

**Review: Mr. Jack McElroy, *Which Bible Would Jesus Use? The Bible Version Controversy Explained and Resolved*, McElroy Publishing, Shirley, MA, 2013**

Pages: 342

**Logical Deduction Over Doubt**

The author makes a seemingly irrefutable argument in favour of the Authorized Version based upon novel propositions. The main one being Jesus, if he were to read from the scriptures today, would first be forced to locate them. Thus the work's title.

The history behind 'fundamentalism's tactical retreat to 'the originals' under the heat of textual criticism is most interesting. Prior to a meeting at Niagara Falls in 1878 belief in inspiration and perfect preservation was orthodox (e.g. the Westminster Confession).

The legacy continues today with the 1978 Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, and most bible college doctrinal statements. All build houses made of two manuscripts (Aleph and Sinaiticus) upon an invisible foundation of the non-existent autographs.

Much work on the AV's '75,000' changes, edition variances, also the pre-1611 question has been done. While thorough, the 'things that are different' question in terms of a perfect presentation of the text could still be legitimately levelled at a Bible Believer, in which case an edition choice is the only ultimate answer. Notwithstanding all are perfect in the sense of being the same translation.

The author brings a keen business mind that cuts to the bone of much scholarly obfuscation yet evenly deals with personalities. An excellent summary work on a crucial topic in today's bazaar of bible versions, one which will force a decision either way.

\*\*\*

### **Foreword (pp. v-x)**

“Intensified Satanic assaults call for emergency reinforcements”.

### **Introduction (pp. 1-17)**

Dr Randall Price states that the collective existence of present-day manuscripts constitutes the ‘Original Bible’. This statement would never fly in business as there always needs to be a known standard.

No one can prove which variations are authentic as the original manuscripts don’t exist for comparison.

The Bible version issue can be very contentious with churches split, pastors let go, and people getting nasty. This is due to the fact that faith is grounded on what the Bible says and many perceive these questions a direct attack on their faith.

The author emphasises the ‘good news’ he never went to Bible College or Seminary, but has thirty years of research experience.

Even the original Greek manuscripts were a translation as Jesus spoke Hebrew (or perhaps Aramaic).

### **I) Why the Lord is Forced to Choose Only One Bible (pp. 19-34)**

Exodus 36.19 demonstrates the confusion, where the tent of the tabernacles could have been made out of:

- Sea-cow hides (NIV).
- Porpoise skins (NASB).
- Badger’s skins (AV).
- Goatskins (ESV).
- Durable leather (New NIV).

Jesus would need to take the congregation on a field trip to Sea World! Despite the additional manuscripts and advances in Hebrew studies the 'fuller understanding' remains elusive.

Dr Robert Albert Mohler, Jr. of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary recommends both the ESV and NASB for their unquestionable accuracy, yet the former has Absalom coming to David after four years, the latter forty (cf. II Sm 15.7).

Knowing Hebrew and Greek makes one no more than a language technician.

Harkness Professor of Biblical Literature at Case Western Reserve University has said, "[W]e remain largely in the dark as to how we might reconstruct the textual history...after showing their [traditionalist's] theories to be unacceptable, we offer no such theories at all to vindicate our accepted text."

## **II) Two 'Dirty Little Secrets' of Modern Textual Criticism (pp. 35-54)**

All text critics believe in the '4<sup>th</sup>C' manuscripts B and  $\aleph$ , the fabled 'oldest and best'. The controversy rises and falls on these. It is amazing God waited until the mid 19<sup>th</sup>C to reveal them. In the NT they differ over 3,000 times.

Ernest Cadman Colwell (1901-1974) stated most variations occurred in the first two centuries, made deliberately for theological reasons.

George Dunbar Kilpatrick (1910-1989) said the creation of new variants had ceased by 200AD as it became impossible to sell them.

Dr Wilbur Pickering states the critical/eclectic texts originated from Egypt where:

-Paul never went.

-Nobody wrote a NT letter to anyone there.

Prof. F. C. Burkitt (1864-1935) reported Tertullian (160-220AD) and Augustine of Hippo (354-430AD) testified African scribes were constantly editing and revising manuscripts.

In Alexandria were three versions of the Gospel of Mark in circulation (ordinary, Carpocratian Gnostic, and a 'secret' version).

Dean Burgon said  $\aleph$ , B, C, and D are four of the most corrupt codices in existence (scandalous, shamefully mutilated, fabricated readings, blunders, and intentional perversions. He also thought the well-preserved state of  $\aleph$  and B were due to their lack of use and rejection by Christians, else they would have been worn out long ago.

Westcott and Hort would be fired as they didn't do what they agreed to or were hired to do [revise the AV], instead substituting a new Greek text.

