

Which Text - Which Foundation

(An Explanation of why I use the King James Bible)

The Dean Burgon Society's 2002 Annual Meeting

By Pastor David L. Brown, Ph.D.

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Introduction

The battle over Bible versions rages on. However, I have settled that issue in my mind, based on the facts, many years ago. But, I know there are many people in the pews of our churches who still struggle with the Bible Version issue. I regularly get phone calls from people who have heard that I stand for the Received Text and the King James Bible. They ask me, "Why do you advocate the use of the King James Bible?" and/or "Isn't this version or that version a good version?"

In a clear, concise and uncomplicated way, I want to explain to the Christian struggling with the *version issue*, why I came to the conclusion that **the King James Bible is the best version available in the English language today.**

As you are reading this report, there are high stakes races on, in the publishing world, to come out with, so called, "newer and better" versions of the English Bible. And, what is their motive? There are countless versions of the English Bible on store shelves today. In my local "Christian" bookstore I believe there were about 24 different English Versions available.

Is there some noble spiritual objective behind all these modern versions like there was with William Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, John Rogers, those behind the Geneva and King James Bible? I think not! The truth be known, **I fear that the publishers are rooting for revenue in the religious pigpen.**

Now, for a moment, let's cut the publishers some slack. Let's assume, for the sake of argument, that they have noble motives. Will noble motives make their translations come out better? The answer is **NO!** Here's why. They are **building on the wrong foundation**, right from the start! There are basically only two foundations that Bible translations have been and are being built upon. It is either the **foundation of faith** or the **foundation of doubt.**

THE FOUNDATION OF FAITH

Let's begin with **the foundation of faith**. The key issue is this: I believe that **God inspired the original writings of the Bible**, which are called the **autographa**. There are many verses that teach this. Here are two key verses that I want you to see...

2 Peter 1:20-21 "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation (that is, they did not originate with man). **21** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as *they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Timothy 3:16 "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:"

But, there is also the matter of **verbal preservation of the apographa** (copies of the originals). I believe that God has preserved His Words in the copies of those original writings in the Hebrew Masoretic Text of the Old Testament and the Traditional Text (Textus Receptus) of the New Testament.

I have **FAITH** that the God who inspired the original autographs can and did preserve the apographs so that we can say, "Thus saith the Lord; This IS the Word of God" when we hold up our King James Bibles.

Nineteenth century believing Bible scholar par excellent, John Burgon wrote: "**If you and I believe that the original writings of the Scriptures were verbally inspired by God, then of necessity they must have been providentially preserved through the ages.**"

The **Westminster Confession of Faith** published in the 1600's says, "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."

My point in quoting this document is simply this; **Bible believing Christians in the past, for the most part, believed in the inspiration and providential preservation of the of the Word of God**. It is only in the last quarter of the 19th century and 20th century that that born again Christians have believed anything else!

In fact, the Bible teaches **providential preservation!** The Lord Jesus Christ taught providential preservation. In **Matthew 4:4** we read, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Did you know that no original manuscripts existed in Christ's day? Yet Christ confidently quoted a portion of **Deuteronomy 8:3** as the authoritative Word of God and it was copy of the original without a doubt.

There are many Scriptures that indicate God has providentially preserved His Word. Here are just a few.

Psalms 12:6-7 "The words of the LORD *are* pure words: *as* silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. **7** Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

Psalms 33:11 "The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations."

Psalms 100:5 "For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations."

Matthew 24:35 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Luke 16:17 "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail."

1 Peter 1:23, 25 "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

I believe God. What he promised He is able to perform (Romans 4:21). He has promised to preserved His Word(s) and I believe Him. I have the faith that He has done it. Therefore, I have chosen to use the King James Bible, because it is built the Traditional Text, which laid on the foundation of faith.

THE FOUNDATION OF DOUBT

What about all of the modern versions of the Bible? What foundation are they built upon? Princeton Theological Seminary textual critic Dr. Bruce Metzger (see picture to the right), who is behind the Greek text used in translating the modern versions of the Bible, writing to Dr. Kirt D. DiVietro testified that the text they founded their work on was that of Westcott and Hort. He wrote, "**We took as our base at the beginning the text of Westcott and Hort and introduced changes as seemed necessary on the basis of MSS evidence.**"



Modern versions are erected on the faulty foundation of doubt!

