

# *Is The King James The Best Bible?*

There is a wonderful cartoon that was published some years ago showing a man holding a Greek-English lexicon. A Greek-English lexicon is a dictionary that gives the English meaning of Greek words. In the cartoon a woman hears the man say, “This makes me sick!! Why don’t they learn to speak AMERICAN like Jesus did!!!” The cartoon is funny, yet sad. It is funny because Jesus did not speak English when He walked this earth. He spoke Hebrew, Aramaic and/or Greek but not English. It is funny that the man did not know that. It is sad because the cartoon was obviously written in response to the fact that some people today are confused too! The cartoon humorously reminds us that the various books of the Bible were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek but not in English, Spanish, Russian, Chinese or some other modern language. The original books of the Bible were not written in 1611 King James English or twentieth century English. The original manuscripts of the Bible are technically referred to as autographs and were written between 1445 B.C. – A.D. 96. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic.

**NEW TESTAMENT GREEK MANUSCRIPTS.** Now that raises a good question. If the New Testament was written in Greek and Aramaic, why do we have Bibles written in English? The answer is that someone translated the original manuscripts of the New Testament from Greek and Aramaic into English so that we can know the meaning of the original letters that the New Testament writers wrote. We can praise God that He has preserved almost 5,700 Greek manuscripts (MSS) that contain various portions of the New Testament.<sup>1,2</sup> There are fewer manu-

scripts of the Old Testament books. Even though there are fewer manuscripts of the Old Testament, they are of superior quality. The number of biblical manuscripts that God has

preserved is huge in comparison to other ancient texts. For example, there are only eight copies of Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War (460-400 B.C.) and there are only 9 or 10 good quality copies of Julius Caesar's Gallic War (50-58 B.C.).<sup>3</sup>

This speaks to God's preservation of His Word. He has preserved a vastly greater number of manuscripts of the Bible.

Most of the manuscripts are in the Greek language. Bible translators have compared the 5,487 manuscripts with each other and discovered that they do not all agree with

one another.<sup>4</sup> Some words and even sentences have been added or deleted. Some words also have been misspelled. This occurred as individuals made copies of the manuscripts. Some individuals wanted to clarify a meaning. They meant



"This makes me sick!!! Why don't they learn to speak AMERICAN like Jesus did!!!!

1. James R. White. *The King James Only Controversy*. Bethany House. 2009. p. 63, 224

2. Paul D. Wegner. *Textual Criticism of the Bible*. IVP Academic. 2006. p. 40.

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3. Ibid. Wegner. p. 40

4. Ibid. Wegner. p. 224

well by their addition, but they introduced a variation to the original text. Dr. Kurt Aland has stated that the original wording and even the additions do not “simply go away” on subsequent copies.<sup>5</sup>

The 5,487 Greek manuscripts include papyri, uncial and minuscule manuscripts. The texts have been classified as being either of the Western (from western Europe), Byzantine (from Constantinople), Caesarean (from Caesarea) or Alexandrian text-types (from Alexandria).<sup>6</sup> Among these manuscripts, the most highly regarded are the Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus and the Codex Vaticanus. It is important to note that the names do not necessarily indicate the location from which they were copied but where they were found.<sup>7</sup> A careful investigation reveals that various manuscripts originated from Africa, Egypt, the Middle East and Europe.<sup>8</sup>

The Codex Sinaiticus or “Aleph” was written in the fourth century and is on display at the British Museum in London.<sup>9</sup> The Codex Alexandrinus, known as “A,” was written in the fifth century and is on display at the British Museum in London.<sup>10</sup> The Codex Vaticanus, known as “B,” was written in the fourth century and is on display at the Vatican library in Rome. This codex was written in the fourth century and kept at the Vatican until 1481. It was released to the non-Roman Catholic world in 1889-1890.<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that there are many other manuscripts of fine quality.

Copes of the New Testament also exist in other languages such as Latin and Syriac (Aramaic), Coptic, Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian, Nestorian, Arabaic, and others for example.<sup>12</sup> The total number of such manuscripts is 9,000. There are also 2,000 lectionaries.<sup>13</sup> God is so wonderful

that even if we did not have any Greek manuscripts, we could reconstruct the Bible except for eleven verses from the 36,289 quotes from the early church fathers of the first three centuries.<sup>14</sup>

**PROCESS OF TEXTUAL CRITICISM.** Using the available manuscripts modern day translators have reconstructed or “compiled” various Greek New Testaments by following a set of rules such as 1) selecting some of the oldest and best manuscripts and 2) comparing them to one another in order to determine the correct reading of the original MSS. Many other factors are also considered in the process of creating a “compiled text” as explained by Geisler and Nix in their book *Introduction to the Bible*<sup>15</sup> and also Paul D. Wegner in his book *Textual Criticism of the Bible*.<sup>16</sup> The translators consider external factors such as the heritage, date and geographical location of the manuscripts. The internal considerations include the difficulty of the Greek reading, brevity of the reading, verbal dissonant and the sophistication of the reading. The correct Greek words are carefully selected in order to create a new “compiled” Greek manuscript of the entire New Testament which is technically called an *Apparatus*. We will also call them “compiled” texts since that more accurately communicates that the new Greek text has been compiled or pieced together from many different Greek manuscripts. For example, the Textus Receptus (TR) is an *Apparatus* and not an autograph.

