

# NT TEXTUAL ISSUES

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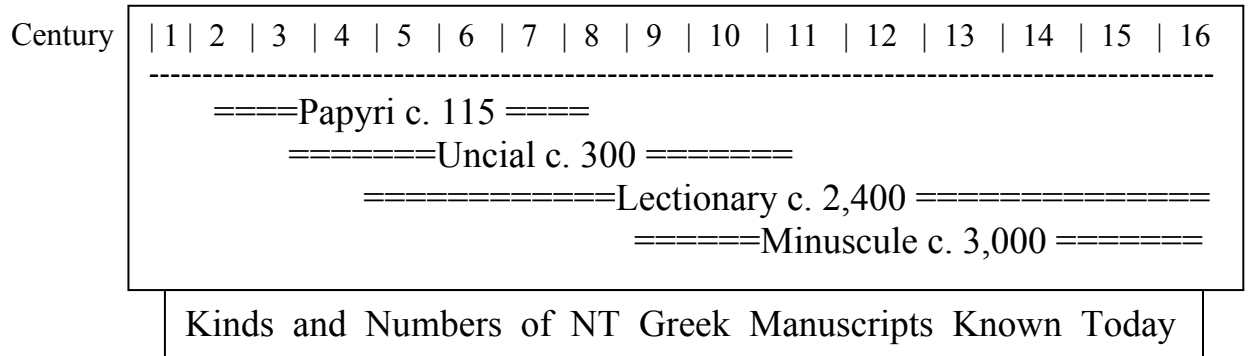
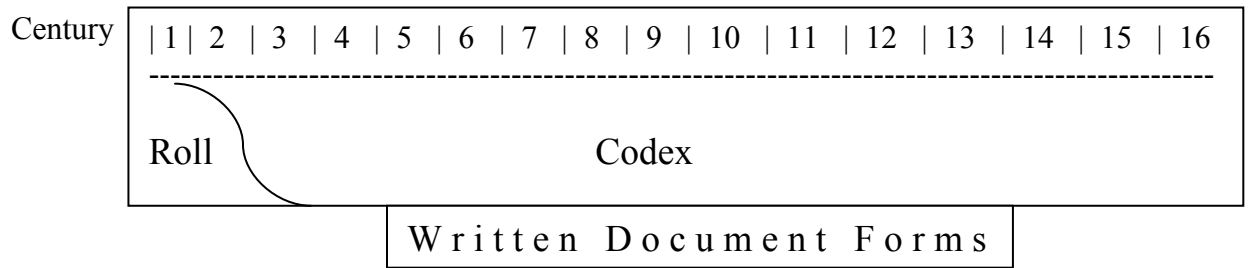
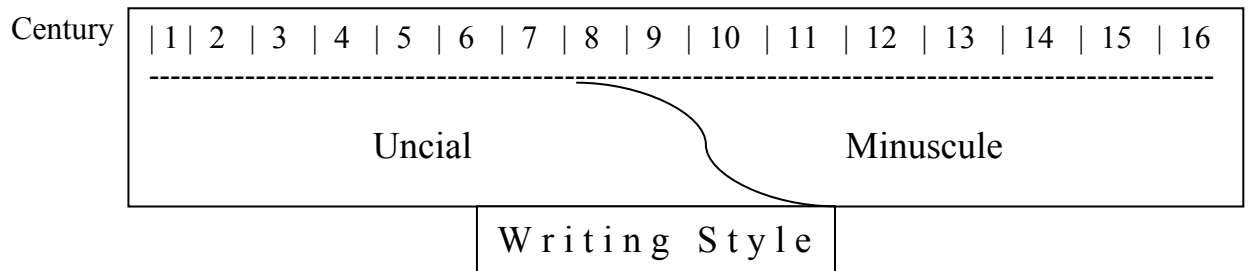
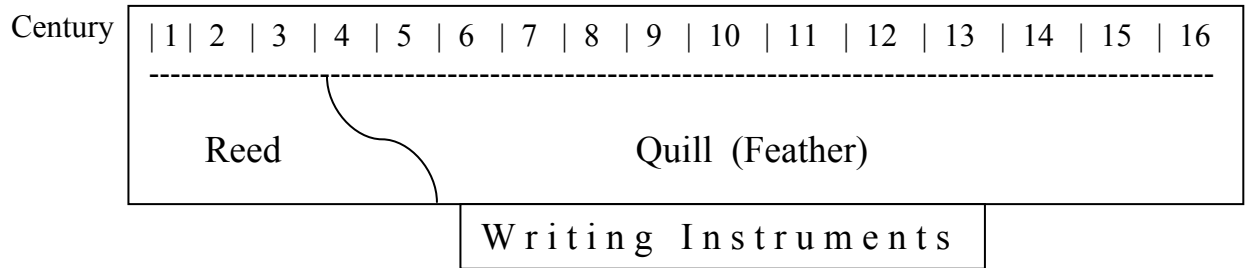
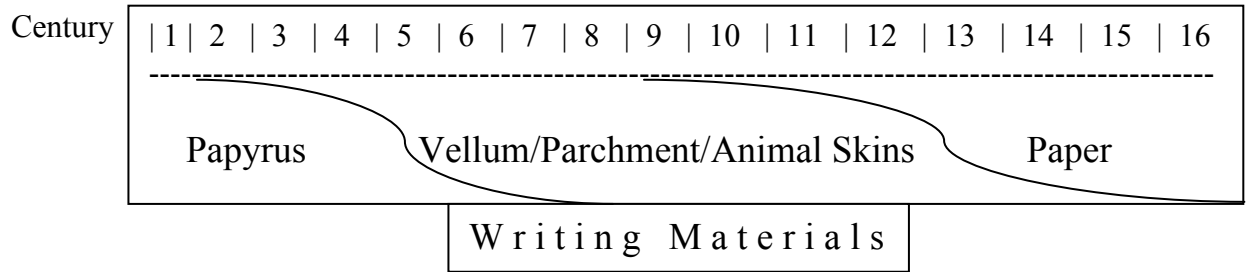
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# NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT PRODUCTION



NOTE: All five entries start from around A.D. 50 - when the NT began to be written. This chart covers writing and manuscript copying of the Greek NT only, not ancient Greek in general.

## SURVIVING MANUSCRIPTS OF ANCIENT AUTHORS

TRADITIONAL AUTHORS	NAME OF WRITINGS	APPROXIMATE DATE	EARLIEST COPY	SPAN OF YEARS	COPIES KNOWN
Homer	Iliad	900 B.C.	400 B.C.	500	643
Sophocles	Tragedy	496-406 B.C.	A.D. 1000	1,400	193
Herodotus	History	480-425 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300	8
Euripides	Tragedy	480-406 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,500	9
Thucydides	History	460-400 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300	8
Aristophanes	Comedy	450-385 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,300	10
Plato	Various	427-347 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,200	7
Aristotle	Science	384-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400	c. 50
Demosthenes	Politics	383-322 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,400	c. 200
Caesar	Politics	100-44 B.C.	A.D. 900	1,000	10
Livy	History	59 B.C. - A.D. 17	A.D. 500	500	20
Lucretius	Didactic Poem	60 B.C.	A.D. 1100	1,100	2
Catullus	Poetry	54 B.C.	A.D. 1550	1,600	3
Virgil	Poetry	50-19 B.C.	A.D. 300	300	?
Horace	History	20 B.C.	A.D. 900	900	?
Eight or nine men	New Testament	A.D. 40-95	A.D. 120	25	6,000
Pliny The Younger	History	A.D. 61-113	A.D. 850	750	7
Suetonius	Biography	A.D. 70-160	A.D. 950	800	8
Tacitus	Annals	A.D. 100	A.D. 1100	1,000	20
Tacitus	History	A.D. 100	A.D. 1000	900	1

For similar attempts, see McDowell, *A Ready Defense* (San Bernardino, Calif: Heres Life, 1990), p. 42; Bruce, *The New Testament Documents*, pp. 16-18. There is some uncertainty because reliable and up to date information was sometimes elusive. The "earliest copy" and "time span" years are approximate.

## HOW WAS IT DETERMINED WHICH BOOKS WOULD GO INTO THE BIBLE?

The canon is a list of books officially accepted as Scripture. The books of the Old Testament<sup>1</sup> were written by accepted prophets, did not contain doctrinal contradictions, were accepted by the Jews for centuries, and may have been formally recognized in the first century A.D.<sup>2</sup> Esther, Ezekiel, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs were sometimes disputed. The book of Esther was likely doubted because it does not directly mention God. The books of the New Testament were accepted by Christian congregations if they met certain criteria.

- 1) **Apostolic Authority** - Apostolic authorship or authority was very important.
- 2) **Tradition** - If a book had been used for many years, it would be more likely to make it into the canon<sup>3</sup> than a disputed book. If churches rarely or never used a book, it would not likely be considered canonical.<sup>4</sup>
- 3) **Doctrine** - Books must have sound doctrine. The standard was the apostles' doctrine.

