

Straight Talk #60 On Bible Manuscripts

By William J. Schnoebelen, © 2011

Many observers of Western Christianity (especially in the US) have noticed a lack of concern for doctrinal truth, holiness or separation among Christians today. There also seems to be very little real revival breaking out in the land, in the old-fashioned sense of the word.

We believe part of the reason for this is the fact that we have “shopping mall Bible study.” Christians go into a “Bible” Book Store and can basically choose from among hundreds of Bible translations the one they like best. The bookstore owners (and the advertising firms behind them) are very careful to obscure the fact that basically among all the hundreds of versions on the market, you can boil them down to only two:

- 1.) The Authorized Version 1611 (King James Bible)
- 2.) All others.

These marketing firms and publishing houses make millions off of **copyrighting** the supposed “word of God,” and then selling dozens of permutations of the basic translation. For example, you have not just the NIV Bible, but the NIV Study Bible, the NIV Student Bible, the NIV Serendipity Bible, NW Men's Study Bible, the NIV Recovery Bible, etc., ad nauseam.

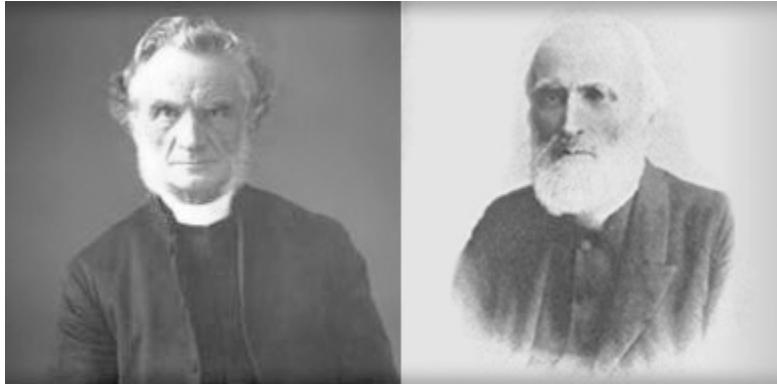
There IS a Difference!

What they will not tell you is that there is a profound and significant difference between the King James Bible and all the others. This difference is not in the language used (older vs. contemporary). The difference is in the manuscripts (abbreviated mss., singular: ms.) from which the translations were made.

The Authorized Version (New Testament) was translated from the Textus Receptus (also called the Majority Text, because the vast majority of ancient mss. agree with it). All modern versions, except the New King James Bible, (See note 1) are translated from what is called the “Alexandrian text,” the “Egyptian text,” the “Hesychian text,” or the “Minority text.”

Modern Bible scholars tend to believe that this latter textual group (small though it is) is closer to the original writings of the apostles because they are *older*. Without wanting to get too detailed and complicated, this hypothesis of textual criticism is based upon the thinking of three men—none of them solid Christians: Westcott, Hort, and Griesbach. These men were Bible critics from the 19th century, and there is strong evidence that none of them (in spite of their denominational affiliation) **were even saved!**

None of these men seemed to have ever believed in the inerrancy of scripture, in the virgin birth, or in the unique deity of the Lord Yah'shua (Jesus in Hebrew) the Messiah! (See note 2) Yet it is these men, (especially Westcott and Hort) and their philosophy of criticism, which has hatched all the modern versions!



Carnal or Spiritual?

Naturally, if you start out—as Westcott and Hort (W&H) did—assuming that the Bible was not really the inerrant, inspired Word of the Almighty YHWH, then that is going to affect your philosophical and academic presuppositions. If you believe that the Bible is just another book, like any other, then in the natural realm, it would make perfectly good sense that an older ms. would be more reliable. However, that is carnal reasoning. It does not take into account the power of inspiration and the Holy Spirit.

