

Bible Versions – The Controversy

By Stella Paterson

“But evil men and imposters shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” 2 Timothy 3:13

There is no doubt that we live in a time of increasing deception which contributes even more to the apostasy of which Paul the Apostle spoke. And Bible versions are at the center of things as the darkness increases. That statement may seem rather odd but unless man allows the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth to reveal the heart of God, the deception will continue. Carnal man has taken Bible passages out of context and built erroneous doctrines to tickle the ears of hearers. Jesus said that before He returns, *“many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray.”* (Matthew 24:11) After many years of in-depth study, with the Holy Spirit as my Teacher, I firmly believe that today’s “Bibles” have played a large part in the making of those *“false prophets”* of whom Jesus warned.

In *“Bible Versions and Apostasy – The Connection”* I asked the question, “What is the Bible?” Of course the answer is “The Word of God.” But with all the “Bible” versions on the market, we must ask a further question, “The Word of God according to whom?”

The New Testament begins with the four Gospels. They are “The Gospel according to Matthew, Mark, Luke or John.” These men walked with Jesus. They lived in the time of which they wrote. Theirs were first-hand accounts of the life of Jesus and His works and teachings. Paul wrote the majority of the remaining books in the New Testament. And His experience was one of miraculous transformation from a Law abiding Pharisee to a completely sold-out preacher of the Gospel, called by God to take the Good News to the Gentiles. Only the Holy Spirit could have revealed Jesus to this man who felt it was his responsibility to kill the Christians who were not subject to Moses’ Law. Only the Holy Spirit could have changed Paul’s allegiance to the Law and made him a preacher of Jesus’ Gospel. He was even willing to suffer unbelievable things for the sake of this One he came to know and love.

Here we are, two thousand years later, with so many accounts of “God’s Word” – all saying things a little differently. Man has even had the audacity to copyright a book on which he places “The Holy Bible” as a title. Which one is the Holy Bible? Which one is God’s Word?

In my years in the “school of the Holy Spirit” the most prominent study was of the word “flesh.” It is foundational to the meaning of Calvary. It is the reason Jesus had to die. The study of the books of the Law made this crystal clear, as did Paul’s epistles. Then, having put flesh to death in Himself, Jesus also told how He would send the Spirit to lead us into all Truth. As I recently shared with a

Brother, we can read the written word until we are cross-eyed but without the Holy Spirit to reveal God's Word to our hearts, we are simply reading words. As Paul said, *"the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually determined."* (1 Corinthians 2:14)

We know that the Bible was written under the inspiration of God through the Holy Spirit. We can read the history of man from Creation on. We can read the accounts of God's hand on His people Israel. We can read the books of the prophets as well, but only the Holy Spirit can give understanding of past, present and future events. And we must submit ourselves to God in humility if we are going to experience the effect of that Word which is *"living, and active, and sharper than any twoedged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12) The words God uttered by His Spirit's power are the words He desires for us to hear. Yes, the scribes penned the words for all posterity and they were recorded in print and preserved in some form for thousands of years. But the printed word is the printed word.

Jesus is the living Word (the *"Word of God"*), as John 1:1 tells us. Then in John 6:63, Jesus said "It is the spirit that quickens; the flesh profits nothing: **the words that I have spoken unto you, are spirit, and are life.**" The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, as Paul said in Romans 8, so with our fleshly minds we cannot understand any written word without the quickening of the Holy Spirit.

Bibles God uses

Whatever "Bible" a person may have in their hands, God's words will pierce by the Holy Spirit's revelation power. Let me share an experience with you. My friend Linda and I were having a rich time of sharing about the Lord and His Word. I noticed she was using the NIV Bible, so I asked her to look up the passage in Revelation about Jezebel. I pointed out the erroneous usage of the Greek word for "fornication." It had been translated as "sexual immorality" rather than showing that Jezebel was seducing God's people to commit idolatry and to eat things offered to idols. Linda's response amazed me. She said, "But I just naturally assumed the word meant 'idolatry' – doesn't everyone believe that?" It was the Spirit of God who used even that corrupt "Bible" to speak truth to Linda.