Due to the translators diligent efforts, modern “compiled tests” are 99.99% accurate, with only about twenty places in the New Testament that are uncertain.<sup>17</sup> Now consider Homer’s Iliad which was written about 900 B.C. Today we have only 500 copies of the Illiad with a textual accuracy that is 90%.<sup>18</sup> In comparison to the Bible with 5,487 Greek manuscripts, that is poor. Now that reveals our Bible is incredibly accurate. Even better news is that none of the uncertainties affect any doctrine - anything that we believe. That is wonderful proof that God has preserved His Word.

5. Ibid. White. p. 78

6. Ibid. White. p. 70-71

7. J. Harold Greenlee. Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism. Hendrickson Publishers. 1995. pp. 29-30.

8. Ibid. Wegner. p. 242

9. <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/codexsinai.html>

10. <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/codexalex.html>

11. Bruce M. Metzger. The Text of the New Testament. Oxford. 1968. p. 47

12. Geisler & Nix. Introduction To The Bible. Moody Press. 1973., pp. 316-328

13. Ibid. Geisler & Nix., p. 359

14. Ibid. Geisler & Nix., p. 359

15. Ibid. Geisler & Nix., pp. 367-370

16. Ibid. Wegner pp. 229-255

17. Ibid. Geisler & Nix, p. 365-366

18. Ibid. Geisler & Nix, p. 367

The 1611 King James Version Bible, which is written in English, is translated from the TR, which is a Greek text, that the translators created or “compiled” from a subset of the existing 5,487 Greek manuscripts. “Modern” Bibles have also been translated from other “com-

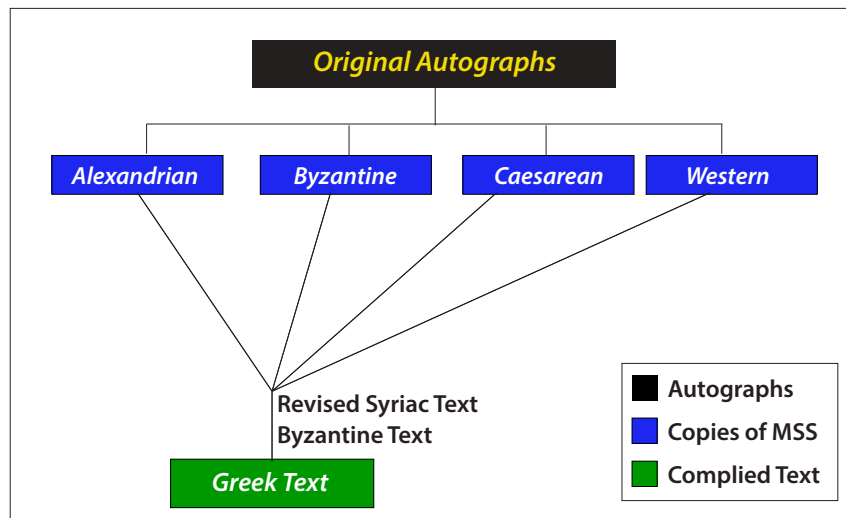
puted” Greek texts or *Apparatuses* such as the UBS Greek New Testament 3rd edition, United Bible Societies 4th edition or the Nestle-Aland 27th edition. Other “compiled” texts include the Critical Text and the Majority Text.

The reader should note that this is not a complete list of “compiled” Greek texts. It is important to note that the TR is not the Majority Text, which has a different *Apparatus*.<sup>19</sup>

**EARLY BIBLE TRANSLATIONS.** From these “compiled” texts translators have created English Bibles so that English readers can understand what the original writers of scripture wrote. Most English readers do not know Hebrew, Aramaic and/or Greek. So Bibles are created from the original languages so that we can understand them. In Nehemiah 8:8 we discover that the priest Ezra read the Law of Moses to the people and then translated it.

*They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading. Neh. 8:8 (NASB)*

Why did Ezra translate what he read? The answer is simple, because the people did not understand the original language. Consequently, we should not be surprised that new Bibles have been created over the hundreds of years - men translated portions of the scriptures into the languages of those living in Syria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Germany, Armenia, Georgia,



*Illustration of the Creation of Greek Text*

Arabia and for other peoples.<sup>20</sup>

The earliest known English version of any portion of the Bible was the Aldhelm (A.D. 639–709).<sup>21</sup> It contained only the book of Psalms. Many do not realize that the King James Bible was not the first Bible translated into English from the

original languages. In the “Bibliographical Introduction” to the reproduction of the 1611 King James Bible, the publishers describe other English Bibles that had been published into English between A.D. 1380-1582.<sup>22</sup> The “Bibliographical Introduction” refers to the following English Bibles that were translated before the 1611 version, 1397 Wyclifite Bible,<sup>23</sup> 1516 Tyndale’s New Testament,<sup>24</sup> 1535 Coverdale Bible,<sup>25</sup> 1537 Matthew Bible,<sup>26</sup> 1539 The Great Bible,<sup>27</sup> 1557 The Geneva Bible,<sup>28</sup> 1572 The Bishop’s Bible,<sup>29</sup> and The Rheims New Testament.<sup>30</sup> This reveals that the 1611 King James Version Bible was not the first English Bible.

