

DEFENDING THE BIBLE'S CREDIBILITY
"Part II: Answering Challenges From 'Lower Criticism':
B. Addressing Concerns About The Bible's English Translations

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) After I met with a pastor several years ago in Plainville, he handed me a book by William P. Grady, entitled Final Authority. On page 317 of that book, Mr. Grady has written this statement: "The King James Bible has been preserved by God to be propagated by man!"

That statement creates a problem for us at Nepaug Church, for, **according to this pastor in Plainville and Mr. Grady's book, the Church Board and I failed you by putting New International Version texts and not King James Version texts in these pews!**

(2) In fact, a believer once told me that she had heard that the New International Version has been called the "New Age" Bible! That is amazing to me as my Hebrew prof at Dallas Seminary, Dr. Kenneth Barker, is the General Editor of the NIV!

Well, are the people of Nepaug Church getting some "New Age" error promoted their way because their pastor was trained under the General Editor of the New International Version?!

(3) On the other hand, the Christian magazine World ran several stories in the April through June, 1997 issues on an apparent effort by the NIV officials to print an alleged "gender neutral" Bible. Wayne Grudem, Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (M. Div., Westminster Sem.; Ph. D. in N.T. from Cambridge Un.) in the April 19, 1997 issue of World complained that the NIV wanted to change the "he-him-his" words to "we" or "you" or "they". Thus, whenever the English reader looked at the text, he would never know if these words were the original reading God caused His Word to say, or what the translators decided it should say. Grudem complained that "Once evangelical translators give in to the principle of changing what the Bible says in order to make it acceptable to our culture, the demands for changes will never end."

Since then, under pressure, the NIV officials have withdrawn their effort to print such a translation in America, and have decided to leave the NIV as our pew Bibles were printed!

Well, if the NIV officials were tempted to go with an alleged "gender neutral" version, and withdrew that idea under pressure from the Christian community, how do we know that our NIV pew Bible is all that CREDIBLE?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "Some warn that the New International Version which we have in our Church pews is a 'New Age Bible' and allege that the King James Version is the translation GOD sanctions! Well, is there a God-approved English translation, and HOW do we KNO W?!"

- I. **Though we know the 66-book Bible is God's Word, challenges face us WITHIN its books that involve "lower" or "textual criticism"!**
- II. **ONE challenge is that some Christians favor one WHOLE text type of manuscripts over others, leading them to accept one ENGLISH VERSION as God's Word and reject the others as erroneous!**
 - A. The King James Version promoters say that the Textus Receptus manuscript (ms) from which it is translated, being of the Byzantine text type is superior as it represents those readings used by the *majority* of Christians **throughout** history, M. King, Bib. Sac., 130:517, p. 36.
 - B. Their concerns are somewhat justified: the Revised Standard Version substitutes "maid" for "virgin" in Isa. 7:14 as some translators denied Christ's virgin birth! Other paraphrases sometimes *doctrinally* err!
 - C. The New International Version uses the "best" readings from **all** of the text types, and make its translation *smooth*, so some view it as *evil*!
- III. **Well, examining the facts, we can readily clarify the route to take!**
 - A. Any English translation of the Bible's mss cannot be inspired Scripture.
 1. We can show how **no** English version can *exactly* interpret the mss:
 - a. In Mark 12:18-27, Jesus countered the Sadducean denial of the resurrection: (a) They taught the soul ceased existing at death, leaving no soul to raise! (b) Jesus quoted God's Ex. 3:6 claim that "I *am* the God of Abraham, Isaac & Jacob." (c) This proved that these men **still existed** though long since **dead**!
 - b. However, the **verb "am"** is **italicized** in both passages in the *KJV* because it is **not written**, for "am" is an *elliptical verb both in the Ex. 3:6 Hebrew and the Mark 12:26 Greek!* (F. Blass and A. Debrunner, A Greek Grammar of the N.T., p. 71)
 - c. Thus, the **point** Jesus makes **has to be paraphrased** by our supplying the **English** word "am" or we miss the **point** of His argument that these deceased patriarchs **still existed** after death!
 2. So, due to the limitations of human languages, verbal inspiration can technically cover only the Bible's **autograph manuscripts!**
 - B. The argument asserting God inspired the Textus Receptus is in error:

1. According to Harold Hoehner, Th. D., DTS and Ph. D., Cam. Un., the KJV's Byzantine text type was not used by the **majority** of believers of the 3rd century A.D. - the **Alexandrian** text type was! Thus, the argument of II,A backing the Textus Receptus as inspired fails, for it was **not** the majority text **throughout** Church History!
 2. 1 Jn. 5:7b-8a in the KJV's Textus Receptus appears in no Greek mss except for a few obvious translations from **late Latin** mss, Ryr. St. Bi., KJV, fn. Thus, the **KJV's 1 Jn. 5:7b-8a** is **not** Scripture!
 3. The oldest known Greek N.T. manuscript, the Ryland fragment, is **Alexandrian** in type, countering claims for the divine inspiration of the Textus Receptus & its **Byzantine** text type, *Ibid.*, King, p. 39!
 4. Also, the KJV was **opposed** by the Puritan American **forefathers**!
 - a. England's King James VI upset our Puritan forefathers by mixing Roman Catholic ritual with their theology to help the Anglicans.
 - b. When this same king created his own 1611 King James Version, these Puritan Congregationalists were so troubled that this, along with other issues, moved them to leave for America on the Mayflower, W. Walker, A Hist. of the Christian Ch., p. 407-409!
 5. Any **English** reader can tell that the KJV exhibits itself to be faulty!
 - a. The KJV in Job 36:33 reads as, "The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapor," a rendering that doesn't even make **sense**! [NIV = "His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach."]
 - b. Where anything doesn't make **sense**, 1 Cor. 14:9 says it does **not convey truth**. So, Job 36:33 in the KJV is a **faulty** translation!
- C. Thus, building on last week's sermon, we use the best of **all** readings:
1. We learned last sermon that no doctrine rests on any **uninspired** ms **copy's variant** reading so that by using all of the ms **copies** under the Spirit's help, even **immature** believers can know (1 Jn. 2:18, 20, 27) and keep (2 Tim. 1:13-14) God's Word. Jesus' prophecy re: 20th century believers doing just that in Rev. 3:8, 10 confirms this!
 2. Well, since the KJV, NIV and NASB **together** well represent the doctrinal variations of the mss acc. to input to me by scholars and my own conclusion of 31 years of study, and since the NIV reveals the **best** research, I would use these **three** versions, giving a **slight** preference for the NIV. **Yet, let the Spirit guide you! (Jn. 16:13)**

Lesson Application: (1) According to Jesus Christ, we 20th century conservatives **HAVE** the Word so as to be able to **KEEP** its truth in our hearts and lives, Rev. 3:8, 10. (2) We **DO** so by (a) **GAINING** the indwelling Holy Spirit by faith in Christ for salvation (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 8:14) and (b) leaning upon Him for His help, 2 Tim. 2:13-14.

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

We can illustrate how the Holy Spirit through the Word can lead us into "all truth," **and keep** us there. Let me to illustrate re: the NIV "gender neutral" issue and another event of this week.

(1) You will recall that I told you that my first Hebrew professor at Dallas Seminary was Kenneth Barker, the General Editor of the NIV. I am indebted to him for his ministry to me in teaching me Hebrew, and of his press on us as students to study God's Word.

Well, keep in mind that when the "gender neutral" push from the NIV came, I got up behind this pulpit and **warned** you about it even though Kenneth Barker at that time was still the NIV General Editor. **The point is this: If the Holy Spirit would lead me to stand before you publicly OPPOSED to what my seminary Hebrew professor advocated in his support of the "gender neutral" NIV as its General Editor, the Holy Spirit can work in YOU to convince YOU of the truth out of the many mistranslations that occur in English Bibles, and that REGARDLESS of MY opinion!**

(2) Another event occurred this week that shows that God the Holy Spirit can lead **you** to convince **you** of the truth from the Bible.

Last Wednesday evening's Prayer Meeting study hosted a discussion out of Matthew 24 where Jesus predicted the separation of the sheep from the goats. Matthew 24:46 shows that the sheep end up going into eternal life where the goats go to everlasting punishment.

Well, one of those attending the Prayer Meeting **thought** that I had taught that the Sheep were the Jews and the Goats were the Gentiles so that the Jews would gain eternal life and the Gentiles would go to hell! This party didn't know Greek, but that issue **bothered** them until they called me Friday in my office, asking for a clarification!

I was glad to share that the sheep and goats are believing and unbelieving **nations** of people, groups whose treatment **of** the Jew in the Matthew 24 Tribulation Period would show their faith or lack of faith in Christ. When I clarified this, the party was **relieved**. I **also** told the party that their **unrest** was a **good** sign, for it revealed the **Holy Spirit's REFUSING** to let them **accept** what was **ERROR**!

As we've said, EVERY believer can KNOW what God's Word says (1 John 2:18, 20, 27) and can KEEP it (2 Tim. 1:13-14).