Most books of the NT were probably recognized as canonical or inspired right away. Manuscript P46 is a collection of Paul's epistles that was copied around A.D. 200. Marcion's list (given below), dates to around 140. These show that there were early collections of books or "Bibles." It is important to understand that the early Christians asked and relied on the Holy Spirit to guide them in these matters. However, they only recognized the canon of inspired Scripture, they did not determine it.

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<sup>1</sup>For much valuable information on the Old Testament canon, see Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament of the New Testament Church* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985); and Earl E. Ellis, "The OT in the Early Church," in *Mikra*, ed. by Jan Mulder (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 653-690.

<sup>2</sup>According to ancient traditions (Mishna and see Josephus, *Wars* 2.16.1ff. [333 ff.]), in the A.D. 60s Vespasian gave the Jews permission to found an academy at Jamnia, near the Dead Sea. Tradition also says the Jews officially recognized the Old Testament canon, or at least debated some of the disputed books, in A.D. 90 at a council held in Jamnia.

<sup>3</sup>For a basic discussion on the canon and related issues, see Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey From Texts to Translations* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999), pp. 99-160.

<sup>4</sup>Even some of Paul's books were not accepted as canonical. He wrote an epistle to the Laodiceans (Col. 4:16) and a third letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:8) that have never been mentioned in a Christian list of canonical writings. Their content is not even known. Other writings, such as the "Shepherd of Hermes" or the "Gospel of Thomas" were known, but were not accepted after years of awareness.

# RECOGNIZING THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON

(Using Athanasius' Order)

<b>Marcion</b> (c. 140)	<b>Muratorian Canon</b> (c. 200)	<b>Eusebius</b> (c. 325)	<b>Athanasius</b> (367)
	[Matthew] (assumed)	Matthew	Matthew
	[Mark] (assumed)	Mark	Mark
Luke	Luke ("the third")	Luke	Luke
	John ("the fourth")	John	John
	Acts	Acts	Acts
Romans	Romans	Romans	Romans
1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians	1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians	2 Corinthians
Galatians	Galatians	Galatians	Galatians
Laodiceans <sup>5</sup>	Ephesians	Ephesians	Ephesians
Philippians	Philippians	Philippians	Philippians
Colossians	Colossians	Colossians	Colossians
1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1 Thessalonians	1Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2 Thessalonians	2Thessalonians
	1 Timothy	1 Timothy	1 Timothy
	2 Timothy	2 Timothy	2 Timothy
	Titus	Titus	Titus
Philemon			Philemon
		Hebrews	Hebrews
			James
		1 Peter	1 Peter
			2 Peter
	1 John	1 John	1 John
	2 John		2 John
			3 John
	Jude		Jude
	Revelation	Revelation	Revelation

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<sup>5</sup>Marcion's "Laodiceans" is Ephesians. After Athanasius, other fourth century canons were written by Ruffinus (350?-410) and Augustine (354-430). These both contained all 27 books now recognized as the New Testament. This chart does not contain apocryphal books that were listed by the above writers. In Eusebius, the remaining books were "disputed." Many Bible dictionaries contain similar and additional information.

## TEN IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS<sup>6</sup>

**Manuscript (ms.) (pl. mss.)** - A hand-written document. In biblical studies, it usually refers to an ancient copy of a portion of the Bible.

**Text-type** - A textual family. A pattern of similar readings. The hypothetical text that stands behind manuscripts that are similar is a text-type or family.

**Alexandrian text** - The text or text-type of the Greek New Testament that is based on some of the oldest manuscripts. It is the critical text that is similar to that of Westcott and Hort and is the basis of most modern translations.

**Byzantine text** - Traditional text or Majority text. The text or text-type of the Greek New Testament that was common in the East or the text of the Greek Orthodox Church. Approximately 90% of all known Greek New Testament manuscripts are of this text-type.

**Traditional text** - The Byzantine text or the text based on the majority of Greek manuscripts. It is similar to the Textus Receptus, but is more broad.

**Majority text** - The vast majority of New Testament Greek manuscripts. This text is also called the Byzantine text, Byzantine text-type, and the Traditional text.

**Majority Text** - In this work, *Majority Text* [in italics] refers to the *Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* by Zane Hodges and Art Farstad (Nelson, 1982; rev. 1985). It is sometimes called the Textus Receptus or traditional text, but it really should not be called the Textus Receptus.

**Textus Receptus** - A printed Greek New Testament that is like the text popularized by Erasmus (early 1500s) and that is the basis of the KJV and NKJV New Testaments. It is a sub element of the Majority Text. The Textus Receptus is sometimes based upon only a few Greek manuscripts (occasionally none) whereas the *Majority Text* is always based on many manuscripts.

**Latin Vulgate** - The common Latin translation of the Bible that was completed by Jerome and others c. A.D. 400. It was the main Bible in the West for 1,000 years, dominating until the 1500s.

**Masoretic Text** - The commonly accepted Hebrew text of the Old Testament. It was established by Masoretic scribes c. A.D. 500-1000.

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<sup>6</sup>These are basic and general definitions. The terms are very important to anyone who wants to know about the New Testament text.

# NEW TESTAMENT HISTORICAL CHART

## ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS A.D. 45-95

The New Testament was completed c. A.D. 95.

## COPIES AND MISTAKES A.D. 50-200

Copies of both the originals and early copies multiplied. Most copying errors appeared by A.D. 200.

## TEXTUAL FAMILIES A.D. 200-400

By A.D. 400 four text-types had emerged.  
Alexandrian Byzantine Caesarean Western

## MANUSCRIPT PRODUCTION AND LOSS A.D. 200-1500

Before A.D. 1500, tens of thousands of New Testament manuscripts were made. Several efforts were made to destroy them. Very many extant manuscripts ended up in monasteries where they awaited the Renaissance and modern age. The Byzantine text greatly dominated.

## MANUSCRIPT REDISCOVERY 1500-2008

In this era, some 6,000 manuscripts were discovered, studied, and cataloged.  
The Alexandrian and Byzantine were prominent.  
The characteristics and results of these two families differ.

### ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPTS

- minority number (c. 2%)
- some shorter readings
- some older manuscripts
- often less consistent

### BYZANTINE MANUSCRIPTS

- majority number (c. 90%)
- some longer readings
- some later manuscripts
- often more consistent

### GREEK NEW TESTAMENTS

- 1831 - Lachman
- 1872 - Tischendorf 8th
- 1881 - Westcott-Hort
- 1993 - Nestle Aland 27th
- 1993 - United Bib. Soc.4

### GREEK NEW TESTAMENTS

- 1516 - Erasmus 1st ed.
- 1550 - Stephanus 3rd
- 1598 - Theodore Beza 5th
- 1633 - Textus Receptus
- 1982 - *Majority Text*

### ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENTS

- 1881 - Revised Version
- 1900 - American Standard
- 1931 - Goodspeed Bible
- 1946 - Revised Standard
- 1963 - New American Std.
- 1966 - Good News (TEV)
- 1971 - Living Bible
- 1973 - New International

### ENGLISH NEW TESTAMENTS

- 1525 - Tyndale NT
- 1535 - Coverdale Bible
- 1537 - Matthew Bible
- 1539 - Great Bible
- 1557 - Geneva Bible
- 1568 - Bishops' Bible
- 1611 - King James Bible
- 1979 - New King James

### **ALEXANDRIAN TEXT STRENGTHS**

- 1) It is very early, having manuscripts that date to A.D. 200.
- 2) It gives evidence of text families that existed in the 200s.
- 3) It is the main text chosen for modern translations.
- 4) It was used by some of the early Church Fathers.
- 5) Among uncial manuscripts that are dated A.D. 500 or earlier, it outnumbers the Byzantine text 4 to 2.

### **ALEXANDRIAN TEXT WEAKNESSES**

- 1) The most important Alexandrian text manuscripts disagree many times. Aleph (Sinaiticus) and B (Vaticanus) disagree more than 3,000 times.
- 2) Scholars now recognize too much weight was given to this text (e.g. three manuscripts over 2,000 in Mk. 16:9-20).
- 3) It was popularized by the Westcott-Hort, but all five pillars of their textual theory are now disproved.
- 4) The Alexandrian text has only 2% of the manuscripts.
- 5) It has conflations, harmonizations, and liturgical changes.
- 6) Possible biblical problems:
  - A) Omits names of deity 200 times.
  - B) Mark 1:2 "As it is written in the prophets," is "As it is written in Isaiah the prophet" in Alexandrian manuscripts.
  - C) In Matthew 1:7,10 two kings are removed from Jesus' genealogy. Asaph, a singer, and Amos, a prophet, are listed rather than Asa and Amon.

