

BIBLE VERSIONS

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About the author...

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Introduction

One of the most troublesome problems in religion today is that of a multitude of Bible Versions now available. It was around most all of last century and the new one sees no abatement in the mounting problems they pose to the integrity of God's Word. One of the greatest preachers of last century was Foy. E. Wallace, Jr. In earlier life he fought the errors of Protestant denominationalism, Roman Catholic, Calvinism, Premillennialism and infidelity. In the latter part of his illustrious life he fought the perversions of the new Bibles. Nearly thirty years ago he wrote a scholarly book in unmasking many of these perversions. Early in that book, *A Review of The New Versions*, he wrote, "It is my firm conviction that the greatest immediate danger confronting the churches of Christ is the general acceptance of the pseudo-versions of the Bible." (35) I often heard him say publicly that the new Bible would make different people of us. His words have been fulfilled again and again in recent years.

An Elder's Prayer

Nearly forty years ago, I was scheduled to preach in a gospel meeting in the capital city of a northern state. Before I arose to speak that Sunday morning, one of the elders of that congregation led the prayer. There was one petition of that prayer that has lingered with me all these many years. He petitioned the Father, "Lord, may we never tamper with thy word." This elder was a well-known attorney in that city and had argued cases before the Supreme Court of our nation. Frequently, he had aided his clients in drawing up their last wills or testaments. He knew how deeply they must be respected when the testators died and the wills were executed. He also knew of the far deeper import of the Lord's last will or testament being respected with no efforts to tamper with the Word of God by additions, deletions, substitutions, alterations and modifications. There is no greater crime than tampering with the Word of the Living God. It is done in wholesale fashion, and the tragedy of the matter is that too few care that this literary crime occurs repeatedly in our lax and loose time. Far too many of our own members have little or no convictions about perverted Bibles.

Some Appropriate Scriptures Treating this Momentous Matter

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you...What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it...all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word...Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar...Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition...Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and may such like things do ye...If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken ...For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ...But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commanding ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God...I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel, Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed...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 (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Jer. 26:2; Prov. 30:6; Mark 7:9,13, John 10:35; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2; Gal. 1:6-9; Rev. 22:18-19).

These crystal clear and potently plain passages in the aggregate warn man NEVER to tamper with the word of the Lord. Man does this at the peril of his own soul and every soul he influences by his tampering and perverting. To do such is not the way to the New Jerusalem on high at last.

Categories of People Relative to Bible Versions

(1) There are those who do not care one way or the other. They do not care whether we have many versions, just a few or none at all. They are not going to read and study ANY of them period! The word of the Lord means nothing to such people.

(2) There is another class ready to stamp ardent approval on each new one that leaves the printing press regardless of how perverted it may be. Be reminded of how many gave tacit approval to *Good News For Modern Man* when it came out in 1966. Look how quickly *The Living Bible Paraphrased* caught on during the 1970's. *Reader's Digest Bible* in 1982 did not cause much of a ripple of dissent at all though it left out about 40% of the Bible or right at 300,000 words. In recent

years the *NIV* (*New International Version*) has really caught on and yet it is “shot through with error” as the late and lamented Guy N. Woods told me personally shortly after its devilish debut. With such people, Bibles cannot get too far out for them and their instant endorsement of the same.

(3) There is another class which says we should educate people relative to the strengths and weaknesses of the new Bible and then allow them to make up their own minds. Touching which one, or ones, they will purchase and peruse. This is stupid. No one has the time to abstract all such strengths and weaknesses, and even if he did, he would never have sufficient time to deliver such information to an audience of people. Why waste valuable time in such when we need to be spending all our time studying and preaching the message from a reliable Bible—one that is not filled full and brimming over with fatal error as so many are?

(4) There is another class which believes in warning people of perverted Bibles and encouraging them to buy and study from a good, sound and solid translation. This is the class in which I have placed myself all my preaching life, and see no need to vacate it for one of the earlier mentioned classes.