God promised to preserve His Word (**Ps. 12:6-7**). Yah'shua promised us that *every tiny stroke of a letter would be preserved* till the end of time (**Mt. 5:18**) and that *every single one of His words* would be PERFECTLY preserved (**Mt. 24:35**). Now if W&H and the Bible critics who follow them are right, then Yah'shua didn't keep His promises! Frankly, I would prefer to believe Yah'shua over any man.

It all depends on how much credit you wish to give the Holy Spirit. Think about it! A spiritually minded man or woman has no trouble believing that the Creator who spun out the Andromeda galaxy and the Orion nebula, and who keeps all the planets and stars in line could ALSO preserve EVERY WORD of His Book if He promised He would. We know that in the human realm such a miracle would not be possible; but with YHWH—all *things are possible!*

Therefore, the entire edifice of W&H textual theory is **built upon a flawed premise**: that older mss. are better. What if that premise is wrong? The question then becomes: How do you *really* evaluate these mss.? Do we use the standards of academia and scholarship (carnal), or do we use the standards of the Bible (spiritual)?

Hopefully, it is understood that even the most set-apart man or woman who is a scholar still has a sin nature. Even if they are genuinely a regenerated child of YHWH, they still struggle with their carnal nature. This was true of Paul, and it is certainly true of Bible scholars today. There is something very appealing to the carnal nature in the idea of “doing” textual criticism on the Bible. It is a subtle temptation, to be certain. But if one thinks about it, it is clear that such men are judging the Word of YHWH.

Who is any man, whether he be Hort or F.F. Bruce, or Metzger or Robinson, to stand in judgment on the Word? This is a serious question, and it needs to be answered. Who are they to decide that the Minority (Hesychian) Text is better than the Textus Receptus—the God honored text of the Protestant Reformation?

Using the Ruler

Let us instead apply Biblical standards to these mss., and see which ones measure up. The term “canon of scripture” (though not in the Bible) *IS* a Biblical concept. It comes from the Greek word KANON, meaning a measuring rod or ruler. This fits in perfectly with what the Bible says of itself:

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

Like a ruler, the Bible can be applied for “correction,” to make certain that doctrine or teaching is accurate. That is what we believe we must do to evaluate which set of mss. are the more appropriate ones to use to get our English Bible.

There are a three ways we can apply the Bible here. The first is to measure the **DOCTRINAL** context of the two text groups. This is something the modern scholars wish to discourage, because invariably the Authorized Version comes out as the more orthodox. For example, the Alexandrian (Hesychian) family of texts (made up of Codices Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and Alexandrinus) contains the following SERIOUS doctrinal errors. We are not talking about minor issues here, but *fundamental doctrines* of Christianity:

- 1.) The denial of Yah’shua’ virgin birth (see **Luke 2:33** in the New American Standard or New International Version or any other modern version)
- 2.) Teaching the Jehovah’s Witness’ (Arian) heresy of Yah’shua being a "begotten god" (see John 1:18 in NAS, etc.)
- 3.) Removing the clearest verse in the Bible on the Trinity (see **1 John 5:7**, and compare carefully with the AV-1611)
- 4.) Casting doubt on Yah’shua’s Ascension into glory (see brackets around **Mark 16:9-20** and then omission of His Ascension from **Luke 24:51**)
- 5.) Removing the blood of Yah’shua as the cause of our redemption (see **Col. 1:14** and compare with the AV)
- 6.) Butchering one of the clearest verses on Yah’shua being Almighty God made flesh so that the doctrine is obscured (**1Tim. 3:16**)
- 7.) Making salvation an on-going process (**Catholic doctrine**) **instead of an instantaneous event (1Cor. 1:18)**

8.) They contain the apocrypha (**and some mss. the Pseudepigrapha**) which no orthodox Jewish or Christian scholar believes to be part of the canon of Scripture.