### **MAJORITY TEXT STRENGTHS**

- 1) It is numerically superior, having 90% of all manuscripts.
- 2) Its mss disagree with each other less.
- 3) Some Majority text readings in the papyri are just as old as those in the Alexandrian text, A.D. 200.
- 4) It has wide geographical distribution around the Mediterranean Sea.
- 5) The best Alexandrian manuscripts contain many Majority text readings. Sinaiticus is approximately 50% Majority text.
- 6) Its existence cannot be explained and must be admitted to the 300s.
- 7) Among uncial manuscripts that are dated A.D. 600 or earlier, it outnumbers the Alexandrian text 2 to 1.
- 8) Logically, the older text should produce more offspring.
- 9) The Byzantine text is from locations where Greek was the spoken language.
- 10) The Byzantine text is primarily from locations where the NT letters were sent.
- 11) The Majority text was the choice of scribes for 1,200 years.
- 12) The Majority text brought order out of chaos. The early papyri appear very confused and diverse (perhaps because of persecution) and the Majority text corrected the text.
- 13) Most criticize the Byzantine text because they do not like it.

### **MAJORITY TEXT WEAKNESSES**

- 1) It is weak in Church Fathers that date before A.D. 350.
- 2) The oldest Byzantine manuscript dates to the fifth century. In Paul's epistles, it is to the eighth century.
- 3) Most Majority text manuscripts were made after A.D. 1000.
- 4) It is sometimes divided, leaving no majority.
- 5) It has conflations, harmonizations and liturgical changes.
- 6) Possible biblical problems: none noted.



## ORIGINALS AND KNOWN COPIES OF SELECT BIBLES

<b>CEN- TURY</b>	<b>GREEK NT</b>	<b>LATIN VULGATE</b>	<b>ENGLISH VERSION</b>	<b>SEPTUAGINT GREEK OT</b>	<b>HEBREW OT</b>
BC				WRITTEN 250-125 BC	WRITTEN 1400-400 BC
AD 100s	WRITTEN AD 50-100			manuscripts	Manuscripts
200s	manuscripts			manuscripts	Manuscripts
300s	Complete	WRITTEN 382-404		Complete	Manuscripts
400s	Complete	complete		complete	Manuscripts
500s	Complete	complete		complete	Manuscripts
600s	complete	complete		complete	Manuscripts
700s	complete	complete	WRITTEN 700-1382	complete	Manuscripts
800s	complete	complete	manuscripts	complete	Manuscripts
900s	complete	complete	manuscripts	complete	Complete
1000s	complete	complete	manuscripts	complete	Complete
1100s	complete	complete	manuscripts	complete	Complete
1200s	complete	complete	manuscripts	complete	Complete
1300s	complete	complete	complete	complete	Complete
1400s	complete	printed	complete	complete	Printed
1500s	printed		printed	printed	

## VERSES MISSING IN SOME NEW TESTAMENTS

VERSES	TR/KJV & NKJV	MAJ	CR	NASB	NIV	NRSV	INCLUDED IN
Mt 12:47			[ ]				C,D,W, <b>W</b>
Mt 17:21			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	C,D,W, <b>W</b>
Mt 18:11			OMIT	[ ]	OMIT	OMIT	D,W, <b>W</b>
Mt 21:44			[ ]				⌘,B,C,W, <b>W</b>
Mt 23:14			OMIT	[ ]	OMIT	OMIT	W, <b>W</b>
Mk 7:16			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	A,D,W, <b>W</b>
Mk 9:44			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	A,D, <b>W</b>
Mk 9:46			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	A,D, <b>W</b>
Mk 11:26			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	A,C,D, <b>W</b>
Mk 15:28			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	<b>W</b>
Mk 16:9-20			[ [ ] ]	[ ]		[ [ ] ]	A,C,D,W, <b>W</b>
Lk 17:36	TR OMIT	OMIT	OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	D
Lk 22:43			[ [ ] ]			[ [ ] ]	⌘,D, <b>W</b>
Lk 22:44			[ [ ] ]		OMIT	[ [ ] ]	⌘,D, <b>W</b>
Lk 23:17			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	⌘,D,W, <b>W</b>
Lk 24:12				[ ]			P75,⌘,A,B,W, <b>W</b>
Lk 24:40				OMIT*			P75,⌘,A,B,W, <b>W</b>
Jn 5:4			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	A, <b>W</b>
Jn 7:53-8:11			[ [ ] ]	[ ]		[ [ ] ]	D, <b>W</b>
Acts 8:37		OMIT	OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	
Acts 15:34		OMIT	OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	C,D
Acts 24:7		OMIT	OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	
Acts 28:29			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	<b>W</b>
Rom 16:24			OMIT	OMIT*	OMIT	OMIT	D, <b>W</b>

\* indicates verses now included in the NASB. Matt. 23:13 and 14 are reversed in W and the *Majority Text*. 1 Jn. 5:7-8 is not considered because no complete verse is involved. The critical text lacks 16 verses; the *Majority Text* lacks four. Luke 17:36 was in the Elzevir 1624 and the TBS 1976 TR.

## HOW DOES THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS COMPARE WITH OTHER TEXTS?

### THE TEXTUS RECEPTUS COMPARED TO VARIOUS MANUSCRIPTS AND TEXTS<sup>7</sup>

The Textus Receptus agrees with $\aleph$	11,585 out of 15,291 or 75.8%
The Textus Receptus agrees with M	1,159 out of 15,291 or 7.6%
The Textus Receptus agrees with M <sup>PT</sup>	1,493 out of 15,291 or 9.8%
The Textus Receptus agrees with $\aleph$	7,057 out of 15,291 or 46.2%
The Textus Receptus agrees with A	8,485 out of 13,441 or 63.1%
The Textus Receptus agrees with B	5,868 out of 13,294 or 44.1%
The Textus Receptus agrees with C	5,487 out of 14,918 or 36.8%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P37	23 out of 64 or 35.9%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P45	752 out of 1,769 or 42.5%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P46	849 out of 2,305 or 36.8%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P47	193 out of 496 or 38.9%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P66	667 out of 1,685 or 39.6%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P72	189 out of 466 or 40.6%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P75	1,318 out of 2,945 or 44.8%
The Textus Receptus agrees with P88	20 out of 78 or 25.6%
The Textus Receptus agrees with Cr	8,104 out of 15,291 or 53.0%
The Textus Receptus agrees with MT	13,427 out of 15,291 or 87.8%
The Textus Receptus stands alone	697 out of 15,291 or 4.6%
The Textus Receptus agrees with $\aleph$ and B against the <i>Majority Text</i>	221 out of 13,294 or 1.7%
The Textus Receptus agrees with $\aleph$ against the <i>Majority Text</i>	516 out of 15,291 or 3.4%
The Textus Receptus agrees with B against the <i>Majority Text</i>	297 out of 13,294 or 2.2%

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<sup>7</sup>This information is from the variants listed in MT1&2, UBS3&4, and NA26&27. When every word in the entire New Testament is considered, the TR and the Majority Text agree approximately 98% of the time.

6A. KINDS OF COPYIST ERRORS

1B. ACCIDENTAL

1C. Wrong word division

1D. The originals had no space between words

2D. Later the divisions were in minuscules

3D. GODISNOWHERE

HAVEYOUSEENABUNDANCEONTHETABLE

4D. `OTI or `O TI

5D. Lk. 16:25 w-de adv. "here" (Cr, MT)

o[ de prn. "this one" (M<sup>r</sup>, TR)

6D. Mk. 10:40 avll v oi-j "but for whom it has been prepared"

a;lloij "it has been prepared for others"

2C. Take one letter as another

1D. Rom. 12:11 καιρος or κυριος

"serving in season" or "serving the Lord"

2D. Examples ΠΑΝ ΤΙΑΛ ; Cε ΟΘ ; ΑΛΔ ; Π ΤΙ ; Μ ΛΛ

3C. Abbreviations - 1 Tim. 3:16 ΘC or OC

4C. Homoioteleuton (same ending)

1D. May skip a line or two with same ending

2D. Jn. 17:15 in manuscript Vaticanus

5C. Dittography (a word given twice)

6C. Haplography (leaving out a word)

7C. Errors of Ear (one read to several scribes

Rev. 1:5 lou,w "wash" (M<sup>a b c</sup>, TR)

lu,w "loose" (Cr, M<sup>d e</sup>)

Jn. 12:6 e;melen "he cared" (M, CR, TR)

e;mellen "he was about" (M<sup>i</sup>)

1 Thess. 2:7 h;pioi "we were gentle" (MT, TR, NASB)

nh,pioi "we were babies" (CR)

8C. Errors of Memory (learned a verse, but wrong)

2B. INTENTIONAL CHANGES

1C. Errors of Judgment (a scribe would think there was an error or a correction in his source ms. and add or leave off based on his judgment)

Jn. 5:3-4 troubling the waters

2C. Orthography (change spelling overtime, etc.)