Why Versions Are Needed

The reason is a simple one—we do not speak the same language. The Old Testament was penned in Hebrew and small portions in Arabic. The New Testament was penned in the Greek language. These are not the languages in which you and I were born and reared. We speak English; others speak French, Spanish, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, etc. Some three centuries prior to the coming of Christianity to the earth there was a Greek translation made from the original Hebrew Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is known as the Septuagint. The Sacred Three never intended for their Word to remain in one language exclusive of all others. C. H. Dodd once said that the job of the Bible translator is an impossible one. This is a serious reflection on God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They gave their Word in such fashion that it could be translated from the originals into other languages and, when it is translated accurately, it DOES NOT lose its inspiration. New Testament personalities quoted from the Septuagint and declared that they were quoting the Word of God, yet from a translation. In all probability, the Eunuch in Acts 8 was reading from this Greek Version and Philip began “*at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus*” (Acts 8:35). Soon after the New Testament was completed it began to be translated into the Syriac, the Coptic, the Latin and other languages. We need versions in order to have the word of God—not pseudo versions as brother Wallace warned people in his own inimitable way.

Three Essentials of a Good Version

(1) A version must be accurate. Translation the Bible is not the time or the place for men to practice laxness and looseness. The version needs to reflect in the receiving language what is found in the original. This is NO time for additions, subtractions, alterations, modifications, substitutions, etc. Yet, in countless cases, this is precisely what the new Bibles have done. They have turned out products called the Bible that are perverted and filled to the brim with fatal or lethal errors. Some of the errors are more poisonous than others but no error is with justification. God’s Book of truth should not be tintured with error and falsehood. Far too many of the new Bibles are and careless religionists

endorse them and use them as their study Bibles. I find this to be inexcusable, minus any justification.

(2) A version must be readable. I am told that the average word in the beloved KJV is composed of just five letters. Couched in the lovely language of simplicity this blessed and beautiful version has led more English speaking people into the redemptive riches of Christianity than ALL other English versions combined. Why some egotistical intellectuals have turned on it with such venom is hard to understand since many of them were led to gospel obedience and early Christian development by its treasured contents. They have turned to bite the hand that formerly fed them!

(3) A version must be reverent. We are not dealing with comic books; we are dealing with the Word of the Living God and His only begotten Son inspired by the Spirit of Truth. Some are saying today that they want a Bible that reads just like this morning's newspaper. I, for one, do not! There is possibly nothing of lesser value in your home than a newspaper that is one day old. This is a poor approach to the process of choosing a good, solid and sound Bible for perusal.

A New Breed of Translators

When the *RSV (Revised Standard Version)* came out with their New Testament in 1946 and both testaments in 1952 they let it be known that they were not interested in a literal, word-for word translational approach inasmuch as is possible. Their perverted product demonstrates that they lived up to their stated philosophy! J. B. Phillips did not think the New Testament writers realized they were writing Scripture. He did not think Paul was interested in maintaining consistency between earlier and later writings. He thought Paul wrote with too much haste and urgency to his wayward Christian friends to be concerned with dotting I's and crossing T's. C. H. Dodd thought the task of the Bible translator was an impossible one. Those who put out the *Reader's Digest Bible* nearly 20 years ago thought they had the right to take Jehoiakim penknives and cut out about 300,000 words—about half of the Old Testament and one-fourth of the New Testament. One woman disliked Mark 16:16 so much that she took her scissors and cut it out. This new Bible took scissors and cut out hundreds of thousands of verses. They deleted in wholesome fashion and then teaching and the whole Bible teaches. Therefore, they had majored in doctrinal destruction. The warnings of Deuteronomy 4:2; 21:32 and Revelation 22:18, 19 meant a great BIG NOTHING to these mutilators of Holy Scripture. Many of the men turning out the new Bibles of our day are far more interested in getting their pet religious doctrines into their perverted products than in giving us in English what the sacred scribes penned in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek in Old and New Testament times.

