

## **Bible Versions: Does it matter which Bible we use?**

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The issue of Bible translations is an issue of hot debate with advocates on both sides of the divide, pouring out publication upon publication to defend their particular viewpoint. Thousands of pages of evidence are brought to the subject that seems to achieve nothing other than greater polarization. Once drawn into this debate, we end up in a vortex threatening to engulf us and it is tempting to throw up our hands in despair and ask: "Does it really matter?" Extreme views are of course prevalent in all such debates, and so we have our "King James Version only" advocates as apposed to our "NIV only" advocates, both claiming that their version most accurately renders the original intent of God's Word. I am reminded of one dear brother in my own country who stuck to his old high Dutch translation of the Bible, saying, "If high Dutch was good enough for Paul, then it is good enough for me."

The King James Version (KJV) advocate will point to the many verses missing and the numerous alterations and partial omissions in the new versions. The advocates for the modern versions will point to other passages of Scripture where the intent of the missing verses is still present and proclaim that needless repetition has simply been removed. However, all these repetitions are probably based on scribal errors, as some of the more ancient manuscripts seem to verify. The modern versions fall easier on the ear and all this fuss about all these minor details merely detracts from the overall beauty of God's Word. Biblical scholars who defend the new versions, however, base their argument entirely on the "most ancient manuscripts" which largely support the modern translations. Some of these manuscripts were only discovered recently, and are said to throw a whole new light on the subject.

When I became a Christian, I came to know and understand the beautiful message of salvation in Christ through the NIV. Does it therefore matter which version I use? Martin Luther found Christ in the Latin Vulgate and it led him to accept salvation in Christ. Does it therefore matter what version he used? Wycliffe, the morning star of the Reformation, translated the Vulgate into English—it was never printed and copies were few. Was God with him in this venture? Did it matter what version he used? Tyndale and Martin Luther later translated the Bible from Erasmus' Greek text and gave the Word of God to their respective countrymen in their own mother tongue. Does it matter what version they used? Was God with them when they undertook this monumental task? Does it matter? Did God make a mistake in first presenting the early reformers with that to which they were accustomed, or did he permit it until they were ready to receive new light? "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" Proverbs 4:18.

I believe that it does matter, but I also understand that no amount of argument will convince either side. It will require a paradigm shift. I have also come to realize that the issue of Bible manuscript translation can be approached from two entirely different perspectives, and these perspectives will determine one's paradigm.

I am reminded of my former experience as an evolutionist. I was fully convinced that Darwinian evolution was true, because science had, or so I thought, proved it so. All the evidence presented to us in my university career conclusively upheld the evolutionary paradigm and was presented with such conviction that there was no room for doubt. The earth and the life it

supported had evolved over millions of years and every scientific discipline was in harmony with this belief. After all, how could all the thousands of scientists and trained professional men in the world possibly be wrong?

When I was convicted of the veracity of the Bible, however, all this changed. It was not a sudden change, because it required a huge paradigm shift in order to even entertain the possibility that my evolutionary mindset was in need of revision. It required nothing less than total detachment from my convictions to even admit that all the so-called proof for evolution was based on interpretive assumptions. The same data could, however, also be interpreted from a totally different perspective and the conclusions then reached could be in total harmony with the Bible. The data had not changed, but the mindset had changed.

I have also come to realize that arguments from the facts alone will seldom convince the other side of this paradigm divide, because spiritual things are spiritually discerned. Does it matter how I view the data? Does it matter whether I interpret it in the light of God's Word or naturalistically? Of course it matters! I long for my atheist friends to see things as I see them now, to get to know the Creator of all things, and the beauty of His character, and for them to have the same hope that I have now in place of the void that led to nothing. Will they listen to the facts? No! Something else needs to happen; they need to be touched by the Spirit of God before they will listen and understand. Salvation is thus always the work of God and neither our knowledge nor articulate skills can change the heart, lest we should boast.

I believe that the same kind of interpretive assumptions are being used by Bible manuscript (MSS) textual critics and scholars today unintentionally as they are influenced by the inherited methods, assumptions and principles of their discipline. A discipline that is shaped and moulded by the ecumenical climate we live in. The interpretation of history is very subjective and the same evidence has often been used to prove two exact opposite positions. Time is a great equalizer, and age-old differences and animosities are easily forgotten by subsequent generations. History books can be rewritten and that which was worth dying for in one generation can be considered ludicrous or irresponsible by subsequent generations.

The same applies to the Bible. It is not only the veracity of the Bible which is at stake, or even its plainest teachings, but the authenticity of the very manuscripts from which it was derived are subject to this debate. Protestants today have not only swallowed the Catholic Counter Reformation teachings on prophecy, hook, line, and sinker, but they are also using the very manuscripts from Rome that the Protestant reformers and God's people through the long Dark Ages of apostasy rejected. One seldom mentioned advantage of the Reformation Bibles is that they were translated at a time when God's people had just come out of the Dark Ages and knew the difference between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. Today this is not the case, as modern ecumenical evangelical Protestants return to Rome.