3C. Harmonistic corruption (eg. transfiguration)

1D. Mt. 17:2 white as the light (φως)

2D. Mk. 9:3 white as snow (ci, wn)

(codex D changed Mt. 17:2 from φως to ci, wn harmonizing with Mark 9:3

(Majority Text) and possibly?? Mt. 28:3)

4C. Doctrinal considerations

1D. 1 Cor. 6:20 (+ or - in your spirit)

2D. Mt. 17:21 (+ or - fasting)

5C. Removal of Historical Problems or perceived ones

Problem: Acts 15:32-33 seems to say Silas left Antioch  
yet 15:40 indicates he was still there

Solution: Acts 15:34 Silas stayed at Antioch still

Question: Was 15:34 later inserted to explain verse 33?

Acts 15:34 is not in Alex. or M<sup>pt</sup>

6C. OT quotes (not quoted exactly) and a scribe may know the vs. and alter it some

7C. Liturgical insertions or omissions

1D. The Lord's Prayer ending at Mt. 6

2D. The eunuch's baptismal profession

Acts 8:37

## WHAT TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHIES / METHODS DO BIBLE TRANSLATORS USE?

There are three commonly used methods or theories of Bible translation.

- 1) **Literal** (also called formal equivalent, verbal equivalent, or grammatical equivalent).
- 2) **Dynamic** (also called functional equivalent,<sup>8</sup> meaning based, or thought for thought).
- 3) **Paraphrase** (also called re-phrasing).

Every translation involves interpretation, but in the **literal** method, one tries to stay as close as possible to what the Hebrew and Greek text reads. Therefore, the literal translation (more than the others) permits the reader to be the interpreter of what it means. The source language is the focus of attention and, as Packer says, the translators make "a word-for-word and clause-for-clause correspondence with the original as far as possible."<sup>9</sup> Good grammar and clear sentences are still required.

In the **functional or dynamic equivalent** method, one tries to make the translation more accurate in contemporary meaning. The translators interpret<sup>10</sup> for the reader slightly more than they do in the literal translations. Therefore, one's opinion can overshadow what the original text says. Translators may place too much emphasis on translating phrases or total syntax (which can be subjective) rather than just words. Every translation has some dynamic equivalency and it sometimes improves the translation considerably. People who **paraphrase** put the Bible in different words altogether. They try to make it have the same meaning, but do not attempt a real translation.

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<sup>8</sup> See Nida and de Waard, *From One Language to Another* (Nashville: Nelson, 1986; John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Zondervan, 1984).

<sup>9</sup>See the discussion in J.I. Packer, "Thank God For Our Bibles," *Christianity Today*, October 27, 1997, pp. 30-31.

<sup>10</sup>All translation involves interpretation. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate*, p. 72, says "Criticism of a particular translation because it is based on an interpretation of a text is silly, because that could be said of every translation. If one wishes to criticize a translation because of the interpretation that undergirds it, one must rather say that the interpretation is faulty for such-and-such reasons, and provide a superior interpretation. . . every Bible translation reflects a theological reading of the text."

## **LITERAL, DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT, AND PARAPHRASE BIBLES**

This chart arranges the translations from the literal to the full paraphrase. Each one is more paraphrastic than the one above it. There are, of course, differences of opinion in arrangement.<sup>11</sup>

### **LITERAL**

1885 English Revised Version (ERV)  
1901 American Standard Version (ASV)  
1970 New American Standard Version (NASV)  
1982 New King James Version (NKJV)  
1611 King James Version (KJV)  
1917 The Holy Scriptures (Jewish)  
1952 Revised Standard Version (RSV)

### **LITERAL/DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT**

2000 English Standard Version (ESV)  
2000 Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB)  
1978 New International Version (NIV)  
1999 New English Version (NEV)  
1970 New American Bible (NAB)  
1997 New English Translation (NET)  
2000 International Standard Version (ISV)  
1996 New International Version Inclusive (NIVI)  
2001 Today's New International version (TNIV)  
1985 New Jerusalem Bible (NJB)  
1989 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

### **DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT**

1989 Revised English Bible (REB)  
1996 New Living Translation (NLT)  
1985 Tanakh: A New Translation (Jewish) (TANT)  
1970 New English Bible (NEB)  
1976 Today's English Version (TEV)  
1995 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

### **DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT/PARAPHRASE**

1995 God's Word (GW)  
1996 New Century Version (NCV)  
1958 Phillips Version (PHIL)

### **PARAPHRASE**

1993 The Message (TM)  
1971 Living Bible (LB)

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<sup>11</sup> Every translation has some paraphrase and dynamic equivalence. At Amos 4:4 the ASV, NASB, and NKJV translate the Hebrew word *yom* (means a 24-hour day with numbers) literally and read "three days." The KJV and NIV both interpret, using dynamic equivalence, "three years." God was mocking the Jews for disobedience.

## WHAT ARE THE GENDER-INCLUSIVE BIBLE VERSIONS?

Gender-inclusive versions<sup>12</sup> include new translations, revisions of previous translations, and lectionaries. Most were produced in the 1980s and 1990s and include the following, listed by date of first issue:

### GENDER-INCLUSIVE TRANSLATIONS

- 1) \*\* An Inclusive Language Lectionary (National Council of Churches, 1983)
- 2) New Jerusalem Bible (NJB - 1985)
- 3) New Century Version (NCV - 1986, 1987, 1988)
- 4) New American Bible (NAB - 1988 and 1990 revisions)
- 5) Revised English Bible (REB - 1989)
- 6) New Revised Standard Version (NRSV - 1989)
- 7) Good News Bible (GNB - 1992 revision)
- 8) The Message (1993)
- 9) The New International Reader's Version (1994, 1996, not 1998)
- 10) \*\* The Inclusive New Testament (Priests for Equality, 1994)
- 11) Contemporary English Version (CEV - 1995)
- 12) God's Word (GW - 1995)
- 13) New International Version Inclusive Language Edition (NIVI - 1995) (not in USA)
- 14) \*\* New Testament and Psalms, An Inclusive Version (Oxford University, 1995)
- 15) New Living Translation (NLT - 1996)<sup>13</sup>
- 16) Today's New International Version (TNIV - 2001, 2002)

\*\* = The radical feminist translations

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<sup>12</sup>Some of these translations are more extreme than others. For example, the 1989 NRSV, one of the first major gender-inclusive translations, has altered the text more than 4,000 times to make it gender-neutral (see Wayne Grudem's study in "Do Inclusive-Language Bibles Distort Scripture?" *Christianity Today* October 27, 1997, p. 32).

<sup>13</sup>The NLT and some of the others do not consider themselves as gender-inclusive, but gender-accurate. They try to detect where the text is not focusing on one gender and choose appropriate English phrasing to communicate it. While all translations have some gender-inclusive language, there is a distinction between those that make special efforts at gender-equality. For example, the NIVI and TNIV are gender-inclusive but the NIV is not.



## WHAT ARE THE MARKS OF A GOOD ENGLISH TRANSLATION?

There are several marks of a good English translation. These reflect the writer's views, but many will agree with them.

1) The translation should be done by a team rather than by an individual. This ensures checks and balances. Although Tyndale did a remarkable job, even his work would have benefited from a team of individuals with his ability.

2) The translators should all believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. Every translation involves interpretation and reflects some theological bias of its translators. There are no exceptions to this! Also, the translators should seek guidance from God and realize their reliance on Him. The translators should, of course, feel free to consult the opinions of experts in any area.

3) The translators should be experts in the original languages and should be knowledgeable of textual criticism and translation theory.

4) The translation should be fairly literal, but in good English.<sup>14</sup> Paraphrases such as The Living Bible frequently are not accurate translations of the Bible and should not be used as such. They only re-phrase what the Bible says and, thus, they are more subject to the views and biases of the translators. Dynamic equivalent translations, such as the NIV, sometimes make the Word of God clearer and are often easier to understand, especially to readers who are unfamiliar with the Bible. However, dynamic equivalent translators interpret more. For example, the Greek New Testament may read "those of the circumcision," and the literal translations (Tyndale, KJV, NKJV, NASB) will follow. The dynamic equivalent translations (such as the NIV) may just read "the Jews." In this case, the translators' and editors' interpretation was correct, but it is usually best to let readers have the interpretation duties.<sup>15</sup>

5) The translation must be in good English and be easy to read and understand. If it is too scholarly or academic, it will not be of use to the average reader. If it is too simple, it will omit truth. If it is too archaic, the grammar and word meanings will be different and misleading. If it is too modern or colloquial, it will not convey the dignity and the beauty frequently found in God's Word.