**TEXTUS RECEPTUS WAS REJECTED.** So why was the 1611 King James Version Bible created? Some people today question why newer Bible translations are published saying that the newer ones are not needed. James Froude wrote a biography on the *Life and Letters of Erasmus* in 1900.

20. Ibid. Geisler and Nix. p. 316-328.

21. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldhelm>

22. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition. Hendrickson Publishers. 2010. p. 6.

23. Ibid. The Holy Bible., p. 6.

24. Ibid. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition, p. 6.

25. Ibid. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition, p. 10.

26. Ibid. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition., p. 14.

27. Ibid. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition, p. 15.

28. Ibid. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition, p. 19.

29. Ibid. The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition, p. 25.

30. Ibid.

19. Ibid. Greenlee. p. 77.

His book is documented with numerous letters written by Erasmus. The letters are insightful into the thinking of Erasmus. James Froude reveals that Erasmus was criticized for creating a newer and different Greek text, the TR. He writes this,

Pious, ignorant men had regarded the text of the Vulgate as sacred, and probably inspired. Read it intelligently they could not, but they had made the language into an idol, and they were filled with horrified amazement when they found in page after page that Erasmus had anticipated modern criticism, correcting the text, introducing various readings, and retranslating passages from the Greek into a new version. He had altered a word from the Lord's Prayer. Horror of horrors! He had changed the translation of the mystic Logos from Verbum into Sermo, to make people understand what Logos meant.<sup>31</sup>

The King James Only advocates should note that the Latin Vulgate Only advocates were critical of Erasmus' works, just as they are of the modern Bibles.

The translators of the TR and the subsequent 1611 KJV Bible believed that a new translation was needed as evidenced in the "Translators To The Readers" section of the original 1611 King James Version Bible. Even the translators defended their creation of a new Bible saying that it was easier to read and more accurate.

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, by which means the flocks of Laban were watered [Genesis 29:10]. Indeed, without translation into the vulgar tongue, the unlearned are but like children at Jacob's well (which was deep) [John 4:11] without a bucket or something to draw with . . .<sup>32</sup>

James White summarizes the translators comments,

31. James Anthony Froude. *Life and Letters of Erasmus*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1900., p. 227.

32. Ibid. *The Holy Bible*, 1611 Edition, "Translators To The Readers"

One of the most eloquent arguments against KJV Onlyism is provided, ironically by the translators [of the King James Bible] themselves . . . from the preface of the 1611 KJV, entitled *The Translators to the Reader*.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear that the KJV translators thought a better translation was needed. Therefore, they created a new "compiled" text called the Textus Receptus. Now we should ask, why are KJV Only advocates critical of every newer "compiled" text when the originators of the TR struggled against the same criticism? Are we to assume that a KJV is sacred text and that God has not in the past and cannot in the future guide men to provide a better translation?

**TEXTUS RECEPTUS AND ERASMUS.** Mr. David Daniels, a KJV Only advocate, condemns the Codex Alexandrinus since it is used by the Roman Catholics.<sup>34</sup> Consequently, he condemns the modern "compiled" texts since they selectively use the codex. But it is widely believed that Desiderius Erasmus, the editor of the TR, was a Roman Catholic priest all his life.<sup>35</sup> Does that taint the integrity of both the TR and 1611 KJV Bible? Mr. Daniels, a KJV Only Advocate, claims that Desiderius Erasmus eventually left the Roman Catholic Church.

But the following letters from Erasmus reveal that he was a Catholic until his death. In March 25, 1520 Erasmus wrote this,

Christ I know; Luther I know not. The Roman Church I know, and death will not part me from it till the Church departs from Christ.<sup>36</sup>

I have sought to save the dignity of the Roman Pontiff, the honour of Catholic theology, and the welfare of Christendom . . . I have not deviated in what I have written one hair's breadth from the Church's teaching.<sup>37</sup> The Pope's authority as Christ's

33. Ibid. James R. White. pp. 117-118.

34. David W. Daniels. *Answers To Your Bible Version Questions*. Chick Publications. 2010. p. 30.

35. Manfred Hoffmann, "Faith and Piety in Erasmus's Thought," *Sixteenth Century Journal*. 1989. 20#2 pp 241-258.

36. Ibid. Froude. p. 253.

37. Ibid. Froude., p. 254

Vicar must be upheld.<sup>38</sup> I will bear anything before I forsake the Church.<sup>39</sup>

In December 24, 1533, just before Erasmus died in 12 July 1536, he wrote this,

... they sing the old song. Erasmus laughs at the saints, despises the sacraments, denies the faith, is against clerical celibacy, monks' vows, and human institutions. Erasmus paved the way for Luther. So they gabble; and it is all lies.<sup>40</sup>

Others will disagree with this conclusion stating that he was neither Catholic or Protestant. But should we want the editor of the TR to be a humanist?