To look at the arguments from a "KJV only" perspective or "my favourite modern day version only" perspective is, in my view, far too narrow a view to take. Translations are based on ancient manuscripts, and the question should rather be—which ancient manuscripts are the representation of God's Word? Is it the Western, Alexandrian, or Byzantine manuscript that most accurately portrays what God really did say?

In my study of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy, I have found that the inspired account of the history of God's people and His written Word, as found in the great controversy theme between Christ and Satan, opens to view the bigger picture of not only Christ's great battle with Satan, but also the great battle of God's people to preserve the written Word and the true doctrines therein.

The 12th chapter of Revelation opens to us a panoramic view of the entire history of the great controversy between Christ and Satan from its beginning in heaven to its end on earth. The Word of God is central in this battle between good and evil and it is just as vital now as it was in the Garden of Eden to know what God really did say. The enemy today is that same wily foe who twisted the Word of God then to say what God absolutely did not say and who also twisted the messianic prophecies at the time of the first Advent to strip them of all their authority and power regarding this life saving subject.

In that timeless classic on the life of Christ *The Desire of Ages*, Ellen White sums up this strategy of Satan as follows: "When God's written word was given, Satan studied the prophecies of the Saviour's advent. From generation to generation, he worked to blind the people to these prophecies, that they might reject Christ at His Coming....Many among Christ's hearers who were dwellers at Jerusalem, and who were not ignorant of the plots of the rulers against Him, felt themselves drawn to Him by an irresistible power. The conviction pressed upon them that He was the Son of God. But Satan was ready to suggest doubt; and for this the way was prepared by their own erroneous ideas of the Messiah and His coming....The very words of prophecy were so perverted as to sanction error...."

"Many are deceived today in the same way as were the Jews. Religious teachers read the Bible in the light of their own understanding and traditions; and the people do not search the Scriptures for themselves, and judge for themselves as to what is truth; but they yield up their judgment, and commit their souls to their leaders. The preaching and teaching of His word is one of the means that God has ordained for diffusing light; but we must bring every man's teaching to the test of Scripture." DA115, 457, 458, 459

Darkening the understanding of what God really did say is one strategy that yielded fruits of disobedience and ignorance in the past, as it is doing even to this day. Modern society chooses to ignore or twist even the plainest statements of Scripture regarding the questions of origins or the many social issues ranging from pro-choice lobbies to gay rights which are so central to modern society. The debates cut across political and ecclesiastical divides with as many opinions as there are groups to defend them. It does not seem to matter what God really did say, it only matters what we think He meant when He said it.

A somewhat more slippery road is when we come to the point of denying that God said it at all or saying that perhaps it was a scribal error or even a deliberate insertion. After all, if one would wish to pervert Scripture, then deliberate changes to the Word of God would seem an obvious way to go. Where, however, does this leave the believer who wishes to place his trust in the Word of God? Faith in the Word of God necessarily also implies faith in the preservation of the Word, because one without the other is a foundation built on sand.

God cannot expect obedience to His Word if that Word is not available to us. It is therefore essential that Scripture must have been preserved by Him in an uncorrupted form in order for

us to comply with its demands. Moreover, should deliberate changes have been introduced into certain manuscripts, then a distinct line of demarcation must exist between corrupt and pure lines of manuscript lineages.

During the “falling away” period following the time of the apostles and the 1260 years of papal supremacy, every phase of heresy had been introduced into the Church. Ellen White describes how God preserved His Word during this period of apostasy and who the guardians of that Word were:

“Satan had urged on the papal priests and prelates to bury the Word of truth beneath the rubbish of error, heresy, and superstition, but in a most wonderful manner it was preserved uncorrupted through all the ages of darkness. The faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldensian Christians was in marked contrast to the false doctrines put forth from Rome. Their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity.

“But those humble peasants, in their obscure retreats, shut away from the world, and bound to daily toil among their flocks and their vineyards, had not by themselves arrived at the truth in opposition to the dogmas and heresies of the apostate church. Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers.

“They contended for the faith of the apostolic church, ...”the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” (Jude 3)

“The church in the wilderness, and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world's great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world GC 64, 69.

“The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution. They declared the Church of Rome to be the apostate Babylon of the Apocalypse, and at the peril of their lives they stood up to resist her corruptions. While, under the pressure of long continued persecution, some compromised their faith, little by little yielding its distinctive principles, others held fast the truth. Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Romish fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God's word and His honor.” GC 65.2.

By the Spirit of Prophecy Ellen White further says, “I saw that God had especially guarded the Bible; yet when copies of it were few, learned men had in some instances changed the words, thinking that they were making it more plain, when in reality they were mystifying that which was plain, by causing it to lean to their established views, which were governed by tradition.” EW 220.