6) A translation should be based on the best Hebrew and Greek texts available. The best Hebrew text is the "Masoretic." Almost all Bibles use this text. There are strong differences of

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<sup>14</sup>See the chart "Literal, Dynamic Equivalent, and Paraphrase Bibles." The 1881 English Revised Version is an example of a translation that is too literal.

<sup>15</sup> It is again emphasized that this is not an easy task. On translation theory and philosophy, see Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969); Eugene A. Nida and Jan de Waard, *From One Language to Another*; Philip C. Stine, "Trends in Translation," *The Bible Translator* 46:1 (January 1995): 141-46.

opinion as to what is the best New Testament text, but solid textual support should be available for every word and phrase. The Alexandrian text is older and preferred by most modern translators. The Majority text is usually the most consistent and is abundantly represented in the manuscripts. The King James Version and the New King James Version are the only two widely used versions that follow the majority of Greek manuscripts (both follow the Textus Receptus, not the actual Majority text). No translation should be made from another translation.

7) No single printed Greek New Testament should be the only text followed. If only one text is followed, that fact should be clearly stated in the preface. For a good translation, the more significant textual decisions must be made only after considering other readings and evidence. The LXX, Latin Vulgate, or any other translation should never be followed without compelling reasons.

8) A good translation will use italics to indicate words not found in the Greek or Hebrew that have been added for clarification. These are only opinions of the translation and editorial committees, but they are often helpful and clarify meaning. If italics are not used, the fact should be stated and explained.

9) A good English translation will use a variety of synonyms, but will avoid local or regional expressions.

10) A good translation will have the same effect on its readers as the original had on the first readers. It will be acceptable in worship and will transform lives.

### **IS A PERFECT ENGLISH BIBLE TRANSLATION POSSIBLE?**

It is not possible for any person or group to produce a perfect translation of the Bible in any language. Every person, even when filled with the Holy Spirit, has less than perfect knowledge of the source languages, the target language, and the relation of the two (the translation process).

Every translation is flawed textually. It is impossible for any honest person to be certain of the best reading at every textual variant. Since no two Greek New Testament manuscripts agree fully, none of them can be considered 100% correct. Some Bible passages apparently have no known correct reading (e.g. 1 Sam. 13:1). Acts 20:28 has significant textual difficulties.

Historically, all good translators have acknowledged that their work was imperfect and only cultists and some unlearned people have believed otherwise. While sinful and fallible men and women cannot reproduce perfection in Bible translations, they have very often made excellent translations in many languages available to the populace. These are all indeed the Word of God. Jesus and the apostles had no problem using imperfect copies and an imperfect translation of the Old Testament. Modern believers must include an element of faith in their Bible; academic abilities are not sufficient. However, believers should learn all they can about how their Bible came to them.

## IMPORTANT EVENTS BETWEEN WYCLIFFE AND TYNDALE

1) The years 1378-1417 marked the "Great Schism" after the "Babylonian Captivity" (1309-1378). England and France in the West departed from the other parts of the Holy Roman Empire. There were two, and sometimes even three, popes at one time. Also, the general corruption in Roman Catholicism left many wondering where to find true Christianity.

2) In July of 1408, a British law made Bible translating illegal. A Constitution adopted by the Provincial Council at Oxford, it said, "The Holy Scripture is not to be translated into the vulgar tongue, nor a translation to be expounded, until it shall have been duly examined, under pain of excommunication and the stigma of heresy" (i.e. death). People were not allowed to read any Bible, pamphlet, book, or treatise by John Wycliffe. Therefore, the government (ecclesiastical authority) did censor and hinder Bible translation work, but thousands of Wycliffe Bibles, including most of the 200 known today, were copied anyway.

3) In 1453, the city of Constantinople fell. Thousands of Greek Christians fled to the West, and they took hundreds of NT Greek manuscripts with them. This promoted a revolution in Greek studies in the universities and made Greek manuscripts available to future believers.

4) In 1453, Johann Gutenberg invented the printing press with movable type. This would soon revolutionize learning, and thousands of English Bibles would be printed within a century. Gutenberg himself, though he gave man one of the best inventions ever, died a pauper.

5) By 1500, London had become a very prominent city, and this factor helped to stabilize the English language. 1500 is the beginning of the Modern English era, and about 50% of the people in England were literate at that time.

6) The combined witness of key men and groups such as John Wycliffe and the Lollards, John Huss and the Bohemian Brethren, Italian reformer Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498), and others affected many. The martyrdom and persecution of Christians from the 1380s to the 1520s also caused many to question organized religion and to believe in Christ for salvation. All of these helped set the stage for the Reformation and the many Bible translations of the 1520s-1530s.

7) In 1516, Erasmus published the Greek New Testament. This helped revolutionize Greek learning. However, even more significant, it was an important tool of the Reformation.

8) In 1517, the Protestant Reformation started with Martin Luther as leader. He had translated the NT into German (1522) when he became friends with William Tyndale during 1524. This encouraged Tyndale to finish translating the Bible into his own native language.

9) In 1522/1523, William Tyndale was tutoring two children of an affluent family. He became astonished at the ignorance of Scripture among Roman Catholic clergy (he was a priest also). God put a burning desire in him to "turn the Greek New Testament into English." Tyndale did more to give English speakers the Bible than any other person in history.

## EARLY ENGLISH BIBLES

TRANSLATIONS AND DATES	TRANSLATOR(S) AND EDITOR(S)	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Anglo-Saxon c. 900-1100	Various	A few attempts were made at English glosses using the Latin Vulgate.
Earlier and later Wycliffe c. 1382/1395	John Wycliffe and his associates	The first known English Bible, it was from a Latin Vulgate. The first was too Latinized. The second is "the Wycliffe Bible."
Tyndale Bible 1525	William Tyndale	1525 NT translated; 1526 published; 1530 Pentateuch finished; 1531 Jonah; 1534 Genesis revised; 1534 NT revised; 1535 NT revised; 1536 Joshua to 2 Chronicles translated
The Psalter 1530	Iohan Aleph	The first printed Psalter; it was made from Feline's Latin.
George Joye's 1534 edition	William Tyndale	George Joye made this unauthorized pirated edition of Tyndale.
Coverdale Bible 1535	Miles Coverdale	It is Tyndale's NT and Pentateuch. The rest was translated by Coverdale, mostly from the Latin and German.
Matthew Bible 1537	John Rogers	It is Tyndale's NT and Genesis to 2 Chronicles. The rest is Coverdale, but Rogers used Hebrew and Greek.
Taverner Bible 1539	Richard Taverner	This is a slight revision of the Matthew Bible.
Great Bible 1539	Miles Coverdale	This is a revision of the Matthew Bible and basis of the Bishops' Bible.
Jugge rev. of Tyndale 1552	Richard Jugge	He used Tyndale and the Great Bible. It was used for the 1557 Geneva NT.
Geneva NT 1557	William Wittingham	This is the first English NT to have numbered verses.
Geneva Bible 1560	Protestants in exile. Beza? Coverdale?	The NT is a revision of the 1557 ed. The Bible was well done and became the people's Bible for 80 years.
Bishops' 1568	Matthew Parker	The Great Bible was the basis. The Bishops' was the basis of the KJV.
Thompson NT 1576	Lawrence Thompson	This is a revision of the Geneva and often replaced it.
Rheims-Douai 1582; 1609/10	Gregory Martin	A Roman Catholic translation from the Vulgate, the NT was used by the KJV.
KJV 1611	54 scholars	Revised in 1629, 1638, 1762, 1769.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER (LUKE 11:2-4) IN HISTORIC ENGLISH VERSIONS**

### **Anglo-Saxon New Testament, 995**

Ure faeder, du de on heofone eart, si din nama gehalgod. To-cume din rice. Geweorde din willa on heofone, and on eorpan. Syle us to-daeg urne daeghwamlican hlaf. And forgyf us ure gyltas, swa we forgyfap aeleum dara de wid us agylt. And ne laed du us on costnunge, ac alys us fram yfele.

### **Wycliffe Bible, c. 1384**

Fadir, halewid be thi name. Thi kyngdom come to. zyue to vs to day oure eche dayes breed. And forzyue to vs oure synnes, as and we forzyuen to ech owynge to vs. And leed not vs in to temptacioun.

### **Tyndale New Testament, 1526**

Oure father which arte in heve, halowed be thy name. Lett thy kyngdo come. Thy will, be fulfillet, even in erth as it is in heven. Oure dayly breed geve vs this daye. And forgeve vs oure synnes: for even we forgeve every man that traspaseth vs, and ledde vs not into temptacio, Butt delliver vs from evyll Amen.

### **Rheims New Testament, 1582**

FATHER, sanctified be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Our daily bread giue vs this day, and forgiue vs our sinnes, for because our selues also doe forgiue euery one that is in debt to vs. And lead vs not into temptation.