Here's why I say that. Westcott and Hort **speculated**, with no evidence to support their idea, that the "pure" text of the New Testament had been lost. They said that the Antiochian text (also called the Traditional Text, Textus Receptus, etc.), the text type behind the King James New Testament, was an artificial and arbitrarily invented text, fabricated between 250 A.D. and 350 A.D. In fact, Westcott and Hort asserted that it remained lost until the 19th century when Vaticanus was rediscovered 1845 in the Vatican library, where it had lain since 1481 and Sinaiticus was discovered in a wastebasket in St. Catherine's Monastery in 1844.

Figure it out. If you believe their conjured theory, that means people were without the Word of God for 1500 years! Therefore, the question must be, **were Westcott and Hort correct?** Had the Word of God been lost for 1500 years?

Dr. F. H. A. Scrivener wrote:

"Dr. Hort's System is entirely destitute of historical foundation.... We are compelled to repeat as emphatically as ever our strong conviction that the hypothesis to whose proof he has devoted so many laborious years, is destitute not only of historical foundation, but of all probability..." (Dr. F. H.

A. Scrivener's Plain Introduction, 1883, pp. 537, 542).

Further, he stated;

"There is little hope for the stability of their imposing structure (speaking of Westcott & Hort), **if its foundations have been laid on the sandy ground of ingenious conjecture**. And, since barely the smallest vestige of historical evidence has ever been alleged in support of the views of these accomplished editors, their teaching must either be received as intuitively true, or dismissed from our consideration as precarious and even visionary." (Dr. F. H. A. Scrivener's Plain Introduction, 1883, p. 531).

In summary, I have chosen to use the English Bible that is built on **the solid foundation of faith**, believing that God has preserved His Words in the Masoretic Hebrew text and the Textus Receptus Greek text, and that the King James Bible "preserves" in the English language, by accurate translation that preserved Hebrew Masoretic and Textus Receptus Greek texts.

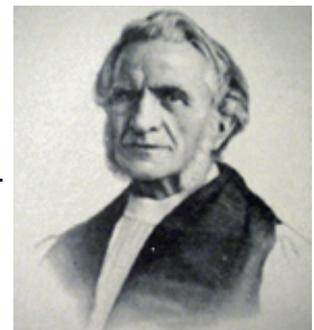
By the same token, I must say that if you hold to a modern version of the Bible, you have chosen ***the sandy ground of ingenious conjecture***. The critical scholars behind the modern versions do not believe that God preserved His Words as He said He did. In fact, **they are not sure where the His Words are**. They are frantically revising, adding, deleting, modifying, and changing God's Words as is right in their own eyes.

Will you choose the solid foundation of faith or the sandy foundation of doubt?

Once the foundation is laid the building begins! Those who are building on the **foundation of doubt** have a **low regard for the Scriptures** while those who are building on the **foundation of faith** have a **high regard for the Scriptures**.

A LOW REGARD FOR THE SCRIPTURES

Would you trust a preacher or a Bible scholar who said **the Bible was just a book like any other book**? I hope that not a single person listening or reading this would trust him. Yet, millions of Christians, who use the modern versions of the Bible, essentially trust the judgment of those who treat the Bible as just another book. Here's proof...



Dr. Edward Hills wrote, "Westcott (picture to the right) and Hort followed an essentially naturalistic Method. Indeed they prided themselves on **treating the text of the New Testament as they would that of any other book**, making little or nothing of inspiration and providence." (Edward F. Hills, The King James Version Defended, pp. 65,66).

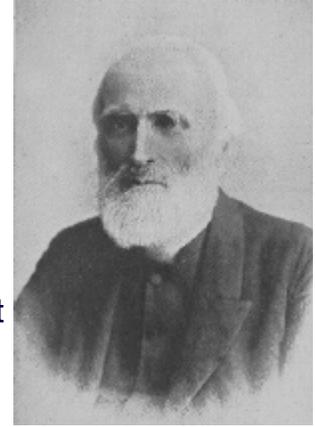
In other words, they treated the Bible just like they would the works of Plato, Shakespeare, C. S. Lewis, J. K. Rowling or any other fallible book. In fact, neither believed in the infallibility of the Bible.

Brooke Foss Westcott stated emphatically, ""No one now, I suppose, holds that the first three chapters of Genesis, for example, give a literal history - I could never understand

how anyone reading them with open eyes could think they did."

Further he wrote, "I never read of the account of a miracle but I seem instinctively to feel its improbability, and discover some want of evidence in the account of it." (*Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*; page 216) Again Westcott said, "**I reject the word infallibility of Holy Scriptures overwhelmingly.**" (*The Life and Letters of Brook Foss Westcott*, p.207).