Hort thought Vaticanus was the original text and there was a conspiracy to revise and replace it (done between AD250-350). The original autographs were corrupted as 'orthodox scribes' tried to fix errors (creating the 'Byzantine Text'.

The Coptic Orthodox Church prefers the Greek Textus Receptus.

### **III) Proof-Prominent Textual Scholars Believe God Made Mistakes When He Wrote the Bible (pp. 55-78)**

'Asaph' in the ESV's Mt 1.7-8 doesn't exist. Dr Bruce Metzger (1914-2007) theorised Matthew may have used a later genealogical list with corrupted spelling.

Dr Roger L. Omanson, a UBS consultant, wrote Matthew may have simply made an error.

Kurt Aland (1915-1994), assembler of UBS4 admits the oldest manuscript is not necessarily the best.

The ESV was endorsed as ‘surpassing’ all other translations and being ‘the most accurate’ by R.C. Sproul, John Piper, Ravi Zacharias, et al.

Dr Charles Stanley believes the NASB the most accurate translation thus far.

In Jn 7.8 both the ESV and NASB both leave out ουπω (‘yet’).

Prior to the 2011 NIV update, Biblica CEO Keith Danby said, “[W]e’ll make sure we get it right this time.” The 1984 edition had ουπω but the 2011 omits it!

If Jesus were an Originals-Onlyist he would have to possess four tables of stone, 39 foot-long scrolls and hundreds of papyri.

#### **IV) Why the Lord Didn’t Preserve the Original Autographs (pp. 55-78)**

‘The originals’ according to the Bible have been smashed, burned, and thrown into rivers.

Prof. Dan Wallace of Dallas Theological Seminary believes only 2% of the text has variances, and within that 2% support always exists for what ‘the original’ said. Textual criticism therefore is the process of ‘burning the dross to get the gold’.

Dan also says the KJV is filled with readings created by overly zealous scribes. He has taught graduate school Greek since 1979.

Assoc. Prof. of Greek at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary Dr Maurice Robinson states 85% of the text is identical in all manuscripts.

## **V) Why the Lord Can't Choose the King James Bible Without Looking Foolish to Scholars (pp. 79-106)**

Bob Jones University “requires use of the KJV, but it does not hold that the KJV is the only acceptable English translation or that it has the same authority as **the original** Hebrew and Greek manuscripts.”

University College of London English Prof. David Daniell writes that from 1769 a perception grew that the KJV was “peculiarly, divinely, inspired”.

In 1858, Anglican Archbishop Richard Chenevix Trench (1807-1886) wrote, “[F]or a great multitude of readers the English Version...is itself the inspired book.”

In 1917 W. B. Reily wrote some, “make a sort of fetish of the book.”

Presbyterian Rv. P. Marios Simms in the 20thC wrote, “Unfortunately the King James Version came finally to be considered as itself divinely inspired.”

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S. J. (1927-2012), once Archbishop of Milan was the only Catholic member of the ecumenical New Greek text committee.

## **VI) Did the Lord Make a Monumental, Multi-Generational Error by Allowing the King James Bible to be Published in the First Place (pp. 107-116)**

Dr Charles Cadwell Ryrie (b. 1925) said there was no proof-text in the Bible for the trinity of God.

Dr Norman Geisler states the KJV was “[N]ot based on early manuscripts, not reliably edited, and consequently not trustworthy.”

Founder of the Institute for Creation Research Dr Henry Morris wrote “[C]hristians...need to hang on to their old King James Bibles as long as they live.”

The story of John Bunyan (1628-1688) and a Cambridge university man:

“How dare you preach, not having the original Scriptures?

“Do you have them-the copies written by the apostles and prophets?

“No, but I have what I believe to be a true copy of the original.”

“And I believe the English Bible to be a true copy too.”

### **VII) Maybe the Lord Jesus Christ Isn't a Loser After All (pp. 117-126)**

On December 25, 1968, a quarter of the world's population heard the first ten verses of Genesis read from space, 1B people in 64 countries.

The plenary preservation belief rests on Jesus:

-Assembling the original inspired autographs in one book and one language after the invention of the printing press.

-Gathering all authentic variant readings scattered throughout manuscripts, sifting them in time and feeding them to printers and editors in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>Cs.

-Assembled a database of authentic readings as no one else can be certain which are authentic.

A 1998 Barna Research poll of over 18s said the KJV was more likely to be read than the NIV by 5-1 and once a month 82% rely on it. Fifty-four percent of households own one (as opposed to 15% for the NIV). It has been translated into over 760 languages.

### **VIII) Why Can't the Lord Choose the 1982 New King James Version (pp. 127-150)**

The King James' dominance is known as *brand insistence*.