### **King James Bible, 1611**

Our Father which art in heauen, Halowed be thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done as in heauen, so in earth. Giue vs day by day our dayly bread. And forgiue vs our sinnes: for we also forgiue euery one that is indebted to vs. And lead vs not into temptation, but deliuer vs from euill.

### **American Standard Version, 1901**

Father, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And bring us not into temptation.

## THE KJV - AN OVERVIEW

### **King James I of England (r. 1603-1625), VI of Scotland**

Scottish Presbyterian background  
Bishop (Episcopal System necessary)  
The man - his morals and character

### **Hampton Court Conference January 1604**

Military petition  
John Rainolds suggestions

### **The process of translation**

54 scholars in six teams (Cambridge, Oxford, Westminster)  
12 revisors  
Two (Miles Smith and Thomas Bilson) oversaw the printing  
Robert Barker, printer and copyright holder

### **A revision of the Bishops' Bible**

Non-bound Bishops' Bibles were printed  
Fifth revision of Tyndale's New Testament  
Based on the 1598 TR  
Completed in 1611

### **Not received at first**

Geneva Bible favored 1560-1660  
Parish churches; KJV was "official Bible"

### **King James Version revisions**

1629  
1638  
1762 - Thomas Paris  
1769 - Benjamin Blaney  
1833 - Noah Webster's edition  
1873 - Cambridge Paragraph Bible by F.H.A. Scrivener  
Word changes (handout)  
Selected readings (handout)

### **Other information**

Paragraph Markers (¶) Stopped at Acts 20:36  
Mt. 23:24 "strain at a gnat"  
Apocrypha in 1611  
What is KJVO?  
Reasons KJV is still a good Bible and why many use it

## JESUS IS CALLED "GOD" (ΘΕΟΣ)

This chart displays which of 21 key English New Testaments say Jesus is God in 11 passages. The + indicates Jesus is equated to or called God. The - shows Jesus is not called God.

NEW TESTAMENT	John 1:1	John 1:18	John 20:28	Acts 20:28	Rom. 9:5	2 Th 1:12	1 Ti 3:16	Tit. 2:13	Heb. 1:8	2 Pet 1:1	1 Jn 5:20	Total +
Tyndale 1525	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	7
KJV 1611	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	6
RV 1881	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	5
ASV 1901	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	4
Moffat 1926	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	3
Goodspeed 1931	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	+	5
RSV 1946	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	6
NWT 1950	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	2
NASB 1963	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	8
TEV 1966	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	5
NEB 1970	+	-	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	7
Living 1971	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	7
NIV 1973	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	9
NKJV 1979	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	9
REB 1989	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	5
NRSV 1990	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	6
MESSAGE 1993	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	8
CEV 1995	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	6
NLT 1996	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	10
ISV 1999	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	10
ESV 2001	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	10
Total (+)	16	7	21	11	7	3	5	13	18	15	20	
Total (-)	5	14	0	10	14	18	16	8	3	6	1	

In John 1:18, Acts 20:28, and 1 Timothy 3:16, textual variations determine the reading.

In John 1:18 and Acts 20:28 the Alexandrian text calls Jesus God, but in 1 Timothy 3:16 the Majority text has him as God. 1 John 5:20 is difficult from any point of view. For a detailed study, see Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992).

## NAMES AND TITLES<sup>20</sup> OF JESUS - FREQUENCY

NAME AND TITLES	KJV	NKJV	NASB	NIV	NRSV
JESUS	980	980	986	1275	1000
CHRIST	555	569	521	564	564
JESUS CHRIST	189	185	134	132	136
LORD JESUS	115	116	101	101	103
LORD JESUS CHRIST	81	81	63	60	62
CHRIST JESUS	58	69	86	86	83
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD	9	7	5	5	5
JESUS OUR LORD	7	9	12	10	10
CHRIST JESUS OUR LORD	5	7	7	7	7
CHRIST THE SON OF GOD	5	5	4	4	1
CHRIST JESUS THE LORD	2	2	1	0.00	1
CHRIST THE LORD	2	2	1.00	1	0.00
JESUS THE LORD	2	2	1	0.00	1
JESUS CHRIST IS LORD	1	1	1.00	1	1
JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD	1	1	1.00	1	1
JESUS THE SON OF GOD	1	1	1.00	1	1
JESUS CHRIST THE LORD	1	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
LORD CHRIST	1	1	2	2	2
SON OF GOD JESUS CHRIST	1	1	0.00	1	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2040</b>	<b>1927</b>	<b>2251</b>	<b>1979</b>

<sup>20</sup>The chart shows the total number of times that these 19 names and/or titles of Christ are found in the five New Testaments listed above - listed according to their frequency in the KJV. Each one contains the word Jesus or Christ. The numbers reflect repeats of some names or titles. Thus, "Jesus" would be counted under Jesus, Jesus Christ, Lord Jesus, and others.



## WHAT WERE THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE NKJV TRANSLATORS?

The NKJV translators were to preserve as much of the KJV as possible. They were to use the Masoretic Hebrew text in the OT and the Textus Receptus Greek text in the NT. Farstad notes, "to accomplish these goals, the following guidelines were followed:

### GUIDELINES OF THE NKJV TRANSLATORS

- 1) Retain all doctrinal and theological words unless the Greek or Hebrew clearly indicates otherwise.
- 2) Retain words for items no longer in current use (i.e., *chariot* or *phylacteries*).
- 3) Correct all departures from the Textus Receptus.
- 4) Words that have changed meaning since 1611 should be replaced by their modern equivalents.
- 5) Archaic idioms should be replaced by modern equivalents.
- 6) Words and expressions that have become vulgar or indelicate in current English usage should be replaced by their proper equivalent.
- 7) Alter punctuation to conform with that currently used.
- 8) Change all Elizabethan pronouns, verb forms, and words having "-eth" endings to their current equivalent.
- 9) Attempt to keep King James word order. However, when comprehension or readability is affected, transpose or revise sentence structure.
- 10) Eliminate the inordinate usage of the auxiliary verb "shall." Follow current grammatical style for these changes.
- 11) Attempt to keep sentences reasonably short without affecting text or meaning.
- 12) Attempt to use words that avoid misunderstanding.
- 13) When making corrections, use other words already represented by the same Greek or Hebrew word in the KJV, if possible.
- 14) Capitalize all personal pronouns referring to deity.
- 15) Proper names should agree with Old Testament when possible.
- 16) All obsolete and archaic words as defined by one or more recognized dictionaries should be replaced by their current equivalents. This applies to phrases and idioms."

Farstad (*The NKJV in the Great Tradition* Nashville: Nelson, 1979), pp. 34-35, then adds, "In addition, after the printing of the first edition of the NKJV New Testament in 1979 (which used no italics), the King James tradition of italicizing supplied words was restored by popular demand of the readers." This practice of using italics was started by John Calvin's cousin Pierre Robert Olivetan in his 1535 Waldensian (French) translation. The 1560 Geneva Bible was the first printed English Bible to use italics consistently for the same purpose.

## **SINCE THE NKJV AND THE NIV ARE MODERN TRANSLATIONS, WHY DO THEY READ DIFFERENTLY?**

The New King James New Testament is the only modern (and widely used) English translation that is based on the Textus Receptus, the same Greek text as the King James version.<sup>22</sup> It is, therefore, a little difficult to compare the New King James Version with other modern translations. The New King James Version is an accurate literal translation of the Bible. The translating committee did not change the King James when, in their opinion, it did not need to be changed, but they did translate from the Greek and Hebrew Testaments. They did not just upgrade the English grammar and vocabulary of the King James Version. Therefore, the NKJV is indeed the fifth revision of the KJV, but it can be considered a completely new translation. Overall, the NKJV is very well done. However in some places it is more accurate but lacks the beauty of the KJV.<sup>23</sup>

The NKJV and the NIV read differently because they are based on different texts in the New Testament. The NIV follows an eclectic text very much like the UBS4/NA27. It does abandon these in favor of the Byzantine text and other readings on numerous occasions. The NKJV New Testament is based on the Textus Receptus. This explains the textual differences. Another reason the NKJV and NIV are different is that they were made using different translation philosophies. The NKJV is a literal (word for word) translation and the NIV is more of a dynamic equivalent (thought for thought) translation. Both of these Bibles were translated by evangelical scholars.

## **SINCE THE KJV AND THE NKJV ARE FROM THE SAME TEXTS, WHY DO THEY READ DIFFERENTLY?**

The main reason the KJV and NKJV are different is due to changes in the English language over the past 400 years. When the KJV was made (1604-1611) archaic English was frequently used for the desired effect. Thus, some of the KJV language is more than 500 years old. Out of date words, idioms, and punctuation are brought up to date in the NKJV. There are

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<sup>22</sup> On the background, production, and text of the NKJV, see Farstad, *The New King James Version in the Great Tradition*. Despite some claims to the contrary, the NKJV OT and NT are definitely from the same texts as the KJV.