My friend Helen also shared with me how the Lord revealed Himself to her through the "Good News" Bible. She was seeking for something more and, with that being the Bible in her possession, God spoke HIS WORDS to her heart and drew her to Himself. She is more in love with Him now than ever – many years after that moment when He touched her through words that our fleshly minds may judge as being less than the true Word.

I love my Bible. It is the book through which the Lord spoke truth to me and it is full of notes, reminding me of the treasures He quickened to my spirit. There are places where my notes refer to my having been washed by the water of the Word of which Paul spoke in Ephesians. The Holy Spirit used the written word, inspired by Himself, to do a work of transformation in my life. **He causes** the Word to cut deep and expose the things of self and flesh that need to go the way of the Cross.

Just like Linda, Helen and myself, I am sure there are many who have varying versions of the Bible. And each one sees theirs as a treasure through which the Lord spoke to them. Is every Bible “perfect”? Is that why God used any one of them to speak to hearts? I am convinced that whatever words of His are there, His Spirit is more than able to speak Life to a seeking soul. He can take what man has done, with all the distortions and mistranslations, and minister Truth – the “job” Jesus said His Spirit would do.

Apostasy and the Bible

Is there such a thing as “the perfect Bible?” I refer you to my first article on Bibles, “Bible Versions and Apostasy – the Connection” so that I need not repeat myself here. A link to a must-read article by Michael Clark and George Davis is in that article also. Then I suggest for further reading the history of the Geneva Bible which can be found at: <http://www.reformedreader.org/gbn/igb.htm> You may also learn about the Tyndale Bible at this link: <http://faithofgod.net/TyNT/>

My own experience with Bibles has been pretty traditional. I grew up believing the King James Bible was THE Bible, completely unaware of any others. My Bibles were always the KJV and my years of study were done with that version. The Holy Spirit taught me so many wonderful truths and my time spent in the Word was indescribably rich. The presence of God opened my eyes to behold a Jesus I could never have imagined knowing in the way that I now know Him. Were there parts of the Bible that did not quite “sit” with my spirit? Yes, there were many. I simply put that down to my lack of understanding, or my unwillingness to receive some passages. I could only trust the Lord to make me into the person He desired me to be. If that meant my having to accept some teachings that I was not initially comfortable with, so be it. If it meant I was to “obey” someone who was to “rule over” me, I knew the Lord could make me willing. Verses that suggested such things seemed so odd because they appeared to have simply been “dropped” into the midst of letters written about faith and a relationship with God. But now I realize that many, many passages in my beloved Bible were translated with a particular slant that I have since been shown by the Spirit of truth.

At one point in my time in the Word, my husband’s grandmother’s old Bible came into our possession. I loved that dear Gran, having known her for only three years, and was thrilled to have her Bible. She passed away in 1965 at the age of

93, which means she was born in 1872. That very old Bible was yellowed and dried out so badly that the pages broke when bent. It is now held together with many yards of tape. We also have her old bookcase and many very old books of hers. There are some great treasures in them as well; like an original copy of Andrew Murray's *"Absolute Surrender."*

The thing that intrigued me most about Gran's old Bible was that it was formatted in what I call the "revised KJV" with notes at the bottom of each page, showing what the revisers had changed from 1870 to 1885. This I learned about from the Revisers' Preface in the front of the Bible. Since that time I have referred to the old Bible as the "1611 version" and my KJV as the "revised KJV." This is also how I have spoken of it in all my writings on Bibles and in my Bible Studies of New Testament words. I will continue putting that old Bible in print and posting the word studies, using it to show the usages of New Testament words for the benefit of those "diggers" out there.

In the last few years I have had numerous email exchanges with some of the very devoted KJV-only folks. One gentleman advised that I purchase a book titled *"King James – Unjustly Accused."* I bought the book, thinking it would be about Bibles and I could learn more about the old Bible of Gran's. To my surprise, the book was about the king's morals. It had nothing about the Bible version in it. The same man also sent me a book he had written to prove that the Catholic church did not give us our Bible. It too was a waste of my time. There have been many hours spent reading material on the Internet about Bible versions. Everyone believes they have the REAL Bible. They all are critical of any other version but their own.