Concerning Fenton John Anthony Hort (picture to the right), Dr. Wilbur Pickering writes, "**Hort did not hold to a high view of inspiration.**" (*The Identity of the New Testament Text*, p.212).



Some might protest that the low regard of the Scriptures held by Westcott and Hort has nothing to do with the modern versions of today. You are wrong.

First, the new Bible versions are built on the Greek New Testament compiled by them.

Secondly, current day New Version Potentate Princeton Theological Seminary Professor Bruce Metzger has a low regard for the Scriptures as well. He doubts Moses alone authored the Pentateuch. As Co-editor of the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV* he wrote or approved of notes asserting that the Pentateuch is "a matrix of myth, legend, and history" that "took shape over a long period of time" and is "not to be read as history." Job is called an "ancient folktale." And the book of Isaiah was written by as least three men. Jonah is called "popular legend." Then add to that that Metzger claims that the Gospels are composed of material gathered from oral tradition. The problem is, he completely ignores the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the Bible itself!

Exodus 24:4 "And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel."

John 7:19 Jesus said, "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?"

Matthew 12:40 Jesus said, "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Let me ask you a question. **How can you trust a Bible that has been tampered with by men who neither respect it nor hold it in any higher regard than they would the works of Shakespeare?** The answer is clear, **you cannot.**

A HIGH REGARD FOR THE BIBLE

I have a high regard for the Scriptures. I believe it stands forever. **Isaiah 40:8** "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

I believe that through the Word of God people are born again. **John 20:31** "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing

ye might have life through his name." **Romans 10:17** "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." **1 Peter 1:23** "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

I will not align myself with those who profane the Scriptures. **The King James Bible is founded upon Traditional Text types collated by men who had a high regard for the Bible.** Consider for instance, the often-maligned **Desidarius Erasmus**. He wrote the following in the Preface to his Greek New Testament, which clearly shows he revered and loved the Holy Scriptures...



"These holy pages will summon up the living image of His mind. They will give you Christ Himself, talking, healing, dying, rising, the whole Christ in a word; they will give Him to you in an intimacy so close that He would be less visible to you if He stood before your eyes." (*An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*; Robertson; p. 54)

Erasmus also wrote this:

"Therefore if you will dedicate yourself wholly to the study of the Scriptures, if you will meditate on the law of the Lord day and night, you will not be afraid of the terror of the night or of the day, but you will be fortified and trained against every onslaught of the enemy." (*Advocates of Reform: From Wyclif to Erasmus*; Matthew Spinka; p. 304: by way of Sorenson; *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*)

Further he proclaimed,

"Christ Jesus...is the true light, alone shattering the night of earthly folly, the Splendor of paternal glory, who as he was made redemption and justification for us reborn in him, so also was made Wisdom (as Paul testifies): 'We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Gentiles foolishness; but to them that are called, both Jew and Greeks, Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.'" (*Advocates of Reform: From Wyclif to Erasmus*; Matthew Spinka; p. 309: by way of Sorenson; *Touch Not The Unclean Thing*)

There are others to consider, such as Theodore Beza. Does anyone doubt the fact that Theodore Beza had a high regard for the Bible? The reason I bring this up is that the King James translators are said to have worked primarily from his 5th edition of the Received Text by Beza. If you do have any doubts about where Beza stood, I challenge you to read his book, *The Christian Faith*. He says this: **"On the subject of the Word of God, the canonical books of the Old and New Testament...proceed from the mouth of God Himself."**



I use the King James Bible because it is built upon texts that were collated by people who had a high regard for the Word(s) of God. Further, it is the most meticulous English translation ever produced.

Next, let's consider the manuscripts that were used. The modern versions are built on...

A FEW CORRUPT MANUSCRIPTS

For a more complete treatment of this issue, log on to [The Great? Uncials](#) and read my article [The Great? Uncials](#).

As you will recall, I shared with you a quote by Bruce Metzger. He tells how they developed their Greek text for the modern versions. He said, "**We took as our base at the beginning the text of Westcott and Hort and introduced changes as seemed necessary on the basis of MSS evidence.**"

So, what manuscripts did Westcott and Hort use to get their Greek New Testament? They used primarily two old 4th century manuscripts for their work. Hort's partiality for Codex Vaticanus (B) was practically absolute. Intuitively (without evidence) he believed it to be a near perfect representation of the Greek New Testament. Whenever pages were missing in Vaticanus he would use Codex Sinaiticus (ALEPH) to fill in the gap. And there was plenty missing from Vaticanus. Barry Burton writes in his book *Let's Weigh the Evidence* -- "it omits... Matthew 3, the Pauline Pastoral Epistles (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon), Hebrews 9:14 to 13:25, and all of Revelation... in the gospels alone it leaves out 237 words, 452 clauses and 748 whole sentences, which hundreds of later copies agree together as having the same words in the same places, the same clauses in the same places and the same sentences in the same places." Floyd Jones further notes that Matthew 16:2-3 and Romans 16:24 are missing.