Now it needs to be asked, *WOULD A RELIABLE BIBLE MS. DO THESE THINGS?* Would it deny the fundamentals of the faith? Now of course, you can find other verses in these mss. that DO teach these doctrines correctly, but the point is "*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*" (**Gal. 5:9**) One verse of false doctrine invalidates the entire text! You can, in fact, find most of the fundamentals of the faith in the Book of Mormon. *Does that make IT reliable scripture?*

No, God's Word MUST be free of error (**Ps. 19:7**)—especially doctrinal error! It must be perfect! On these grounds alone, we must reject the Alexandrian line of mss.

A Tale of Two Cities

We are going to try and just stick to what the Bible says about all these issues, and never mind what any human scholar says. Human scholars can error, or be biased—even in spite of their best intentions. "*...let God be true, but every man a liar;*" (**Rom. 3:4**) Amen?

Realize that these two lines of mss. come from two different sources. This is acknowledged by all scholars. The mss. that support the AV (King James Bible) come from Antioch, where the church was first called "Christian." (**Acts 11:26**) The second strain comes out of Alexandria in Egypt (remember, they were called **Alexandrian** or **Egyptian** mss.); a country about which the Bible says almost nothing nice.

Believers say that they accept the Bible as their final authority in all matters of faith and practice. Thus, to find out *what* the Almighty *thinks* about Alexandria versus Antioch (and, by implication, texts which emerge from those cities), *we need to check it out in The Book!* Here the rule of "**the law of first mention**" comes into play. This says that it is generally true that the context in which something is mentioned in the Bible often sets God's attitude about that place or person. If ALL the verses that mention the thing agree, then we know for certain what God thinks of it. That only makes sense. With this in mind, let us look at Antioch, Egypt, and Alexandria.

Egypt was first mentioned in **Genesis 12:10-12**, as a place which was a snare for Abraham and drew this honorable, man of Elohim into lying. As you will discover, even today, "Egypt" (the Alexandrian cult of Bible-correcting scholars) has also seduced many an otherwise godly men to lie. It has been the history of God's people to seem to be continually seduced into returning to Egypt or to trusting in Egypt; rather than leaning on Him and His unfailing promises (cf. **Gen. 16: 1-2, Is. 19:1-3, 12-14; Is. 29:24, Is. 30: 1-3**).

•**Alexandria** is mentioned four times in the Bible, and each time is easily seen to be **NEGATIVE**:

1.) **Acts 6: 9**—Jews from Alexandria were in the crowd that stoned Stephen!

2.) **Acts 18: 24**—gives us Apollos, a fervent but BADLY MISINFORMED preacher who did not understand the gospel, only John's baptism. He was not saved, and neither were his converts, until Priscilla and Aquila straightened him out (vs. 28). *Thus, it is synonymous with bad Bible teaching.*

3.) **Acts 27: 6**—The ship which began the journey carrying Paul to his martyrdom in Rome is from Alexandria.

4.) **Acts 28: 11**—When that ship sinks, they were marooned three months and then continued on to Rome and that ship is *also* from Alexandria. Coincidence? When you believe in a living, powerful God; there are no coincidences!

• **Antioch** is first mentioned:

1.) In **Acts 6: 5**—as the home town of one of the first deacons chosen, Nicolas. *Can this be a coincidence ?* Or is it a coincidence that Nicolas is the ONLY deacon whose town is mentioned?

2.) In **Acts 11: 19-21**, *the first great gentile revival* occurred in Antioch!

3.) In the same chapter, vs. 22-24, the great saint, Bamabas, was sent to Antioch to investigate the revival, and many more people were added to Yah'shua under his preaching.

4-5) As above, the believers were first called Christians in Antioch, and in vs. 25-26, we learn that Barnabas took the young convert, Saul out of his exile in Tarsus and returns with him to Antioch (NOT Jerusalem) which was rapidly becoming *the spiritual capital of the New Testament Church*.

6.) In **Acts 11: 27-28**, God has packed up His prophets from Jerusalem and sent them to Antioch!

