

REVISITING A DEFENSE OF THE BIBLE'S CREDIBILITY

Part II - Answering Challenges From "Lower Criticism"

B. Answering The Challenge Of The Bible's Versions

(2 Timothy 1:13-14; Mark 4:24-25; Jeremiah 3:15)

I. Introduction

- A. We have learned in this series that we can trust our 66-book Bible to be God's Word, but since the autograph manuscripts were written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, most of us rely on translations for the Bible's truth.
- B. Some claim that the King James Version (KJV) is a *divinely inspired version* and *thus* the *only version to use*, so English readers may wonder *what is* the *correct* version(s), and *why*, an issue we address in this lesson:

II. Answering The Challenge Of The Bible's Versions, 2 Timothy 1:13-14; Mark 4:24-25; Jeremiah 3:15.

- A. Due to the *limits* of *human* languages, *no translation* of the *autograph manuscripts can be divinely inspired*:
 - 1. We can illustrate how **no** language of the **Bible** can be *word-for-word* translated into **English** (as follows):
 - a. In Mark 12:18-27, Jesus countered the Sadducean denial of the resurrection that was based on their belief that the soul ceased to exist at death, leaving nothing to resurrect. To correct this error, Jesus cited Exodus 3:6 where God told Moses, "I *am* the God of" the patriarchs to show that these deceased men still existed!
 - b. However, the verb "*am*" there is *italicized* since it is *not written* in *Hebrew* *nor* is it *written* in *Greek* in Mark 12:26 that cites it, for "*am*" in *both* texts is a grammatical *ellipsis* (Blass & Debrunner, *A Grk. Gr. of N. T.*, p. 71). [Daniel 2:32 in *Aramaic* also has an ellipsis – the verb "*was*" ("This image's head *was*...")]
 - c. Jesus' argument *must* be *clarified* in the *English translation* by *adding* the *paraphrased verb* "*am*" for the *English reader to perceive that the fathers still existed in Moses' era though they were then deceased!*
 - 2. This illustrates how differences in human languages *require some paraphrasing* for *any translation*.
- B. Thus, claims that God inspired the Textus Receptive (TR) ms behind the KJV or that the KJV is inspired err:
 - 1. The TR itself exists in differing editions, countering claims of the KJV's infallibility and the divine verbal inspiration of the KJV that was translated from the TR (*The Biblical Evangelist*, July-August, 1999, p. 2).
 - 2. Job 36:33 KJV reads illogically, and thus is in error (as follows): "The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapor." [The New International Version (NIV) logically renders that verse (as follows): "His thunder announces the coming storm; even the cattle make known its approach"]
 - 3. The *1611 KJV* differs from the *1769 KJV* in *1,441 places*, but it is the *1769 edition* that is used in *today's KJV Bibles* (Ibid., May-June, 2006, p. 17), so *today's KJV cannot possibly be divinely inspired!*
 - 4. In the preface to the 1611 KJV, its translators wrote, "(A)s S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of Scriptures." (James R. White, *The KJV Only Controversy*, 1995, p. 76) So, *Augustine and the 1611 KJV translators taught the helpful use of various translations*.
- C. Therefore, *in the spirit of Augustine and the 1611 KJV translators*, if one is *limited to English*, we suggest using the *KJV and the NIV and the ESV together* for a good sense of the Scriptures. [The KJV is closer to the original, but the TR ms is inferior. The NIV is closer to English, but paraphrases more. The ESV is closer to the original, it uses good mss, but it has a Calvinist bias. We thus suggest that they be used *together!*]
- D. However, we need advice *if doctrinal bias affects all three of these suggested versions*, and we illustrate:
 - 1. At Acts 13:48, the KJV, NIV and ESV render the Greek perfect participle *tetagmenoi* to be in the *passive voice*, to read that all who "were appointed (or) ordained (to eternal life believed)," the *Calvinist* view.
 - 2. However, the *perfect passive participle* is *spelled* the *same* as the *perfect middle participle* (Machan, *N. T. Grk. For Beg.*, 1966, p. 186), and *tetagmenoi* in the *middle voice* reads, "had marshalled themselves (on the side of eternal life believed)," *contrasting with* the *Calvinist* view. Also, the *Expos. Grk. Test.*, T. A. Page, *Acts of the Aps.* (1903), R. B. Rackham, *Acts of the Aps.* (1901) and I view it in the *middle voice!*
 - 3. For the *English reader to handle* this *contrast in interpretation*, we urge him (i) to rely on the Holy Spirit for accuracy (2 Timothy 1:13-14), (ii) to claim God's Mark 4:24-25 pledge that the more of His Word we want to know, the more He will show us, (iii) to claim God's Jeremiah 3:15 pledge that He will send us shepherds to teach us knowledge and understanding (iv) and to adopt the view that aligns with the context.

Lesson: *Though no translation of the autograph manuscripts is covered under divine inspiration, the Holy Spirit's ministry, God's promises to guide and to teach us and the Scriptural context equip us to understand God's truth.*

Application: *If limited to the English translations, may we use the KJV, the NIV and the ESV together, but rely on the Holy Spirit, trust in God's promises to guide us and align with the context that we might be sure of God's truth.*