Here is another interesting fact. "It contains the Epistle of Barnabas...which teaches that water baptism saves the soul." (*Which Version is The Bible?* by Floyd Jones; published by Global Evangelism of Goodyear Arizona; p. 68).

"Erasmus knew about Vaticanus B and its variant readings in 1515 AD while preparing the New Testament Greek text. Because they read so differently from the vast majority of mss which he had seen, Erasmus considered such readings spurious." (*Which Version is The Bible?* by Floyd Jones; published by Global Evangelism of Goodyear Arizona; p. 68). Further, as I understand it, Vaticanus was available to the translators of the King James Bible, but they did not use it because they knew it is unreliable..." It wasn't until 1889-1890 that a complete facsimile was made. The manuscript remains in Vatican City to this day.

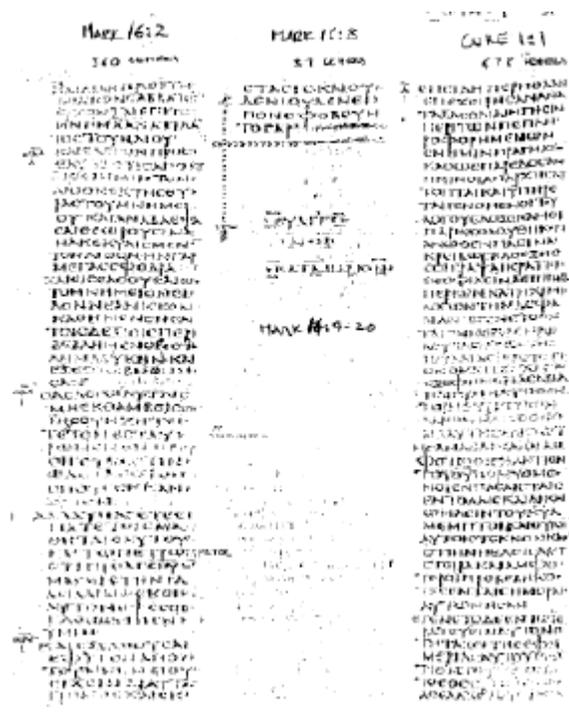
Here is a key fact you should know about **Codex Vaticanus (B)** -- "**The entire manuscript has had the text mutilated, every letter has been run over with a pen, making exact identification of many of the characters impossible.**" More specifically, the manuscript is faded in places; scholars think it was overwritten letter by letter in the 10th or 11th century, with accents and breathing marks added along with corrections from the 8th, 10th and 15th centuries. Those who study manuscripts say, **All this activity makes precise paleographic analysis impossible.** Missing portions were supplied in the 15th century by copying other Greek manuscripts. How can you call this manuscript "the oldest and the best."

This is a picture of the Hebrews 1 from the 4th Century Codex Vaticanus. Though hard to see in this size, notice the marginal note between the first and second column. A corrector of the text had erased a word in verse 3 and substituted another word in its place. A second corrector came along, erased the correction, reinserted the original word, and wrote a note in the margin to castigate the first corrector. The note reads, "Fool and knave, leave the old reading, don't change it!"



What about **Codex Sinaiticus (ALEPH)**? This is a Greek manuscript of the Old and New Testaments, found on Mount Sinai, in St. Catherine's Monastery, which was a Greek Orthodox Monastery, by Constantine Tischendorf. He was visiting there in 1844, under the patronage of Frederick Augustus, King of Saxony, when he discovered 34 leaves in a rubbish basket forty-three leaves. He was permitted to take them, but did not get the remainder of the manuscript until 1859. Konstantin Von Tischendorf identified the handwriting of four different scribes in the writing of that text. But that is not the end of the scribal problems! The early corrections of the manuscript are made from Origen's corrupt source. **As many as ten scribes tampered with the codex**. Tischendorf said he "counted 14,800 alterations and corrections in Sinaiticus." Alterations, and more alterations, and more alterations were made, and in fact, most of them are believed to be made in the 6th and 7th centuries. So much for the oldest!

