

Has the Bible Been Correctly Translated?

A response to those who claim that the Bible has not been properly translated and parts have been lost.

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One of the more subtle attacks on God's word and our modern Bible is that it has been corrupted having been mistranslated, parts of it lost. This implies that that it cannot be trusted and our beliefs in its teachings are suspect. Liberal churches and cults are telling their people the Bible cannot be absolutely known. Many unsuspecting, and trusting members of these group believe these statements and that casts a shadow over the accuracy and authenticity of the Bible, the very word of God. The problem with this teaching is utterly and completely false.

It is interesting that when you ask them where they learned the KJB is untrustworthy, having portions lost and mistranslated the response their church did. When you ask them have they researched or have personal knowledge of this claim they reply they do not. It is obvious they have placed their trust in their religious leaders, and they cannot verify their claims.

The King James Bible is an Accurate Translation

The Bible we have today is the same Bible God gave by inspiration to the prophets, apostles and those whom God used to reveal His word to us. Among knowledgeable Bible students and scholars, it is well known that our modern King James Bible is an accurate translation of the original "autographs" (The original copies of the Bible). How do we know this? There exist many copies of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, Old and New Testament manuscripts (mss) from which we can compare the modern translations. For the New Testament we have close to 6,000 Greek manuscripts and manuscript portions in addition to 10,000 copies of the Latin Vulgate. There is 9,300 other extant versions, plus 36,000 early (100-300 A.D.) patristic quotations of the New Testament. These quotations contain all but a few verses of the entire New Testament. The fact is most of the New Testament could be reconstructed from these alone. In addition to these ancient manuscripts of the Bible, there exist approximately 2000 lectionaries that contain over 86,000 scripture quotes dating from the first century. Lectionaries are early church service books containing selected copied scripture readings usually from the Gospels and sometimes from Acts or one of the Epistles. It is easy to compare these early Scripture quotes of various New Testament passages that were written as early as the first century, to our modern Bibles. What is found by this comparison is that our modern Bibles reflect accurately the ancient and original text. It clearly shows that nothing has been lost and we can fully trust that the original text is preserved in our modern English King James Bible.

Men who cast aspersions on the Bible do so for reasons that are advantageous to them. Few studied the Bible in their original languages and knew little or nothing about translations. The fact is, then as well as now, many people were ignorant of the facts of how God preserved and transmitted His word throughout the ages. Few are not aware of the existence of the literally thousands of ancient Bible manuscripts dating back to 200 BC. It is a simple task to compare the ancient texts with our modern English translations. There are minor differences in the manuscripts, which are called "variants." However, these variant readings in the ancient manuscripts have been thoroughly documented and compared, leaving no doubt, as to how the origin text read. Ninety-nine percent hold virtually no significance whatsoever. Many of these variants simply involve a missing letter in a word. Occasionally the order of words was reversed such as "Christ Jesus" instead of "Jesus

Christ"). Some of the variants involve the absence of one or more insignificant words. When all the facts are considered, only about 50 of the variants have any real significance, and even then, no doctrine of the Christian faith or instruction from God is involved. In more than ninety-nine percent of the cases, the original text can be clearly reconstructed to a practical certainty.

Modern Bible Scholarship Proves that God has Preserved His Word without Error.

There are two families of ancient New Testament texts consisting of three (3) ancient manuscripts (Codices) the Sinaiticus (Aleph), dated 340 AD, the Codex Vaticanus (B) dated 325-50 AD and the Alexandrius, 400-440 AD in addition to roughly a dozen other partial ones. This is the Eastern text, also called the Minority text. These texts were discovered in Egypt, which for centuries was a hotbed of heresy. It is not the purpose of this article to deal with the corruption of the Eastern text on which all our modern Bible versions, from 1880 AD, are based. However, you are interested; you might like to read my article on "[How we got the Bible](http://bible-truth.org/howwegot.htm)" at <http://bible-truth.org/howwegot.htm>.

The other families of extant manuscripts numbers close to 6000 and are the Western or Majority texts. These texts originated in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Eastern Europe where the New Testament was written.