**ORIGIN OF THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS.** The TR generally follows the Byzantine text-type.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, the TR could not take advantage of the three main codices and the thousands of Greek manuscripts that have been found since A.D. 1611. Desiderius Erasmus "compiled" the TR from a small set of available manuscripts before his death in 12 July 1536.

... Erasmus used the same basic methods of textual-critical study that modern scholars use. I am not saying he had the full spectrum of textual tools available today, but he used the basic forms and methods of trying to arrive at the original reading even as he collated what became known as the Textus Receptus.

The TR did not fall down out of heaven complete. Instead, Desiderius Erasmus, a classical scholar, used his best judgment in coming up with his Greek text, drawing from various sources, accepting some readings and rejecting others as he saw fit. Anyone who believes the TR to be infallible must believe that Erasmus, and the other men who later edited the same text . . . were somehow "inspired" or at the very best "providentially guided" in their work. Yet none of these men ever claimed such

inspiration.<sup>42</sup>

Research has revealed that the TR is of Byzantine text-type and has incorporated portions of the Latin Vulgate. F. H. A. Scrivener has documented that the Textus Receptus was compiled from Minuscule 1, which is of the Caesarean text-type.<sup>43</sup>

Scrivener showed that some texts were incorporated from the Vulgate (for example, Acts 9:6; Rev 17:4.8). Daniel B. Wallace enumerated that in 1,838 places (1005 are translatable) the Textus Receptus differs from the Byzantine text-type.<sup>44</sup>

Dean Burgon, who is a supporter of the Textus Receptus, has declared that the Textus Receptus needs correction in 150 corrections in the Gospel of Matthew alone.<sup>45</sup>

When Erasmus used the Latin Vulgate, he translated the Latin back into Greek. Consequently, he introduced errors into the TR and subsequently into the 1611 KJV.

... As would be expected from such a procedure, here and there in Erasmus' self-made Greek text are readings which have never been found in any known Greek manuscript - but which are still perpetuated today in printings of the . . . Textus Receptus of the Greek New Testament.

Even in other parts of the New Testament Erasmus occasionally introduced into his Greek text material taken from the Latin Vulgate. Thus in [Acts] 9:6, the question which Paul asks at the time of his conversion on the Damascus road, "And he trembling and astonished said, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?,' was frankly interpolated by Erasmus from the Latin Vulgate. This addition, which is found in no Greek manuscript at this passage . . . became part of the Textus Receptus, from which the King

38. Ibid., Froude. pp. 267-268.

39. Ibid., Froude., pp. 385.

40. Ibid., Froude., pp. 411.

41. Ibid. White., p. 106

42. Ibid. White., p. 96.

43. F. H. A. Scrivener, A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, (George Bell & Sons: London 1894, vol. 2, pp. 183-184.

44. Daniel Wallace, "Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text," Bibliotheca Sacra, July-September, 1989., p. 276.

45. J. W. Burgon, The Revised Revision. London 1883., p. 242, 548.



### The Wise Men From The East

ζ	2.1 Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ	γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις	B uwt rel
	2.1 Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ	γεννηθέντος ἐν <u>Βιθλέεμ</u> τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις	L*
	2.1 Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ	γεννηθέντος ἐν <u>Βιθλέεμ</u> τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις	L <sup>c</sup> 1071
	2.1 Τοῦ Ἰησοῦ	γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις	M*
	2.1 Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ <u>Χριστοῦ</u>	γεννηθέντος ἐν <u>Βιθλέεμ</u> τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις	Ω
	2.1 ..... Ἰησοῦ	γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας .....	579
	2.1 Τοῦ δὲ Ἰησοῦ <u>Χριστοῦ</u>	γεννηθέντος ἐν Βηθλέεμ τῆς Ἰουδαίας ἐν ἡμέραις	1346

### Comparison of Greek Texts - Matthew 2:1

Reuben Swanson. *New Testament Greek Manuscripts*. Sheffield Academic Press 1995., p. 15.

B = Codex Vaticanus  
uwt rel = all codices

James version was made in 1611.<sup>46</sup>

Backwards translation from Latin into Greek results in error. This would not be acceptable in modern translations today.

Erasmus was not the only editor of the TR which is the base of the English translation in the 1611 KJV Bible. Three men are primarily responsible for the TR: Desiderius Erasmus, Robert Estienne (died in A.D. 1559) and Theodore Beza (died in A.D. 1605).<sup>47</sup> The TR underwent changes after Erasmus' death in 12 July 1536 until 1611. Beza made changes to the TR. After the 1611 KJV was published, more changes were made to the TR and incorporated into the KJV Bible.<sup>48</sup>

**TEXTUS RECEPTUS AND THE CODICES.** Some believe that the 1611 King James Version is inerrant or perfect - without mistake. They believe it is superior to all other Bible translations because they reason that the underlying Greek text, the Textus Receptus, is perfect. One King James Only advocate, David W. Daniels, who seeks to condemn all other Bibles except for the 1611 KJV Bible, has stated that the Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus rarely agree word-for-word and compares the words in the Lord's Prayer in the gospel of Luke as proof. He claims that the codices do not agree regarding the Greek words in the Lord's Prayer. His implication is that we cannot trust these three Greek codices and since the TR did not use them, the TR is preferred. Here is his statement,