"On nearly every page of the manuscript there are corrections and revisions, done by 10 different people." He goes on to say, "...the New Testament...is extremely unreliable...on many occasions 10, 20, 30, 40, words are dropped...letters, words even whole sentences are frequently written twice over, or begun and immediately canceled. That gross blunder, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same word as the clause preceding, occurs no less than 115 times in the New Testament."



Here are several examples of *di homoeotéleuton omissions*. The word *di homoeotéleuton* is Greek for "because of a similar ending." Here are some examples of the sloppy work of the scribes.

Note: In the following passages the italicized, bold words are omitted in Sinaiticus...

1 Cor. 13:1-2. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, ***I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.***
2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

Here the scribe had copied the verse up to the end of the *first* "and have not charity," but when he looked up to his example again to continue copying, his eye fell upon the *second* occurrence of the phrase, from which he continued, omitting all of those words between the two occurrences of the phrase.

Now a more complicated example:

1 Cor. 15:25-27. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.
26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 ***For he hath put all things under his feet.***

Here it is not immediately clear what has happened. But when it is known that in some early manuscripts the order of clauses is as shown below, once again we see that the scribe's eye has jumped from the first occurrence of a phrase to the second occurrence:

For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. ***For he hath put all things under his feet.*** The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

And in the very next verse another such omission:

1 Cor. 15:27-28. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did subject unto him all things. ***28 And when there shall be subjected unto him all things,*** then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

These *di homoeotéleuton* omissions number about 300 in the New Testament of Codex Sinaiticus. They are not taken seriously as various readings by the editors of critical editions and in fact are not even mentioned in the notes of the critical editions of currently used translations. (Information <http://www.bible-researcher.com/faulty.html>).

While these manuscripts may be (or may not be) old, it is obvious that they are corrupt. **It is these corrupt manuscripts that form the basis to the modern Bible versions.**

However, that is NOT the case with our King James Version of the Bible. It is based on...

MASSIVE MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE

While it is true that there are about 45 to 50 Greek manuscripts that support the Westcott/Hort Greek text that underlies the modern versions of the Bible, you must realize that there are more than 5000 that support the Textus Receptus type text that underlies our King James Bible. Figure it out. 99% of all the manuscript evidence supports the text type that the King James Bible is translated from. Further, this text type is overwhelmingly supported by the early church fathers.

Christian friends, there is no doubt in my mind that underlying the King James New Testament is a superior Greek text!

While there are many more things that could be said, this will be my final point, that relating to the method of translation.

FORMAL EQUIVALENCY – A SUPERIOR METHOD OF TRANSLATION

The King James Bible translators used a superior method in translating called **formal equivalency**. Formal Equivalence, sometimes called Verbal Equivalence is a method of translation, which takes the Greek, and Hebrew words and renders them as closely as possible into English. This is the method used by the King James translators and is certainly a superior method, seeing that our Lord is concerned about every word, even the jots and tittles (Matthew 5:18; 24:35).

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCY & PARAPHRASING – AN INFERIOR METHOD OF TRANSLATING

The modern versions of the Bible use **dynamic equivalency**, also called **concept inspiration** in their translations. Dynamic Equivalence is not following a word for word translation but changing, adding, or subtracting from the original to make it flow as the translator sees fit. We are warned against this in the Bible (**Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5-6; Revelation 22:19**). The New International Version is this type of a version.

Then, there is one further step that is even worse and that is **paraphrasing**. Paraphrasing is simply taking what the text says and rewriting it to what you think it says. It is more like a condensed commentary than a Bible. The most popular paraphrase is the **Living Bible**. It is really not a translation at all!

I use the King James Bible because it certainly is superior in its translation. There is much more that could be said, but I will save that for another time. Therefore I will move to the summary.

The King James Bible is built on the foundation of faith by men who had a high regard for the Bible, Massive manuscript evidence to support their work. They meticulously translated the Greek and Hebrew words, renders them as closely as possible into English.

The Modern versions are built on a foundation of doubt by men who have a low regard for the Bible. A few corrupt manuscripts were used to support their work. For the most part, they loosely translated the concepts of the Greek and Hebrew and some versions are even sloppier, not translating at all but paraphrasing.

I have to wonder. If you are not using the King James Bible, why not?

Preached at the 24th Annual Meeting of the Dean Burgon Society
Meeting in Arden North Carolina
by David L. Brown, Ph.D