I even lost a friend over the Bible version issue. She is from the other side of the world from here in Canada and she found my web site through a link. She loved what she read and wrote an email – the beginning of a lovely time of communication about the Lord and what He was doing in each of our lives and on our individual side of the world. When she discovered I had quoted other Bible versions in my book to give a little variety, for the sake of readers, she gave me quite a lecture. She even asked me how, "on my deathbed", I would give an account to God over having turned away from "His perfect Word" to those "corrupt" versions. She believed I had almost committed the unpardonable sin. At that point the friendship ended. In her estimation I had fallen away from the Lord and was in danger of losing my soul.

I was saddened that this friendship that had been so enriching for a time had come to an end. But most of all I was shocked at such a legalistic view that would so profoundly affect someone. We must never exalt any printed word above the God of the Word. He is the ultimate authority – not some "authorized" version that has been processed by the hands of man over countless centuries. I do not mean for these statements to offend a sister or brother who is KJV-only. My concern is that we make our relationship with Jesus our ultimate aim. After all,

He is coming for a Bride – not someone who has perfectly dotted every “i” and crossed every “t”.

Jesus does not want us in bondage to anything, but to be free, as He said in John 8:31-32: *“If you abide in my word, then are you truly my disciples; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* The word “free” is translated from a Greek word which means “exempt from...mortal liability.” Jesus’ words to the Jews who had just come to believe on Him conveyed the message that they should abide in the things He had shared with them. And if they continued to follow Him, as true disciples, believing those things He had spoken, they would know the Truth and the Truth (Jesus) would free them from the liability of death. They would have eternal life. After they challenged Jesus further, He added *“If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free [Greek: exempt] indeed.”* (vs. 36)

Our Bible should be a resource through which the Author, the Holy Spirit, can begin to form Christ within us. Paul used the words, *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* in Colossians 1:27b. If we read the Bible, using the knowledge of good and evil with which we were born, we will never decrease – we will have head knowledge only. We, in our fleshly minds, will simply increase. But if we read our Bible in submission to the Spirit of Truth we will have knowledge (full acknowledgment) of God – it will be a “heart-knowing” of God, and Jesus will increase.

The word studies will continue to be posted for any who desire to compare translations with the Greek meanings that are all taken from Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance with Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries. I encourage you to take advantage of them and allow the Lord to use them as a tool to bring doctrinal correction where needed. This is what He has done for me through the hundreds of word studies.

Here are some brief examples of distortions that have diluted the written word:

- In Galatians 2:16, the phrase *“justified by the faith of Christ”* was used in the revised KJV. It should have read *“justified by faith in Christ.”* It is not Christ’s faith that justifies us – it is faith IN Him that justifies us.
- In Galatians 2:20, we find the same error. The revised KJV used the words *“I live by the faith of the Son of God”* rather than *“I live by faith which is in the Son of God.”* Again, as all other faith messages point out, our faith must be IN CHRIST.
- 1 Corinthians 12:4-5, in the revised KJV reads *“Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of **administrations**, but the same Lord.”* Gran’s old Bible puts verse 5 this way: *“And there are diversities of **ministrations**, and the same Lord.”* By inserting the prefix “ad” the verse takes on a more hierarchical tone.

- 2 Corinthians 9:12-13 also uses the word "*administration*" which more correctly means "*ministration.*" See the study of the word "*minister*" for these quotes.

The word studies are full of such distortions. Some may ask why I use the KJV for the word studies, rather than some other version. The reason is that Strong's Concordance is keyed to the King James Bible, and lists all occurrences of each word that appears in that version. Therefore it is simpler to use the KJV and Gran's old Bible. They can very easily be compared with any other version.

I fully believe we are in the closing days of time and we need, more than ever, to store away in our hearts the quickened Word. There very likely will come a time when Bibles will be outlawed, but the Living Word will be dwelling in us by His Spirit. I will close with these words of Jesus' in John 14:25-26: "*These things have I spoken unto you while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you.*" I believe those words, spoken to His disciples, are still applicable today.