It is rare that these three ever agree [codices] . . . Look at the Lord's Prayer in Luke again Between codices Aleph, A [Alexandrinus], B [Vaticanus], C [Ephraemi Rescriptus] and D [Bezae Cantabrigiensis] there is no agreement in 32 out of 45 words. That means these major books agree in 13 out of 45 words.<sup>49</sup>

This sounds terrible, especially to a non-Greek reader. But a careful check of the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2-4 using Reuben Swanson's *New Testament Greek Manuscripts* which aligns the Greek texts of the leading papyri, uncials and minuscules line-by-line, reveals a different story. A careful comparison of the Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus reveals that they agree in 32 words out of 53 Greek words. The disagreements are due to 16 missing words and 5 misspelled words. If the Ephraemi Rescriptus (C) and Bezae Cantabrigiensis (D) are included, per Mr. Daniel's example, the agreement drops dramatically to 19 words out of 56 Greek words.<sup>50</sup> The disagreements are due to 22 missing words, 3 reversed words and 12 misspelled words.

Why did Mr. Daniels include C and D in the comparison? Why did he choose the Lord's Prayer in Luke and not in Matthew? There is a huge difference when C and D are included in Luke. But if we examine the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13, we discover that the comparison yields significantly better results. The Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus agree with 53 of the 57 Greek words.<sup>51</sup>

49. Ibid. Daniels., p. 16.

50. Reuben Swanson. *Luke. New Testament Greek Manuscripts*. Sheffield Academic Press. 1995. pp. 200-201.

51. Reuben Swanson. *Matthew. New Testament Greek Manuscripts*. Sheffield

46. Ibid. Metzger, p. 100.

47. Ibid. White, p. 104-106.

48. Ibid.

Examination of all four gospels reveals that the word-for-word comparison of the Lord's Prayer in Luke's gospel is probably one of the more discouraging comparisons that could have been chosen. Why wasn't the Lord's Prayer in Matthew selected to demonstrate the quality of the three codices? It is important to note that the three major codices have greater agreement than would be apparent from the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2-4.

Bruce Metzger, an expert in ancient biblical manuscripts, points out that the TR translators did not have access to the three codices: Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus. Consequently, the translators could not have used them or have rejected them. The fact that they did not use them is not an endorsement for or against the codices. They did not even know they existed.

But the work of the king's translators had also its basic weaknesses . . . its inheritance. There was no standard edition of the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the late and corrupt Greek text of Erasmus as popularized . . . since nothing better was available. Codex Alexandrinus, the very existence of which was unsuspected by the translators, was not to arrive in England for a score of years; Codex Vaticanus though reported in the Vatican catalog of 1481, would for several centuries remain inaccessible to Protestant scholars; and Codex Sinaiticus, its value unrecognized, lay undisturbed at St. Catherine's monastery awaiting rescue from flames and oblivion by Tischendorf in the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

In the next four hundred years, thousands of manuscripts would become available. Would the TR translators have wanted to use one or more of these newer manuscripts for the TR if they had had access to them? Unfortunately, we cannot ask them.

**TEXTUS RECEPTUS ACCURACY.** The TR contains numerous errors. For example, Erasmus arbitrarily ignored the Greek manuscript in Romans 4:1 and followed the writings of the early church fathers and the Latin Vulgate. In

Romans 10:17, Erasmus guessed about the correct reading of the Greek text when he switched the wording from the phrase "word of Christ" in the Latin Vulgate to "word of God" for the TR. He did not know that Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus and P<sup>46</sup> papyri agreed with the wording "word of Christ."<sup>53</sup> Bruce Metzger writes,

Basically, [Erasmus] guessed and chose "God," explaining, "It does not greatly affect the meaning except in the sense that the phrase 'voice of God' lends more dignity to the words of the Apostle and has a wider application."<sup>54</sup>

A serious error in the TR is the inclusion of its version of 1 John 5:7-8, known as the *Comma Johanneum*.

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 1 John 5:7-8 (KJV)

The *Comma* is found in only the Latin Vulgate and a small number of Greek texts. Here is the account of how the *Comma* was included.

When Erasmus' first edition came out in 1516, this phrase, dubbed . . . the *Comma Johanneum*, was not in the text for a very simple reason: Not one Greek manuscript of 1 John that Erasmus examined contained it. He found it only in the Latin Vulgate.

Erasmus rightly did not include it in his first or second edition. The note in the Annotations said, "In the Greek codex I find only this about the threefold testimony: 'because there are three witnesses, spirit, water, and blood.'" But his reliance upon the Greek manuscripts rather than the Vulgate caused quite a stir. Both Edward Lee and Diego Lopez Zuniga attacked him for not including this passage and hence encouraging "Arianism," the same charge KJV Only advocates make today. Erasmus protested that he was simply following the Greek texts; in responding to

Academic Press. 1995. pp. 46-47.