7.) In **vs. 29-30** we find that the saints whom God is blessing in Antioch must send money to help the saints (whom God is apparently NOT blessing) in Jerusalem!

8.) When God sends missionaries out, he does not send them from Jerusalem, but from Antioch (**Acts 13:1-3, 14: 25-28, 15:40**). Thus, **ALL MENTIONS OF ANTIOCH ARE POSITIVE!!!**

This does not bode well for mss. that emerge from such as Alexandria. Christians need to know that these mss. have been the ones used to produce, down through the centuries, all the "bibles" of the Catholic church, and (oddly enough) the "Bible" of the Watchtower Society (the Jehovah's Witnesses). In fact, you will find that the NIV and the NAS agree far *more closely* with the heretical Jehovah's Witness "Bible" (*"New World Translation"*) than they do with the AV. In fact, there are around 35,000 changes in most of the modern Bibles from the KJV.

The New International Vomit Bible?

Another way to evaluate these mss. from the Bible's perspective is to look at God's prophetic map of the Church age. Most fundamentalist scholars look at the letters to the seven churches in Rev. 1-3 as

having a prophetic reference to seven periods of church history. Without going into detail, the church period of the Protestant Reformation (c.1500-1900) is related to the Philadelphia church (**Rev. 3:1ff**).

This is the only church period about which nothing negative is said. Historically, it is easy to see why. Missions exploded during that period, it was the time when the Bible was restored to the vernacular (common language of the people) and the chains of papal slavery were being shaken off in many lands. It was also the period of the **King James Bible** being translated (1611)! Yah'shua states something about this church period that He says about none of the other churches:

*Rev. 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and **hast kept my word**, and hast not denied my name.*

He even repeats it

*Rev. 3:10 Because **thou hast kept the word of my patience**, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.*

The modern versions were produced in the later, lukewarm Laodicean church period (1900-?)--a time in church history which Yah'shua says makes Him want to **VOMIT (Rev. 3:16)**! If you have any doubt that the period from 1900 to the Second Advent is the Laodicean period, check out what the word "Laodicea" means: it translates as "rights of the people" or "human rights!" Has there ever been a period of human history where there was such an obsession with human rights?

The Holy Spirit knew this would happen 2,000 years ago, and had John write his warning to a church age which thinks it is rich and mighty and powerful, but which is actually "*wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*" (vs. 17) The church got that way today because much of it has been feeding on a diet of poisoned bread instead of the Bread of Life: the Revised Standard Version, the American Standard Version, the New American Standard Version, the New International Version, and on and on and on! *Every single modern version* attacks the deity of Messiah and other key doctrines of the faith!

On the other hand, the AV has presided over some of the greatest moves of the Holy Spirit in history! Look at the saints who preached out of it, and look at the fruits of their ministries: Wesley, Whitfield, Jonathan Edwards, Spurgeon, Moody, Finney, Billy Sunday, etc. When those men preached out of His Book, entire towns got saved! The Great Awakening happened! Taverns and whorehouses would shut down!

When has such a revival hit America since preachers started using the NAS or the NIV? The answer is: *it has not!* That is because the Spirit will not send revival when preachers do not honor His Word. Most modern preachers are trained in seminaries or Bible colleges where they are taught to continually correct the King James Bible by referring to “the Greek,” and it is invariably the corrupt, God-rejected Alexandrian Greek that they use—the Nestle, Metzger-Aland text!

These men are also taught that only the “original autographs” are inerrant and given by inspiration. This effectively means that NO Bible currently extant is really given by inspiration. This means that we do not have a perfect Word anywhere on earth today! We must depend on a priesthood of scholars to help us (shades of the Vatican!)