The United Bible Society published in 1966, 1968, and 1975 uses the Greek Westcott-Hort New Testament, and is represents the Minority or Eastern text. This is the Greek text on which all modern English translations are based. (From the late 1880s)

In 1985, Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Fastad, published another Greek text, titled "The Greek New Testament according to the Majority Text, Second Edition," that represents what is called the Majority text, Western or Byzantine text. The Greek text from which the King James Bible was translated is the Textus Receptus (received text) which is the Majority text compiled by scholar Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus (27 October 1466 – 12 July 1536). Erasmus used and consulted most of the existing manuscripts of the New Testament in the TR (Textus Receptus)

Hodges and Fastad's Greek Majority text reflects the text according to over 5000 plus ancient extant Greek manuscripts and incorporates the Textus Receptus on which our King James Bibles is based.

Both these Greek New Testaments show in detail the variant reading between these two families of manuscripts and the variants within each family. These two Greek texts list the variant readings in footnotes showing all the varying readings and in what manuscripts they are found.

For example below is a copy of Luke 9:51-58 from "The Greek New Testament", Kurt Aland, Matthew Black, Carolo M. Martini, Bruce M. Metzger, and Allen Wikgren, New York:United Bible Societies, 1975.

A Samaritan Village Refuses to Receive Jesus

51 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὰς ἡμέρας τῆς ἀναλήψεως αὐτοῦ καὶ αὐτὸς τὸ πρόσωπον ἐστήριξεν τοῦ πορεύεσθαι εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ, 52 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν ἀγγέλους πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ. καὶ πορευθέντες εἰσῆλθον εἰς κώμην Σαμαριτῶν, ὡς ἐτοιμάσαι αὐτῷ. 53 καὶ οὐκ ἐδέξαντο αὐτόν, ὅτι τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ ἦν πορευόμενον εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ. 54 ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ Ἰάκωβος καὶ Ἰωάννης εἶπαν, Κύριε, θέλεις εἶπωμεν πῦρ καταβῆναι ἀπὸ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ ἀναλῶσαι αὐτούς⁷; 55 στραφεὶς δὲ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτοῖς.⁸ 56^a καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς ἑτέραν κώμην.

The Would-be Followers of Jesus

(Mt 8.19-22)

57 Καὶ πορευομένων αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ εἶπέν τις πρὸς αὐτόν, Ἀκολουθήσω σοι ὅπου ἐὰν ἀπέρχῃ. 58 καὶ εἶπεν

⁷ 54 {C} αὐτοῦς p^{45,75} & B L Ξ 700* 1241 it^{aur,e,l} vg syr^{c,a} cop^{sa,bo} arm geo Jerome Cyril // αὐτοῦς ὡς καὶ Ἡλίας ἐποίησεν A C D K W X Δ Θ Π Ψ f¹ f¹³ 28 33 565 700^{ms} (892 omit καὶ) 1009 1010 1071 1079 1195 1216 1230 1242 1253 1344 1365 1546 1646 2148 2174 Byz Lect l^{692,m,1852,m,11272,m} it^{s,b,c,d,f,g,r} syr^{p,b,pal} cop^{bo,mas} goth eth Marcion Diatessaron^a Ambrosiaster Basil Gaudentius Chrysostom Augustine Antiochus

⁸ 55-56 {C} αὐτοῖς. p^{45,75} & A B C L W X Δ Ξ Ψ 28 33 565 892 1009 1010 1071 (1241 αὐτοῦς) it¹ Lect syr^a cop^{sa,bo} eth Basil Cyril-Jerusalem Jerome // αὐτοῖς. καὶ εἶπεν, Οὐκ οἶδατε ποίου πνεύματός ἐστε. D (l^{1127m} ἐστε ὑμεῖς) it^d geo // αὐτοῖς. καὶ εἶπεν, Οὐκ οἶδατε οἴου πνεύματός ἐστε ὑμεῖς; 56 ὁ γὰρ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἤλθεν ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων ἀπολέσαι ἀλλὰ σῶσαι. K Π 1079 1242 1546 (1365 ποίου) (2148 ποίου and ἐλθῶν) (f¹ l^{692m} ποίου and omit γάρ) (Θ f¹³ 1195 omit ὑμεῖς and γάρ) (1230 1253 1344 1646 omit ὑμεῖς and γάρ and read ἀποκτεῖναι for ἀπολέσαι) (2174 ποίου...omit ὑμεῖς and γάρ) (700 1216 ποίου...omit ὑμεῖς and γάρ and read ἀποκτεῖναι for ἀπολέσαι) Byz l^{76,1852m,331,854,950,1579,1642,1761} (l^{122m} ποίου) it^{f,g} (it^{s,b,r} omit γάρ, it^c omit ἀνθρώπων, it^{aur,e} vg omit γάρ and ἀνθρώπων) syr^{c,p,h} cop^{bo,mas} (goth omit ὑμεῖς and ἀνθρώπων) arm Marcion Diatessaron Ambrose Epiphanius Antiochus

^a 56 On location of verse number see footnote 8.