52. Bruce M Metzger. The Bible in Translation. Baker Academic. 2001., pp. 77-78.

53. Ibid. White., p. 97.

54. Ibid.

Lee, Erasmus challenged him to “produce a Greek manuscript that has what is missing in my edition.” He also wrote,

If a single manuscript had come into my hands in which stood what we read . . . then I would certainly have used it to fill in what was missing, in the other manuscripts I had. Because that did not happen, I have taken the only course which was permissible, that is, I have indicated . . . what was missing from the Greek manuscripts.<sup>55</sup>

In response Codex Montfortianus, an Irish manuscript, was found that contained the *Comma* and Erasmus included the *Comma*.<sup>56</sup> The few manuscripts that contain the *Comma* are very recent and half of the readings are contained in comments in the margins.<sup>57</sup> Mr. Daniels, a KJV Only advocate argues in favor of the *Comma* by referring to a small set of manuscripts and quoting similar and direct phrases from some early church fathers. But quoting early church fathers does not mean that the Greek texts contained the phrase.

The starting point for determining what verses and words belong in the Bible is not the 1611 KJV Bible. The starting point is also not determined by the orthodoxy of the statement, that is, something we believe to be true. The starting point is what the authors of the 66 books of the Bible wrote. When the existing manuscripts of 1 John are evaluated, the *Comma* occurs only in a very few number. James White quotes John William Burgon,

If so few manuscripts are sufficient to establish such illegitimate

readings, [then] one can oppose so many and weighty things (both of evidence and of argument), that obviously nothing will be left in the serious matter of a true and a false standard, and the text of the New Testament in general will be entirely uncertain and doubtful.<sup>58</sup>

The message is simple. The *Comma* does not belong in any Bible, but that does not mean the doctrine of the trinity is not true. The doctrine of the trinity is strongly supported in scripture.

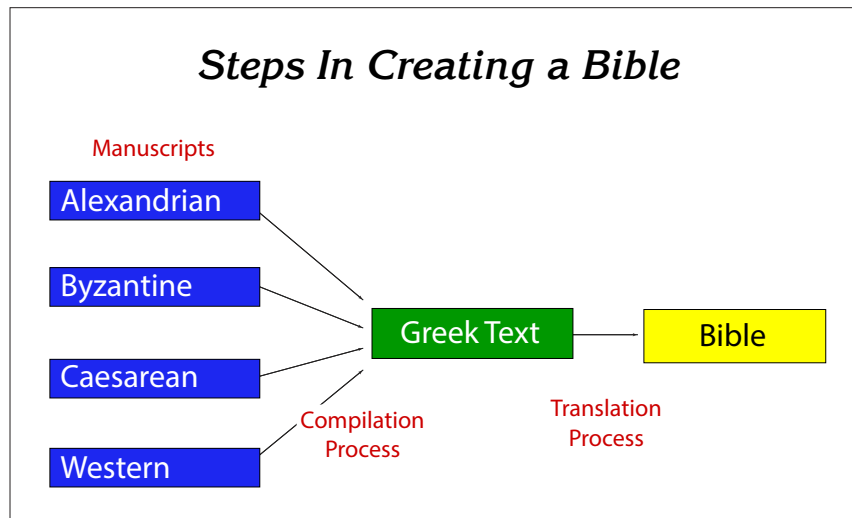
There are many other issues with the TR. A number of very excellent books have been written on the subject. The reader is encouraged to read the highly documented book, *The King James Only Controversy* by James R. White.

Another book is Bruce Metzger’s *The Bible in Translation*. These are highly respected authors.

**THE 1769 KJV.** The King James Version Bibles that are usually sold today are actually reprints of the KJV which was translated from Benjamin

Blayney’s TR of 1769. That is, the KJV Bibles usually sold in bookstores are actually 1769 KJV Bibles. If someone wants a reprint of the 1611 KJV, they have to ask for one. This fact is important as we will soon discover.

The KJV carried by the average KJV Only advocate today looks very different than the edition that came off Robert Barker’s press in 1611. Not only do many printings of today’s KJV lack the marginal notes and references, but the *form and the wording* of the text has undergone change over time. Editions with textual changes came out as soon as 1612 and again in 1613, followed by editions in 1616, 1629 and 1638. By 1659, William Kilburne, in a tract titled *Dangerous Errors in Several Late*



55. Ibid. White., pp. 100-101.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid. White. p. 102.

58. Ibid. p 103-104.



*Printed Bibles to the Great Scandal and Corruption of Sound and True Religion*, could claim that twenty thousand errors had crept into six different editions printed in the 1650s.

Modern KJVs follow the revision made by Benjamin Blayey in 1769. Jack Lewis notes that Blayey “did extensive revision, added seventy-six notes - including many on weights, measures, and coins - and added 30,495 new marginal references.”<sup>59</sup>

James White then continues to document differences between the original 1611 KJV and the KJV Bibles sold today. The changes are extensive and for a devoted KJV only advocate, they should be alarming if one believes the 1611 KJV is the inspired text.<sup>60</sup>

**KJV AND MODERN READERS.** Creating an English Bible from an *Apparatus* or the “compiled” text into English requires as much scholarship as creating the *Apparatus*. One could have a perfect *Apparatus* but end up with a defective Bible by assigning the wrong meaning to the Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic words. The assignment of a wrong meaning to Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic words could occur because the translator selected a rare meaning or the translator was careless in selecting the meaning. Consequently, the English translation would not accurately communicate what the author of the autographs had intended.