Final, Important Considerations



This "Straight Talk" is necessarily a simplification of a complex subject. If you need more materials, we recommend the following excellent books, *Let's Weigh the Evidence* by Barry Burton, *Which*

Bible? by David Otis Fuller D.D., *True or False?* also by Fuller, *The Answer Book* by Dr. Samuel C. Gipp Th.D., *Final Authority* by William P. Grady and *The Christian's Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* by Dr. Peter Ruckman, PhD. Most of these books are more written for the "scholar," and we carry some of them in our catalog.

Two things are vital to understand. The first is that, contrary to much of the PR out there, prior to the middle of this century, *virtually every solid Christian* believed that the King James version of the Bible was the sole, totally perfect and inerrant Word of God. Moody believed it, Spurgeon believed it, Finney believed it, Billy Sunday believed it. The "early" Billy Graham believed it. The "early" Jerry Falwell believed it. It has only been in the last generation that anyone except liberal (modernist) Christians would even touch any "Bible" except the AV.

Since the turn of the century, it has been a gradual process of acclimating the Christian to these "new, updated" versions; very much like the proverbial frog in the kettle, whose water is gradually turned up to boiling. Oddly enough, the growth of modern apostate translations has *precisely tracked the growth of Freemasonry within the Christian church.*

Those churches that are riddled with Masons always use the RSV, which is the absolute WORST of the modern versions. The more "conservative" (less-Masonic) churches use the NAS or the NIV. The ones who wish to appear REAL conservative and fundamentalist use the New King James version, but it is still full of problems.

The OTHER important thing to understand is that this issue is a lot like the infiltration of Masonry into the churches in that it has been a gradual exploitation of the *natural trust* Christians have for their leaders. Most pastors, and even Bible college teachers *have never been allowed to hear about any of this.* It is **censored** out of their classrooms! In many cases, Bible colleges and seminaries which think nothing of having a Book of Mormon in their library forbid any books which discuss this side of the issue from being on the shelves or read. Students caught with such books are often expelled. What are they afraid of?

Often these Christians, teachers and professors are just assuming that because their pastors (or seminary professors) have taught them something, it must be true. They think, "These are men of God..."(WHICH THEY ARE!)...and they have been well - trained in seminary... " (WHICH THEY HAVE!)...and they wouldn't knowingly mislead me..." (WHICH THEY CERTAINLY WOULDN'T)" **...therefore** these Bibles must be okay." (WHICH THEY AREN'T!)

That chain of reasoning implies that everyone along the way has checked this stuff out. But you see, the pastors to whom the people look for teaching and feeding have made *the same assumptions* about their seminary professors. And their seminary professors *have made the same assumptions* about **their** seminary professors. But no one bothered to go back and see what the Word of God said about all this. They failed to be like the Berean" (**Acts 17: 11**)

These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

Thus, the same chain of trust that has allowed Freemasonry to run riot through many churches has also allowed faulty versions to be used.

This is not to say that these pastors and professors are not heartbreakingly sincere and love YHWH with all their hearts they are and do! It is just that ■ they have chosen to believe some man, rather than the Holy Bible.

The lesson that all this carries is this: that even “...good, Godly men...” can make sincere mistakes and be wrong. Sometimes they can even (*gasp*)! willfully sin! (**Romans 3:23**) Christians sometimes forget that fact. Abraham lied, Moses lost his temper, David was an adulterer and a murderer, Peter denied Christ and wimped out on the Judaizers (**Gal. 1:11-12**)

The point is, "**Let God be true, but every man a liar**; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art *judged*."—*Romans 3:4*. We don't flush the epistles of Peter down the drain because he denied Yah'shua. We eagerly read and study them! Similarly, we don't discard the works of “mighty men of God” like John MacArthur, Jerry Falwell or Chuck Swindoll because they presume to correct the Bible. *Where they presume to correct the Bible we correct them !*

Otherwise, we check all their teaching and writings out by the Word—as we should with every teacher, and then be blessed by them. But we don't emulate their sins in using "bible" versions which dare to correct the Living Word! We all fall far short of all that YHWH has for us! The point is, we don't justify our sin because someone else does it!