The motivation for the NKJV's production was the son of Dr Kenneth Barker. Meetings were held in Chicago, Illinois, Nashville, Tennessee, and London.

Thomas Nelson sell over 6M bibles p.a. Over the last 30 years (1982-2012) , 60M NKJVs have been sold.

Despite contrary claims, the NKJV contains many difficult words.

The 1611 used the 1524-25 Bomber Edition of the Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text but the NKJV the 1967/77 Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Notwithstanding it is said the differences are 'microscopic'.

In Gn 2.7 the NKJV has man a living *being*, not a *soul*. A soul has eyes, nose and mouth, can see and talk, e.g. the rich man's **soul** of Lk 16 was in hell.

Some NKJV readings match the 1952 RSV (NT 1946).

Dr Jack P. Lewis of the NIV committee said, "The RSV opened the era of the multiple translations flooding today's market, all competing with each other."

### **IX) Where was the Bible Before 1611? Version (pp. 151-160)**

Christian academics always defer to 'the Original Bible' as final authority because it conveniently doesn't exist.

Some ancient manuscripts of Mark's Gospel contains the last twelve verses which raises a conundrum. Dr Wilber Pickering says they are in 1,700 Greek manuscripts except three (including  $\aleph$  and B. Textual critics need these gone as they don't appear in  $\aleph$  and B.



Tischendorf said the folio containing the end of Mark/beginning of Luke was written by a different hand and ink:

- This appears on page 3.
- Pages 1 and 4 average 17 lines of text in four columns.
- Page 2 averages 15.5 lines of text in four columns.
- Page 3 column 1 contains 12 lines and has verse 8 appearing at the top of column 2, **the rest being blank.**

William Caxton printed large parts of the Old and New Testaments in 1483 as part of a work called *The Golden Legend*. He did so from Latin and French texts.

### X) Which Edition of the King James Bible is 'The Bible' (pp. 161-178)

Over 400 years an estimated 5B copies of the AV have been produced. These cross many editions and printings, proving the Lord is not averse to using *any* edition.

It's still the standard of comparison in today's market.

The fourteen-book Apocrypha did contain some value and was the reason for its original inclusion.

The Lord could teach on original spelling significance and variance translation, capitalisation of the word 'spirit', and punctuation questions.

All use an edition of the AV1611 translation.

There were printing errors in the first 1611 edition, spelling and grammar were modernised in Dr Thomas Paris' 1762 Cambridge edition, also Dr Benjamin Blayney's Oxford 1769 one, after which the text was 'fossilized'.

The true revision was in 1881/85 with the English **Revised** Version.

Over 3M letters had to be typeset without modern lighting, and only 351 typographical errors have been counted by David Norton. Most corrections were made by 1638, when Dr Samuel Ward and Dr John Bois were still alive.

In 1851 the American Bible Society reported that “the text of our present Bibles remains unchanged, and without variation from the original copy as left by the translators.”

The reason other versions sell is they successfully imitate the real thing, and people are ignorant of the differences.

### **XI) What About the Tens of Thousands of Differences Between the 1769 Edition (or any Edition Today) and the 1611 First Edition (pp. 179-204)**

The extreme view is that the 1769 edition has over 75,000 differences from the 1611.

Rick Beckman<sup>1</sup> in 2007 collated a list of non-spelling/printing significant differences since 1611:

- i. I Cr 12.28: MS98 (John Bois' translator notes shows this verse was contentious.
- ii. Js 3.11: change of 'of' to 'even' made in 1629 under surviving translators.
- iii. 2 Kn 11.10: made 1638 ('').
- iv. Is 49.13: The 1380 Wycliffe Bible used 'for the Lord'. GOD represents Jehovah whereas God Elohim. Also, Jews often read/wrote Adonai in place of Jehovah (and vice versa). The DSS (408BC-AD318) have an example in the Isaiah scroll (in Is 3.17,18. Dot marks are placed under both words).
- v. Jr 31.14: Change 'with my goodness' was made 1629.
- vi. Jr 51.30: 1638 spelling update.
- vii. Ez 6.8: 1612 printing error correction.
- viii. Ez 24.5: 1638 printing error correction.

- ix. Ez 24.7: 1613 printing error correction.
- x. Ez 48.8: 1638 update.
- xi. Dn 3.15: Bodleian Library's annotated 1602 Bishop's Bible suggests the second adjective 'burning' was unnecessary.
- xii. Mt 12.49
- xiii. I Cr 15.6: 1616 printing error correction.
- xiv. I Jn 5.12: MS98 shows the translators first thought was to keep 'of God'. Reinstated in 1629.
- xv. Dt 26.1: 'thy God' was used from 1629.
- xvi. Js 13.29: 'the children' used from 1638.
- xvii. Rt 3.15: The Hebrew reads he, but both went into the city.
- xviii. Ps 69.32: 1617 printing error correction.
- xix. Jr 49.1: 1616 printing error correction.
- xx. Mt 16.16
- xxi. Mk 10.18
- xxii. I Cr 4.9: 1616 decision to return to the pre-1611 line reading of appointed.