*Genesis 1:28.* For example, consider Genesis 1:28 in the KJV,

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it . . .” *Genesis 1:28 (KJV)*

Suppose a non-Christian found a KJV Bible and read this verse. How would he understand the word *replenish*? He would think “re-fill” or “re-supply.” That is the current meaning of the word. But in 1611 the meaning of the English word *replenish* was “to supply abundantly.”<sup>61</sup> When the

KJV was translated into King James’ English the meaning was to “supply abundantly.” The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary states that “to supply abundantly” is now a rare or obsolete meaning of the word *replenish*.<sup>62</sup> Further, the 1967 New Scofield Reference Bible has a footnote indicating that *replenish* is obsolete.<sup>63</sup> This example strongly suggests that an update to the KJV needs to occur since it communicates the wrong message, except for scholars who know the word is obsolete. Why communicate a wrong message?

*Exodus 20:13.* Another unfortunate passage in the KJV is Exodus 20:13.

Thou shalt not kill. Ex. 20:13 (KJV)

Notice the word *kill*. The meaning of this word in 1611 English was “to murder.”<sup>64</sup> The 1611 English word *slay* was equivalent to our modern English word “kill.” Again, this shows that the current KJV should be revised.

These are just a few examples that indicate the need for a better TR and a better translation of the old TR. The current reprints of the 1611 and 1769 KJV Bibles no longer communicate, in some instances, the same message that the older KJV editions communicated to the readers in the 1600s and 1700s.

**KJV AND MARGIN NOTES.** Some KJV only advocates are critical of margin notes that suggest an alternate reading in modern Bibles. Such critics are not aware that the 1611 KJV had margin notes too! For example, in the margin of a 1611 KJV next to Matthew 26:26 is this note, “Many Greeke copies have, gave thanks.” The translators communicated in the margin that an alternate was possible.<sup>65</sup>

Consider the note in the margin next to Luke 17:36, “This verse 36 is wanting in most Greek copies.” This note indicates that maybe the verse should not be there.<sup>66</sup>

In fact, there are 6,565 margin notes in the Old Testament

59. Ibid. White., p. 124.

60. Ibid. White. pp. 125-128,

61. Glynnis Chantrell. *The Oxford Dictionary of Word Histories*. Oxford University Press. 2002. p. 429.

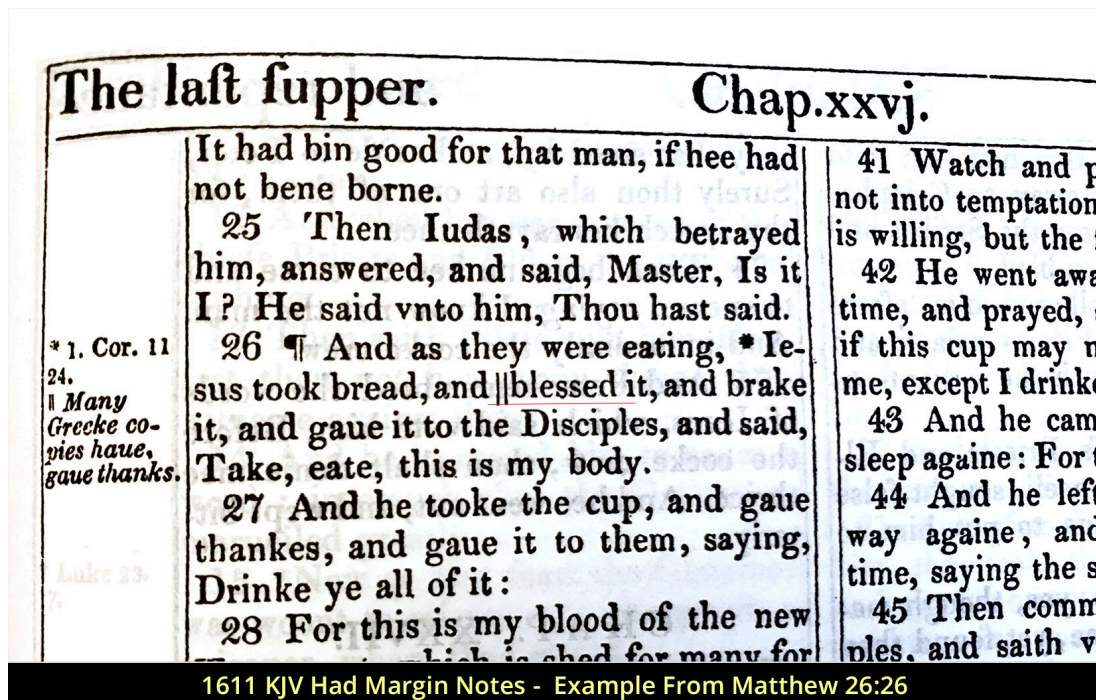
62. Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford University Press. 2007. p. 2534.

