have attempted to hide the fact that Jesus is "*the only begotten Son of God.*" (John 3:18) The phrase, "only begotten" cannot be found in the NIV, in its place we find the term, "one and only." It is sad that this version is so misleading, yet they are not alone in their attempt to hide the fact that Jesus Christ is "*the only begotten Son of God.*" The NASV rightly uses the term "only begotten" referring to Christ, but the translators have inserted a note in John 3:16 referring to the term "only begotten." The note reads, "Or, *unique*, only one of His kind." Notice they do not give the Greek text as the authority for this assertion. This is quite appropriate because, even though the NASV translators rely heavily on the two corrupt Greek manuscripts (the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) they do not even have them to fall back on in this case. All of the "Textus Receptus" manuscripts contain the Greek word $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ ³⁴³⁹ (only begotten). The Vaticanus and Sinaiticus also contain the exact same word and the spelling in this verse.

Yet some will still claim that the Greek word $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ actually means "unique." However, this assertion is not accurate, which we will see as we examine the Scriptures. The Greek word $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ is made up of the two Greek words $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ ³⁴⁴¹ and $\gamma\iota\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ ¹⁰⁹⁶. The Greek word $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ means, "alone (without a companion), only." (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*) The vast majority of times the New Testament writers wanted to indicate "only," or "alone," they used either the Greek word $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\varsigma$ or its companion $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\nu$. The Greek word $\gamma\iota\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ means, "to come into existence, begin to be, receive being." (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*)

The Greek word $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ was never used to merely indicate "only, or unique." Every time $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ was used in the Bible it refers to children. This Greek word was used nine times in the New Testament, five times it refers to Christ, and the remaining four refer to other children. Some people maintain that since $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\upsilon\eta$ is used in Hebrews 11:17 referring to Isaac that it cannot possibly mean "only begotten" because Isaac was not Abraham's only son. This argument would hold some validity if the thought ended in verse 17. However, verse 18 continues the thought making the intention clear. The verses read, "*By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called.*" (Hebrews 11:17, 18) It is not true that Isaac was Abraham's "only begotten Son," but it is true that Isaac was Abraham's "only begotten Son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called." As you can see, the use of this verse to

disprove the fact that Jesus is “*the only begotten Son of God*” has no foundation.


It is a sad day when Christians will try to prove that Jesus Christ is not “*the only begotten Son of God.*” Yet it is even more sad when Bible translators take it upon themselves to twist the Bible and make it say something it does not say.

God wants His people to have His Word in its most pure form. With every translation there are difficulties due to the problem of the language barrier, yet if the translation you are using begins with using corrupted Greek manuscripts there are bound to be many errors contained therein.

The best way to study the Scriptures is to know the original languages in which they were written. However, to most people this is not practical. Yet the Lord has provided tools whereby we can examine the Scriptures in their original languages without the need of knowing those languages. The first and most important tool is the *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. This handy tool allows you to discover the original Greek and Hebrew words behind each English word in your Bible and find a brief definition of each word. This book is based on the “Textus Receptus,” and is most commonly found for the KJV. This book is available in most Christian bookstores.

Please be aware of the Bible version you choose to read. Using the tests outlined in this paper I have determined several translations that follow the “Textus Receptus” Greek manuscripts. Here are some of them: KJV (also known as AV-Authorized Version), NKJV, 1898 Young’s Literal Translation, Green’s Literal Translation, Green’s Modern KJV, the Spanish 1909 Reina-Valera, 1995 Revised Webster’s Bible, 1833 Webster’s Bible.

Here is a partial list of translations that follow the two corrupt Greek manuscripts, the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus: NIV, ASV, Bible in Basic English, Darby Translation, RSV, NASV, the Spanish 1989 Reina-Valera Actualizada, 1912 Weymouth NT, the Living Bible, the Good News Bible, Greek Westcott-Hort, Greek Nestle.

I pray that this study has been a blessing to you so that you are more informed about Bible versions. 

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