Some Perversions of the Modern Versions

The *RSV* removed virgin from Isaiah 7:14 and injected young women instead thus getting it out of all harmony with Matthew 1:22, 23 wherein they left in virgin. Even earlier the *RSV* had refused to call the Second Person God, yet retain God in the New Testament quotation of this passage (Psalm 45:6; Hebrews 1:7, 8). The *RSV* has Genesis 12:3 and Galatians 3:8 out of harmonious gear with each other. But modernists put out the *RSV* and keeping the Old and New Testaments in harmony with each other was of no great importance to such fellows. Many of the new Bibles will have Christ in Matthew 5:17 to deny that He planned to abolish the Old Testament law and then have Paul in Ephesians 2:15 affirm that He did abolish it. The fault does not lie with Christ and Paul; it lies with

inept translators who should have been occupying their time with other activities than Bible translational work. Bratcher's *TEV* (*Today's English Version*) or *GOOD News For Modern Man* has faith only passages in Romans and Galatians and then contradicts his own position when he got to James 2:24. If right in his Roman and Galatian renderings, he is wrong in James. If right in James, he is wrong in Romans and Galatians and what a precarious position in which a Bible translator finds himself! The *NEB* and the *TEV* both change the time of the Lord's Supper observance to Saturday in Acts 20:7. The *NEB*, *New English Bible*, has Peter as the rock on which the church was to be built in Matthew 16:18. The *NEB* is filled with charismatic terms in 1 Corinthians 14. *Beck's Bible* has *play music* in Ephesians 5:19; *The Amplified Bible* adds instruments along with voices in this same rendering—Ephesians 5:19. Taylor's *Living Bible Paraphrased* is rampant with premillennialism and Calvinism and even resorts to vulgar language. The *NIV*, the newest darling among new Bible users, is "shot through with error" as the late, and lamented, Guy N. Woods told me during the 1970's when it first came forth from the printing press. Calvinism is advanced in Psalm 51:5 and in the sinful nature renderings in Romans 7, 8 and the book of Galatians. It really messes up Acts 2:27, 31 pertaining to Jesus between His death and His resurrection. The gospel plan of salvation is left in shambles in Ephesians 1:13; Romans 10:10 and Galatians 3:27. The *NIV* has people included in Christ at the point of confession and then baptized INTO Christ. I guess after being included in Christ at the point of hearing, they to remove from Him before the formation of faith in order that they might be justified at the point of faith. Between faith and confession they would have to remove themselves again in order that they might be saved at the point of confession. Between confession and baptism they would have to get out of Him again in order that they might be baptized INTO Him at the time of this water ordinance. Nearly all the modern Bibles tamper and tamper greatly with monogenes, only begotten, refusing to use what the older translations have been doing for hundreds years. The *New Revised Standard Version* tried to please the Women's Movement by removing many male terms to which they objected in the older versions.

Why Stay With The Older Versions Such as The KJV?

The KJV is accurate; it is readable and understandable as touching our duties of obeying the gospel, worshiping and serving God and preparing to meet Him in eternity. It is reverent. Its language belonged to the Golden Period when English reached its apex. We need to avoid the perverted Bibles because they will make new and different people of us and have already done so in many instances. They abet nearly every fatal error that is popular in religion today. Why choose a Bible that is going to fill your soul with the venom of religious falsehood?

Conclusion

There is NOTHING I need to know, believe, obey and live out but what I can find it in the KJV or the ASV of 1901. In more than fifty years of preaching I have not changed Bibles and have not changed what is in the Bible. I still do my study, memory work, preaching, teaching, home Bible studies and writing from the KJV. I have no plans to change from this as much as one iota.

Works Cited

Wallace, Foy. E, Jr. *A Review of The New Versions*. Ft. Worth, TX: Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Publishing, (1937).