<sup>23</sup>The NKJV was to follow the word order and flow of the KJV as much as possible.

extremely few changes due to textual differences. The NKJV follows the same Masoretic text in the OT<sup>24</sup> and Textus Receptus in the NT even more closely than the KJV.

### **ARE THERE DIFFICULTIES OR MISTAKES IN THE NKJV?**

The King James Version and the New King James Version both have some difficulties. For example, in the New King James, one will find the word "minas." It is a transliteration of the Greek word μνᾶ - *mna* which is found 10 times in Luke 19. Since *mna* (or *mina*) is not an English word, most readers do not know what it means. They should have translated the word as a day's wage, a coin, a piece of money, or something like that.<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, words in the King James Version, like the word "pound" (a translation of *mna*) have nothing whatsoever to do with the modern English pound. Any dollar bill figure put in any version would be out of date immediately because of inflation. The New King James Version has problems, as all versions do, but it is definitely one of the best modern translations available. The NKJV translators acknowledged that they could not produce a flawless Bible.

On some rare occasions, the NKJV adjusts the literal translation because of contextual reasons. For example, Hosea 10:5 reads "calves" in Hebrew, but the passage has the singular pronoun "it" referring to calves four times. Here the NKJV has "calf" to agree with the pronouns in the context and a marginal explanation is given.

Like the original KJV, the NKJV sometimes uses marginal notes or paraphrase to explain these difficult areas. A New Testament example is Mark 2:15. Jesus was dining in Levi's house. The Greek text literally says "as he reclined in his house." The NKJV clarifies "as He was dining in *Levi's* house." To explain whose house Jesus dined (literally "reclined") in, the NKJV removes "his" and adds "*Levi's*" in italics. The KJV also had trouble with this verse and added, with no italics, the word "Jesus." It reads "As Jesus sat at meat in his house."

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<sup>24</sup>James D. Price, "The False Witness of G.A. Riplinger's 'Death Certificate for the NKJV'" (unpublished paper of July 12, 1996) says this of the NKJV Old Testament text, "the NKJV translators followed the Bomberg [1524-1525] edition whenever it differed from the Stuttgart." Price was the Executive Old Testament editor of the NKJV.

<sup>25</sup> A translator's guideline was to retain biblical names for units of money. An explanatory note about the monetary value of "minas" was put in the margin. The reader may be interested to note that the word "money" comes from the Greek word μνᾶ - *mna*.

## SELECT PROBLEMS IN VARIOUS BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

### **TEXTUAL PROBLEMS**

- ALL** 1 Sam. 13:1 All Hebrew manuscripts have an omission. The correct reading is not known for certain.
- KJV** Isa. 13:15 "joined" - This has no manuscript evidence. The Hebrew has "captured."
- KJV,NKJV** Mk. 3:32 "and thy sisters" -
- NIV,NASB** These important words are omitted from the TR, Alexandrian text, and these four translations, but are in the Majority text.
- KJV/NKJV** Jn. 14:14 "me" - This is omitted. [It is in part of the Majority text.]
- KJV/NKJV** Acts 9:5b-6a - This is not found in Greek mss. Erasmus said he imported it from Acts 26:14.
- KJV/NKJV** 1 Jn. 5:7b-8a - This is in only four late manuscripts.
- KJV/NKJV** Rev. 16:5 "shalt be" - This reading is in no Greek manuscript. Beza put it in his text, speculating that "holy one" was incorrect. Earlier English Bibles and Greek texts correctly had "holy one."
- KJV/NKJV** Rev. 17:8 "and yet is" - This reading came about because of a mistake in Erasmus' Greek NT. All Greek manuscripts have "and shall come."
- KJV/NKJV** Rev. 22:19 "book of life" - This is found in no Greek mss.; all have "tree of life."

### **ARCHAIC AND WORD PROBLEMS**

- KJV** Prov. 11:15 "He that is surety for a stranger will smart *for it*: and he that hateth suretiship is sure."
- NKJV** Lk. 19:13-25 "minas" - This English transliterated word has no meaning.

- KJV** Rom. 9:25 "Osee" - He is Hosea.
- KJV** 2 Cor. 6:12 "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels."
- KJV** 1 Thess. 4:15 "prevent" - Now the meaning is precede.

### **TRANSLATION PROBLEMS**

- NASB** Mt. 5:15 "the peck measure" - This is technically accurate, but unknown and pedantic English; KJV has bushel.
- KJV** Mt. 23:24 "strain at a gnat" - The Greek and the earlier English versions had "strain out a gnat." The error had been corrected in three KJV revisions.
- KJV** Mk. 7:11 (& Mt. 15:6) "*he shall be free*" - By a clear misunderstanding, the KJV translators added these italicized words. These words are not in Greek or earlier English versions, do not need to be added, and make no sense in this verse.
- KJV** Tit. 2:13 This weakens the deity of Jesus. See the NASB, NIV, & NKJV.
- KJV** 2 Pet. 1:1 This weakens the deity of Jesus. Some translations are clearer.

### **INDELICATE PASSAGES**

- LB** 1 Sam. 20:30 "you son of a bitch"
- KJV** 1 Sam. 25:22, 34; 1 Ki. 14:10; 16:11; 21:21 "pisseth against the wall"
- KJV** 2 Ki. 18:27; Isa. 36:12 "drink their own piss"
- KJV** SOS. 5:4 "my bowels were moved for him"

## **THEOLOGY - WHAT WE BELIEVE**

### **What is revelation?**

Revelation is the actual process or activity in which God gave (revealed) information about himself and other matters to mankind. It has involved both natural, as the created star-filled sky (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:18-21) and supernatural communication from God to man. Not all of God's revealed information became inspired Scripture. God used dreams and other methods to communicate (Heb. 1:1). Sometimes God revealed information by direct speech (Ex. 33:11). The most important revelation process, the one by which God gave the Scriptures, was to use his special holy men (prophets, apostles, and others) as infallibly directed and superintended by the Holy Spirit to write the Bible words (2 Pet. 1:21).

Revelation refers to the ways in which God gave (revealed) his Word, but revealing it is not enough; inspiration of the selected words from God's special revelation (the Bible) finished the job. Both revelation (the communication process) and inspiration (insuring the inerrant quality of the product) involved supernatural acts of God. Revelation and inspiration are closely related, and one cannot be fully understood and appreciated without the other. It might be helpful to think of revelation as God's act of giving his Word and inspiration as God's act of sealing his Word with perfection and inerrancy.<sup>26</sup>

### **What does biblical inspiration mean?**

Inspiration<sup>27</sup> describes the quality of the Bible that resulted when God gave the Scriptures. The English phrase "given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16 - KJV) is a rendering of the single Greek word θεόπνευστος - *theopneustos*, which is found only here in the New Testament. 2 Timothy 3:16 literally declares that "all Scripture is God-breathed." Inspiration is God's part in giving the Scriptures. Thus the Bible is the product of both man and God. Dual authorship of

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<sup>26</sup>It is not possible to know the exact process of either.

<sup>27</sup>See Louis Igoe Hodges, "Evangelical Definitions of Inspiration: Critiques and a Suggested Definition," *Journal of The Evangelical Theological Society* 37:1 (March 1994): 99-114. Hodges gives a good overview of the problems of making a statement on inspiration, and he gives the essential parts of many such statements of faith. See also, Warren Vanhetloo, "Indications of Verbal Inspiration," *Calvary Baptist Theological Journal* 5:1 (Spring 1989): 63-85.

Scripture may be called confluent or concurrent inspiration.<sup>28</sup> Since God is in a real sense the author of Scripture, this guarantees that there could have been no flaws or errors in the Scriptures which he gave.

Inspiration refers to both the source and quality of the written product (the Bible words), not the writers, paper, or ink. The Greek word θεόπνευστος - *theopneustos* is an adjective<sup>29</sup> that describes the quality of Scripture. Verbal inspiration means the very words that God gave are inspired. Plenary inspiration means the entire Bible (every original word) is inspired. This also means the exact wording is inspired.<sup>30</sup> The Holy Spirit sovereignly moved (guided, directed, or led) the writers (2 Pet. 1:21) so that they wrote without error as he directly inspired the words and sentences they wrote. The exact words and even letters that God directly inspired are forever settled and cannot be changed (Ps. 119:89). They are flawless because the God who gave them is flawless.

Though the meaning is quite different, it may be helpful to think of inspiration as God's stamp of approval or guarantee of inerrancy, because inspiration describes the very nature of Scripture. The Bible is his product and any copy or translation that accurately says the same thing the original Bible said is also the inspired Word of God.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>On the dual authorship of Scripture, see the basic but helpful discussion in Edward W. Goodrick, *Is My Bible the Inspired Word of God?* (Portland: Multnomah, 1988), pp. 16-27. Words like confluent, conjoint, and concurrent are used to describe dual or joint authorship.