No Christian is any better than his or her own sin nature—and that sin nature can rear up in all of us when we least expect it. It is one of the chief impulses of that sin nature to want to correct or rewrite God's Holy Word, just as Eve did in **Genesis 3:3** after the serpent called it into question in verse 1 ("Yea, hath God said...?") Sticking to The Book is the best antidote for that kind of carnal nonsense.

A Final Challenge

We know that this is a "hot" topic, and that it represents a viewpoint that most Believers have had carefully concealed from them. However, it is a topic of vital importance. It is NOT some side issue. YHWH esteems His Word more highly than His name (**Psalms 138:2**), and in the Tenakh (Old Testament), the penalty for taking the name of YHWH in vain was death! (Lev. 24:16)

Similarly, in the Book of Revelation, horrid curses are leveled at anyone (Christian or not) who would dare to add to or subtract from the Holy Bible (see **Rev. 22:18-19**). In **Prov. 30:5-6**, we read:

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them hat put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

This is AT LEAST as important an issue as the challenge of the pseudo-Christian cults such as Mormonism; or the infiltrators from Masonry and the New Age that actually attend our churches. This is because faith comes by hearing the Word of God (**Rom. 10:17**); we are Born Again through Yah'shua' words (**John 6:63, 5:24**), by His words, our prayers are answered (**John 15:7**).

This is not to say that people who get saved from other versions are not saved, anymore than the occasional Mormon who gets saved reading the Book of Mormon isn't saved (Yes, it does happen!). Our God is an awesome God. If He can use a donkey to preach, He can certainly get someone saved with an NW or Living Bible! However, that avoids the deeper question:

If you lay down two versions side by side: the NAS and the Authorized King James version; you will find that **one contradicts the other**—in numerous places. Both cannot be the true Word, because YHWH does not contradict Himself. Neither is He the author of confusion (**1Cor. 14:33**). Which one do you trust? Or do you rely on a scholar to tell you which one to trust?

YHWH does not expect His people to rely upon scholarship. He expects them to trust Him and His Word and His promises.

Here then is the challenge: never mind what men say! Men can err (see above). You go to your Bible (any version) and find a verse that says you can have two conflicting Words of God—two final authorities. That two-headed dog won't hunt! Just as there can only be one supreme Creator, so there can only be one, supreme Holy Bible, not a multiplicity of confusing voices (**Deut. 6:4, 1Cor. 14:8, 33**)

•Or find a verse that says you can have a Word of God which is only 98% perfect. We thought God does all things well! (**Mark 7:37**)

•Or find a verse which says that there will be no perfect Bibles on the earth for most of the last 2,000 years, that the perfection only resided in the "original autographs" of the apostles and other inspired writers. We thought that the Word of God was nigh unto us—near at hand, where it can do us some good (**Rom. 10:8**).

•Or find a verse that says it is okay to rely on Bible mss. that come out of Egypt from unsaved Neo-Platonist philosophers; which contain the Apocrypha (Catholic spurious scripture) and psuedepigraphal (fake scripture) writings like the Shepherd of Hermas. We thought that we were to avoid philosophy and vain deceit (**Col. 2:8**) and to avoid leaven (doctrinal error—**Matt. 16:12**), in any form (1Cor. 5:7-8).

You know what the answer will be to these. You won't find any such verses. Then, you must choose whether to trust in the Reformation text of the King James Bible which has led more men and women to Christ than any other book in the history of the world; or in the modern versions which have the leaven of Catholicism and Greek philosophy shot throughout them.

We hope it will be a self-evident choice. God bless you!

Endnotes

1.) The New King James, however, has its share of problems; because of the philosophy of textual criticism held by the men that put it together, and because it has still been corrupted by influences from the Alexandrian text.

2.) For a full documentation of the depths of the apostasy of Westcott and Hort, see Dr. William Grady's book, **Final Authority**, available from this ministry.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the author through:

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