51 Mk 10.32 53 Jn 4.9 54 πῦρ...αὐτοῦς 2 Kgs 1.10, 12

Note above at the line where the Greek text ends. It begins ¹54 {C}. This begins the footnotes pertaining to Luke 9:51-58. Observe that the footnotes show a variant reading in this Greek text. The variant reading is identified by the superscript number⁷. Verse 54 shows the Greek word *autous* ends the verse in the Greek manuscripts p45, 75, ("p" stands for manuscripts written on papyrus), ALEPH, B, L, 700, 1241 and twenty-two manuscripts. The word is spelled *autois* in the above text, which is the Eastern text based on the Westcott and Hott edition of the Greek New Testament. It is spelled "*autous*" in papyri manuscripts C p45 and p75 and sixteen (16) other texts from the Eastern or Minority text, including the Sinaiticus. The sentence in the Eastern text ends with "*and consume them.*"

Further, it is spelled *autous* and the sentence ends with the words "*autous was kai Hlias epoinsen*" ("*and consume them as Elias did*") in thirty-nine (39) Western or Majority Manuscripts and in thirty-three (33) Lectionaries. This is the same Greek word with two different spellings. Therefore, the predominate spelling is *autous* in the majority of the Greek manuscripts with the phrase "*and consume them as Elias did?*"

However, other Western Greek texts read *autous ws kai Hlias epoinsen* (as Elias did?) and this reading is found in manuscripts designated as A, C, D, K, W, etc, for a total of thirty-one (31)

manuscripts plus twenty six (26) non-biblical manuscripts. It even shows that manuscript 892 omits the word *kai* [and] which is a minor detail.

Now let us look at the verse in English and see what this means. The verse in our English King James Bible based on the Textus Receptus or Majority text reads,

"And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?" (Luke 9:54) (KJB)

In the New International Version (NIV), the verse is *translated* "When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" (Luke 9:54)

What is interesting and revealing is that the United Bible Society chose to ignore the predominate reading of the Greek text and changed the spelling and omitted the ending phrase.

The phrase "*even as Elias did?*" is found in over 50 ancient manuscripts compared to only 16 manuscripts the where text ends with the word "them" and omits "even as Elias did?" Plainly, some scribe omitted the statement "*even as Elias did*" when copying from a manuscript that had that reading. There is no doctrinal problem whether the phrase was in the original or not because clearly as 2 Kings 1:12-14 states Elijah did bring fire down from heaven. Even though the modern versions of the New Testament change based its text on the minority of the Greek texts, no doctrinal teaching of the Bible is affected. The KJB accurately translates the verse and nothing is lost because the Bible records what happened. More importantly, we have the fifty manuscripts with which to compare the variant reading to determine the phrase was in the original autographs and this an accurate translation.

Clearly, anyone who states that our modern Bible does not reflect the original manuscripts and that it has been changed, or parts lost or mistranslated shows their ignorance of the facts. We have the proof in the form of these manuscripts by which we can compare ancient texts and modern translations. The text of the original is clearly known and every variant reading or difference between extant manuscripts has been thoroughly studied and documented. I think it is revealing that this knowledge is widely known. Hundreds of scholarly research books and papers have been written that plainly show the indisputable evidence. Why then to some willingly ignore the truth and teach the lie that our KJB cannot be trusted.

The truth is that those who claim the Bible has not been correctly translated are in gross error. God has preserved His word to us, and nothing has been lost or changed. The manuscripts of the Majority text on which our King James Bible has been translated, has very few differences and not one of the variant readings deals with any doctrinal teaching. The majority of the variant readings only involve the spelling of words and punctuation.

The bottom line is that our modern King James English Bible is shown by the evidence to be an accurate and complete translation of the extant (existing) manuscripts. The one who reads its text can be assured that it is accurate, complete, and trustworthy and is the very word of God.

Those who teach that the Bible cannot be trusted are incorrect and is based their ignorance of the Greek text and process on which our English Bible was translated. Further, modern scholars, who are well versed in the matter, are being dishonest by not correcting this gross error. By

examining the manuscripts, we can show that our KJB English Bible is accurate and complete. Further, we can compare various teachings on the Bible with what the manuscripts say and show what is false and unbiblical.

“For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” (2 Peter 1:21)

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

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