## XII) What About the Differences Between King James Bibles Printed by the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses (pp. 205-218)

Rick Norris wrote a book detailing different KJV readings (between original, Cambridge, and Oxford) over the past 400 years. The charges always boil down to four main examples:

- i. Js 19.2: [1611] 'or' to 'and' [Oxford] Sheba. The well was given the name Sheba but the city was called Beer-sheba for its location.
- ii. II Ch 33.19: 'sin' [1611] to 'sins' [Oxford].
- iii. Jr 34.16: 'ye' [1611] to 'he' [Oxford].
- iv. Nh 3.16: 'flieth' [1611] to 'fleeth' [Oxford].

It is often said no two Greek manuscripts exist, however Dr Wilbur Pickering cites 107.

The word 'revision' usually means to 'reconsider and alter in the light of further evidence'.

---

<sup>1</sup>In Dec, 2007 his website described him as ‘brazenly atheist’.

### **XIII) Why ‘Which Edition?’ is (Quite Often) a Trick Question (pp. 219-226)**

Per II Tm 3.7, academics are ‘ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth’. The question of the canon requires faith, for the Roman Catholic bible contains 73 books, the Greek Orthodox 76, and Ethiopic Church 81. The Greeks also have 151 psalms.

Even the original NT manuscripts may have been written in Hebrew: Papias (AD 150-170), Irenaeus (AD 170), Origen (AD 210), Eusebius (AD 315), Epiphanius (AD 370), and Jerome (AD383) believed Matthew wrote Matthew in Hebrew.

### **XIV) The Real Question for the Fake Question (pp. 227-232)**

Most of the time authority doesn’t like to be questioned. If any of the alternatives turned out to be a failure too many people would be disappointed.

### **XV) Inspiration of Scripture-What is it? (pp. 233-244)**

The word scripture appears 53 times in the Bible and never once refers to the originals. Experts believe translation will always miss something, however 1000s of business documents are translated every day.

The only ‘safe’ position was perfection of the original autographs.

The UBS4 uses a grading system for variant readings:

- A: certain.
- B: almost.
- C: difficult.

-D: very difficult.

**XVI) Inspiration-What it Was and What They Say it is Now (pp. 245-258)**

The 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy was signed by 300 evangelical scholars.

Article VI says the scriptures **were** given by inspiration.

Article X says inspiration applies only to the autographic text of scripture, which from available copies today the 'Word of God' is ascertained with great accuracy.

While all versions contain the 'essential doctrines' nobody has yet come up with a list of 'non-essential' doctrines.

**XVII) Who Changed the Definition of Inspiration, and When Did They Change it? (pp. 259-273)**

In the 19<sup>th</sup>C the German school of Theological Rationalism rejected divine authorship of the traditional canon.

The Niagara Bible Conference in Ontario was held annually from 1878-1897. Point 1 of the 1878 Niagara Creed raised up the original manuscripts as the final authority.

Presbyterian B. B. Warfield was unable to defend assaults against the AV so moved the locus of inspiration and inerrancy to the originals.

In 1893 80 Presbyterian ministers rejected this as a confessional standard as they had no means of determining how far God controlled penmen in transcribing from documents. Also, it was setting up an imaginary Bible as a standard.

The doctrine of preservation must be rejected by this approach, and conservative scholars are now only able to say the true words are out there somewhere.

### **XVIII) Did the Lord Preserve Error Instead of Truth in the Extant Biblical Manuscripts? (pp. 275-288)**

The numbering discrepancies may exist to test faith by design. Including the 4,000 stalls **for** horses and 40,000 stalls **of** horses, and Ahaziah being twenty-two when he became king, which was also the forty-second year of the house of Omri.

### **IXX) How to Spot a Standard Bible (pp. 289-296)**

The ‘experts’ believe up to 39 verses shouldn’t be in the Bible. The modern versions however are too afraid to do renumbering.

### **XX) The Revelation 16.5 Controversy (pp. 297-304)**

The words ‘and shalt be’ are claimed an addition and contain no current Greek manuscript support. However it appears in a Latin commentary by Beatus Libena in 786 AD, quoting Tyconius of 380 AD:

“qui fuisti **et futures es**”

There are an estimated 10,000 Latin manuscripts that have so far proven too costly to investigate.

### **XXI) Which Bible Should You Use? (pp. 305-308)**