<sup>29</sup>The noun θεοπνευστία - *theopneustia* is not found in the Greek New Testament.

<sup>30</sup>The grammar and meaning were inspired along with the words. This means that the Bible is fully inspired and yet the same words without the Bible are not inspired. Thus, Paul's comment in Titus 1:12 about the Cretans is inspired, but the same words he quoted, as found in Epimenides' *de Oraculis* (or other writings) are not. See Goodrick, *Is My Bible the Inspired Word of God?*, pp. 77-83. He notes on page 79 that "Verbal inspiration simply does not survive translation. *But meaning can and does.*" Actually verbal inspiration and meaning both can and do survive the translation process, but because it is impossible to translate exactly from one language to another, neither can do so perfectly. See Chapter Eight. Detailed discussions can be found in Kevin L. McCune, "The Relationship of the Doctrine of Inspiration to Copies and Transportations of the Autographs," Master of Divinity thesis, Central Baptist Seminary, 1981.

<sup>31</sup>Direct Holy Spirit inspiration (sometimes referred to as verbal inspiration) applies only to the originally written words. Copiers and translators have all erred and were not supernaturally kept from making mistakes. The word "accurately," as used in the paragraph above, allows a variety of words to be translated from the same original Greek word. It does not mean flawless or incapable of being improved. Thus, every good translation (such as Tyndale, KJV, NASB, NKJV, and others in English) is definitely the inspired Word of God, but when they read differently, each one is more or less accurate than the others and none is directly or verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit. No translation is or ever will be perfect or flawless. All can be improved.

## What is Bible preservation?

Preservation is a providential act of God in which he made sure that his inspired Word (the Bible) would be carefully and faithfully copied and transmitted through the centuries. God chose to use imperfect men, not unfallen and infallible angels, to preserve his Word. Preservation does not mean God perfectly preserved every word and letter of the Bible in any particular manuscript, copy, document, textual family, translation, edition, revision, or on any one piece of writing material. But it does mean that God's revealed truth is preserved in the written inspired scriptures. Also, only the words are important and preserved, not the original paper and ink. Inspiration was achieved by a direct miraculous act of God, and therefore the original was, and is, just as infallible, perfect, unchangeable, and inerrant as God himself. Nothing in the originally given Scriptures could be improved upon.<sup>32</sup> However, preservation is always achieved by human endeavor, under the providential care of God.<sup>33</sup> When Jeremiah's scribe Baruch had to rewrite a portion of what would become the Bible (Jer. 36:20-32), God insured that the supernaturally inspired words, which were more extensive than the destroyed ones, were included. Providence brought about the situation, and God used sinful men to produce his perfect book. The rewriting was providential. The inspiration was a miracle.

It has pleased God to use mere men and women as his instruments to do things such as proclaim the gospel and preserve his written Word.<sup>34</sup> God never guaranteed (or even hinted) that any scribes, copiers, engravers, readers, printers, translators, revisors, or editors would be flawless, but he has used all of these to preserve his Word. Roger Nicole wisely stated, "variances in the transmissional forms . . . merely indicate that God has surrendered his own

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<sup>32</sup>It does not appear, however, that any copiers or translators were infallible, or inerrant. Yet God has made preservation a Christian responsibility. See William D. Barrick, "Ancient Manuscripts and Biblical Exposition," *The Master's Seminary Journal* 9:1 (Spring 1998): 25-38.

<sup>33</sup>Some have thought that belief in providential preservation of the miraculously inspired Scriptures (i.e. the inerrant autograph view) is a twentieth century doctrine. See Theodore P. Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text* (Philadelphia: The Institute for Renaissance and Reformed Biblical Studies, 1997). However the 2nd London Confession (1677) says "the OT in Hebrew . . . and the NT in Greek . . . being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and Providence kept pure . . . in all Ages." This understanding of inerrant autographs is the historic Christian view.

<sup>34</sup>The Bible continually warns about tampering with, adding to, or removing from God's Word. See Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19. These commands all show that preserving the Bible is a human responsibility; people could modify or destroy it. They also show that preservation is by God's providence, not by a miraculous act. No Bible on earth has ever been produced, preserved, or proclaimed apart from human effort.

Word to the ordinary process of human transmission."<sup>35</sup> With approximately 6,000 extant (known to exist) New Testament Greek manuscripts and 20,000 manuscripts of ancient versions, God's preservation is obvious.<sup>36</sup> Today, God's Word is preserved in its entirety or in part in 2,000 different languages. Approximately 400 of them boast a complete Bible.

Young Timothy was raised on the Scriptures (Old Testament) which were inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:16). It is unlikely that anyone in his generation had ever seen an original Hebrew Old Testament manuscript. Even though he presumably used an imperfect Greek translation of the Hebrew, he still had the preserved Scriptures. When Paul said that all Scripture was God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16) he was simply reminding Timothy that the Holy Bible (in their case, the Old Testament) is God's inspired book, and that it was preserved and available for Timothy to use in the ministry. Paul was speaking about preservation as much as inspiration. Likewise today every accurate translation and copy, though slightly different,<sup>37</sup> is a preservation of the Word of God. Preservation protects and continues, but does not perfect.

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<sup>35</sup>Roger Nicole, "Fallible Manuscripts-Infallible Autographs," a paper presented to the Southeastern section of the Evangelical Theological Society, 1987, p. 4. It is not for Christians to ask why God did not miraculously preserve copies and translations of the Bible any more than it is to ask why no one ever preaches a perfect sermon. One's faith in the Bible is based on the words of Jesus as to its truthfulness, not in the certainty and infallibility of sinful and imperfect copiers and translators.

<sup>36</sup>This has long been an argument for inspiration and preservation. See Beacham and Bauder, *One Bible Only?*. Also in the Introduction (pp. 9-12), McLachlan says they see the large number of manuscripts "as God's way of preserving the integrity and accuracy of His Word on planet earth."

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Any two good copies of 1 John are both the Word of God. Likewise, any two editions of the KJV or NKJV (though slightly different) are still the Word of God. Two Bibles may read "he had" and "ye had" respectively in Jeremiah 34:16, and both be the Word of God. The 1769 edition of the KJV had thousands of changes from the first 1611 edition. Scores of these were real word changes, but both the 1611 and the 1769 are still the Word of God.



## TESTIMONY

### THE SECOND LONDON CONFESSION OF 1677

"The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving Knowledge, Faith, and Obedience; . . . for the better preserving, and propagating of the Truth . . . The Books commonly called Apocrypha not being of Divine inspiration, are no part of the Canon (or rule) of the Scripture . . . . The Authority of the Holy Scripture . . . is to be received, because it is the Word of God. . . . The Old Testament in *Hebrew* . . . and the New Testament in *Greek* . . . being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and Providence kept pure in all Ages, are therefore authentic; so as in all controversies of Religion, the Church is finally to appeal unto them. . . . They are to be translated into the vulgar language of every Nation."

**Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)** was the Prince of Preachers and a leading Baptist in England.

Spurgeon had a very high view of inspiration of the original writings of Scripture and argued against those who said the use of human writers lessened their infallibility.

Spurgeon felt that the ERV was more accurate (both textually and in translation) than the KJV on some occasions. In a message on 1 John 3:1-2 on July, 1885, he said the words "and we are" (in the Alexandrian text and therefore in the ERV) were original. He added, "A genuine fragment of inspired scripture has been dropped by our old [KJV] translators" (MTP -32: sermon #1934).

**The following quotations are all from the *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*.**

"I do not hesitate to say that I believe that there is no mistake whatever in the original Holy Scriptures from beginning to end. There may be, and there are, mistakes of translation; for translators are not inspired" (35:257).

"Oh, brethren, it were better to die, that book being true, than to live, that book being false" (12:278).

"I accept the inspiration of the Scriptures as a fact" (34:152).

"If I did not believe in the infallibility of Scripture--the absolute infallibility of it from cover to cover, I would never enter this pulpit again" (36:9).

"We will not have it that God, in his holy book, makes mistakes about matters of history or of science, any more than he does upon the great truths of salvation. If the Lord be God, he must be infallible" (37:159-160).

"We believe in plenary, verbal inspiration, with all its difficulties" (45:21).

"By the grace of God, from this confidence [in the Bible] I shall never be moved" (45:39).

"Scripture never errs" (54:206).

"We must settle in our minds that the Word of God must certainly be true, absolutely infallible" (55:242).

"I fail to see how the sense of Scripture can be inspired if the words in which that sense is expressed are not also inspired. I believe that the very words, in the original Hebrew and Greek, were revealed from heaven" (57:187).

"Men talk of the 'mistakes of Scripture.' I thank God that I have never met with any. Mistakes of translation there may be, for translators are men. But mistakes of the original word there never can be, for the God who spoke it is infallible, and so is every word he speaks" (39:195).

