

The impact of new Bible Versions on Bible Teaching

The King James Bible is a literal translation and has been available for four hundred years but in the last 100 years many new versions have been produced. This proliferation of Bible versions has caused some confusion in understanding Bible teaching. The number of versions from which to choose has been increased by revisions of some of the new versions. There have been over 40 English language versions published since 1900. Why should this be?

Manuscript discoveries

a. New Testament Manuscripts

In the nineteenth century more Greek manuscripts were discovered and incorporated into a Greek New Testament text produced by Cambridge scholars, Westcott and Hort. The number of New Testament manuscripts now available to translators is well over 5,000. These manuscripts may be sorted into one of two groups.

- ❶ The majority of manuscripts (over 90%) are in agreement with each other and were found over a wide geographical area.
- ❷ A minority group of manuscripts differ from the majority.

The translators of many new Bible versions dip into both majority and minority manuscript sources. This has led to some significant differences in Bible teaching between versions. In addition, modern translation strategies allow a mix of literal and interpretive translation. This makes it difficult for

Bible readers to determine the status of the message being conveyed. Today many translators give high priority to the minority manuscripts which differ from the overwhelming majority of manuscripts.

b. Old Testament Manuscripts

Few Old Testament manuscripts were found before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Hebrew scholars preparing new modern Bible Versions had the same manuscripts to work with as the King James translators. The Dead Sea Scrolls confirmed the accuracy of the manuscripts used for the King James Version. There was also some progress in the understanding of some rare Hebrew words.

The outcome of all these changes is that we should compare Bible versions carefully so that we can be aware of any changes or shifts in Bible teaching that may be introduced by a version. To give an insight into the differences that result we will now compare the King James Version, being a literal translation, with other versions to see if there are changes in the teaching of the Bible.

Comparing Versions

❖ The Lord's Prayer

Many modern versions make significant changes to this much loved and important prayer, which brings together the key points for our understanding of the Christian's way of life and hope for the future.

King James Version	Other Bible Versions	Bible Teaching
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)	And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one (Today's New International Version)	The change of the phrase to <i>"deliver us from the evil one"</i> , introduces the idea that evil is a supernatural power.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen (Matthew 6:13).	...Omitted from ESV, NIV, RSV and some other versions.	Removes from the Christian's prayer the hope for the future Kingdom of God.

The concluding lines of the Lord's Prayer (Matt.6:13) are omitted in some versions. However, the Apostle Paul recognised these words as part of the Lord's Prayer when he prayed:

"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4:18).

❖ The human nature of Jesus

King James Version	Other Bible Versions	Bible Teaching
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2).	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God (John 1:1-2 ESV, NIV and NKJV).	This changes the Word of God from being His plan and purpose in the beginning to meaning he (Jesus) was with God in the beginning.
No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18).	No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only who is at the Father's side, has made him known (John 1:18 NIV).	The omission of "begotten" removes the clear Bible teaching that Jesus' beginning was at his birth as recorded in the other Gospel accounts.
Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God (John 20:17).	Jesus said, 'Do not hold onto me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God' (John 20:17 NIV).	Jesus was to ascend to be with his Father. Returning to his Father implies that he had been with his Father in the past.

King James Version	Other Bible Versions	Bible Teaching
<p>...who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God (Philippians 2:6).</p>	<p>He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God (Philippians 2:6 GNB).</p> <p>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped (Philippians 2:6 NIV).</p>	<p>Being in the “form of God” is not stating that Jesus was God. He was made in the image of God because he was the Son of God. These are significant changes that support a doctrine of Trinity that is not to be found in the Bible.</p>

These Bible verses are only a sample of the changes that have been made in some modern versions to promote the idea that Jesus existed with God from the beginning as part of a Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is not Bible teaching. However, each of the versions quoted above agree on one point in their translation of John 1:14. Jesus was born about 2,000 years ago and God’s Word or plan became flesh and he dwelt among the Jews in the first century.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

Omissions

Translators usually provide a footnote to show where there are differences between the majority group of manuscripts and the minority manuscripts. This is not always the case and the reader may not be aware that some of the text has been omitted.

On the next page some of those omissions are listed and the impact this can have on Bible teaching is noted. The text being used is often a

pick-and-mix between different manuscripts, which sometimes seems a deliberate choice to support the doctrinal preference of the translator.

Enduring

The enduring influence of the King James Bible remains with us today. God’s Truth has not changed. The proliferation of new translations adds very little that is new to our understanding of the Gospel. Rather, there is a blurring of the clarity of the distinctive Bible teaching about the nature of Jesus and his relationship with God. All Versions of the Bible can have a place as aids to Bible study. God gave us His written Word so that successive generations can learn about His plans for the earth. We have a responsibility to preserve this message as faithfully as we can to the original inspired words and to pass it on to others to read and understand.

For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may

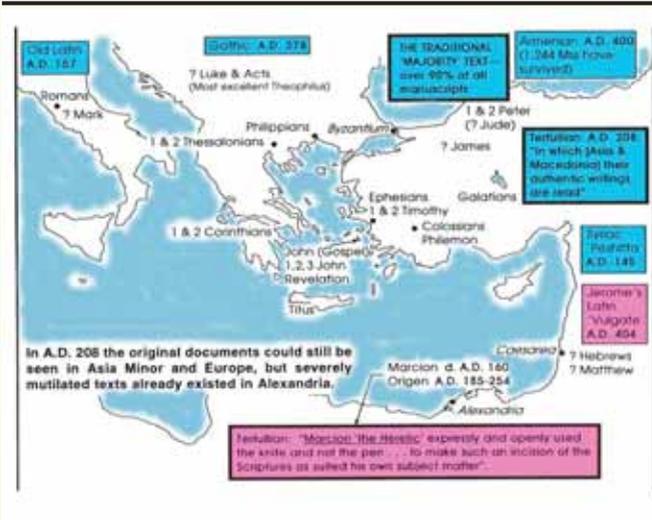
arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments (Psalm 78:5-7).

We pray that many more will read and come to understand the things which God has in store for those who love Him.

Peter Moore

The series is now concluded

King James Version	Other Bible Versions	Bible Teaching
<p>But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able (Matthew 20:22).</p>	<p>Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” (Matthew 20:22 ESV, NIV, RV and others). This omission is done with no apparent reference to the reason.</p>	<p>The link between Jesus’ death and baptism is omitted. The Apostle Paul understood this link when he describes baptism of the believer to relate them to the death of Jesus.</p> <p>Read, Romans 6:1-10.</p>
<p>Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Luke 4:4).</p>	<p>Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone (Luke 4:4 NIV).</p>	<p>The KJV translation includes the whole reference that Jesus makes to Deuteronomy 8:3. From this we understand that we must pay attention to every word of God.</p>



This map shows that the Bible texts on which the KJV translation is based come from those parts of the first century world which the apostles visited and the new texts – those used in more recent translations – come, by and large, from the area of Alexandria in Egypt.