63. New Scofield Reference Bible. Oxford University Press. 1967.

64. Ibid. Chantrell. p. 289.

65. Ibid. *The Holy Bible*, 1611 Edition, see Matt. 26:26. (The book contains photostatic copies of the pages of the original 1611 KJV.)

66. Ibid. *The Holy Bible*, 1611 Edition, see Luke 17:36. (The book contains photostatic copies of the pages of the original 1611 KJV.)



and 777 in the New Testament for a total of 7,342.<sup>67</sup> In Revelation 20:13 the word “hell” has a typographical error and so a margin note was added to indicate that the word should be “hell.” The 1611 KJV’s margin notes reminds one of the modern Bibles such as the New American Standard Study or an English Standard Version Study Bible. The 1611 KJV Bible has marginal notes from Genesis through Revelation, except for the book of Philemon. It should be noted that the modern KJV Bibles do not include the margin notes from 1611 or 1769. One might ask, “Why?”

**CONCLUSION.** In summary, editions of the King James Bibles which were written for 1611 or 1769 readers fail to accurately communicate the Word of Truth in some instances. The modern reprints fail modern readers by not including the translators’ margin notes which communicated a desire to completely inform the reader that alternate readings should be considered. The translators did their best with the manuscripts that were available to them. Since their time thousands of additional manuscripts have been discovered. It is known that Erasmus searched for new manuscripts to read in a desire to improve the Textus Receptus. One can only imagine that he would have welcomed the latest manuscripts,

including the Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus.

The most important goal in creating a new Bible is not to twist scripture to make it support one’s doctrinal beliefs or favorite Bible but to obey Revelation 22:18-19.

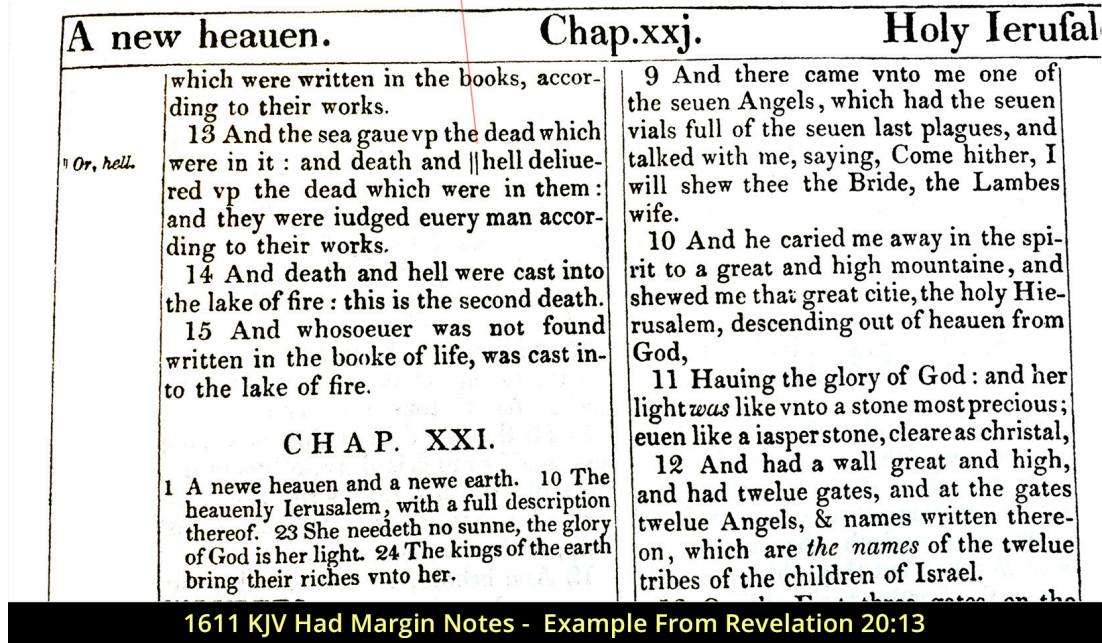
For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: 19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. Revelation 22:18-19 (KJV)

One should be eager to possess a Bible that most accurately communicates the truth. This argues for improvements in the current editions of the KJV.

Currently, there exists a number of high quality Bibles in modern English that are superior to the 1611 and 1769 KJV editions. Erasmus created the TR because the existing *Apparatuses* of his time were good but improvement was needed. The same is true today. The KJV is good, but Bibles such as the English Standard Version (ESV) and the 1995 New American Standard (NASB) are currently the more

<sup>67</sup>. <http://en.literaturabautista.com/exhaustive-listing-marginal-notes-1611-edition-king-james-bible>

JKV Editors noted  
a correction occurred



accurate Bible translations available.

The reader is encouraged to purchase a reprint of the 1611 KJV and checkout the numerous marginal notes which range from alternate manuscript readings to recommended verses for the reader to consider. The translators obviously included them because they believed they had value. The reader is also encouraged to read some of the books from the bibliography to learn more about textual criticism and the history of the King James Bible.

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