This changing of the Word was undertaken by the likes of Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome in the fourth century, and today learned scholars are again changing the words of the Bible, thinking

that they are making it more plain. In reality, they are mystifying that which was plain by causing it to lean to their established views.

Ellen White writes this: "While Luther was opening a closed Bible to the people of Germany, Tyndale was impelled by the Spirit of God to do the same for England. Wycliffe's Bible had been translated from the Latin text, which contained many errors. It had never been printed, and the cost of manuscript copies was so great that few but wealthy men or nobles could procure it, and, furthermore, being strictly proscribed by the church, it had had a comparatively narrow circulation. In 1516, a year before the appearance of Luther's theses, Erasmus had published his Greek and Latin version of the New Testament. Now for the first time the Word of God was printed in the original tongue. In this work many errors of former versions were corrected, and the sense was more clearly rendered. It led many among the educated classes to a better knowledge of the truth, and gave a new impetus to the work of reform. But the common people were still, to a great extent, debarred from God's Word. Tyndale was to complete the work of Wycliffe in giving the Bible to his countrymen." GC88 245.1.

Wycliffe did not have the Greek manuscripts from which to translate his Bible, so he used the Latin Vulgate as his source which "contained many errors." Did God make a mistake when He inspired Wycliffe to translate the Bible from a flawed text? I believe not. The time had come to instill a hunger for the Word of God in the minds of the people. The art of printing had not been invented in the time of Wycliffe, and so copies had to be prepared by painstaking copying the original translated work. Thus only a very limited distribution could be achieved, but this very condition created the hunger and prepared the way for that which was to follow. Which Word did Tyndale give to his countrymen to complete the work that Wycliffe began? Was it not the Received Text, as the Greek translation of Erasmus came to be known, which he used as the basis for his translation?

The art of printing had only just been invented and the printing presses were churning out the writings of Luther and the other Reformers to light a fire that consumed the dross of superstition and darkness which permeated the Dark Ages. Was this not the work that aroused the ire of Rome? Did this not lead to war and bloodshed even to the point of sending the Spanish Armada to halt the work?

The doctrines of Rome could not stand the scrutiny of the Word of God, and when it was available in the native tongue of the people, even a ploughman could know more of the Word of God than prelates and Popes who were concerned more with love for power than the power of love. War and bloodshed could not prevail, and it was obvious to all that Rome was at war with the Word of God itself. To escape this stigma, Rome proclaimed that it was not the Word they were warring against, but the "faulty Protestant version" of that Word that they were opposed to. The Jesuits were assigned to write the Roman counter Bible which became known as the Douay Version. The Douay was based on Jerome's Vulgate and the Vaticanus manuscript, which both find their origin in the 4th century, the century of apostasy when every wind of doctrine was brought into the Church. Regarding the stealthful progress of apostasy in the early Church and the events of the fourth century in particular, Ellen White writes this:

"Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, the mystery of iniquity carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into

the Christian church. The spirit of compromise and conformity was restrained for a time by the fierce persecutions which the church endured under paganism. But as persecution ceased, and Christianity entered the courts and palaces of kings, she laid aside the humble simplicity of Christ and His apostles for the pomp and pride of pagan priests and rulers; and in place of the requirements of God, she substituted human theories and traditions.

“The nominal conversion of Constantine, in the early part of the fourth century, caused great rejoicing; and the world, cloaked with a form of righteousness, walked into the church. Now the work of corruption rapidly progressed. Paganism, while appearing to be vanquished, became the conqueror. Her spirit controlled the church. Her doctrines, ceremonies, and superstitions were incorporated into the faith and worship of the professed followers of Christ.” GC 49.2.

“In the early part of the fourth century, the emperor Constantine issued a decree making Sunday a public festival throughout the Roman Empire. The day of the sun was revered by his pagan subjects, and was honored by Christians; it was the emperor's policy to unite the conflicting interests of heathenism and Christianity. He was urged to do this by the bishops of the church, who, inspired by ambition and thirst for power, perceived that if the same day was observed by both Christians and the heathen, it would promote the nominal acceptance of Christianity by pagans, and thus advance the power and glory of the church. But while many God-fearing Christians were gradually led to regard Sunday as possessing a degree of sacredness, they still held the true Sabbath as the holy of the Lord, and observed it in obedience to the fourth commandment.” GC88 53.1.

“The royal mandate not proving a sufficient substitute for divine authority, Eusebius, a bishop who sought the favor of princes, and who was the special friend and flatterer of Constantine, advanced the claim that Christ had transferred the Sabbath to Sunday. Not a single testimony of the Scriptures was produced in proof of the new doctrine. Eusebius himself unwittingly acknowledges its falsity, and points to the real authors of the change. All things, he says, whatsoever that it was duty to do on the Sabbath, these we have transferred to the Lord's day...But the Sunday argument, groundless as it was, served to embolden men in trampling upon the Sabbath of the Lord. All who desired to be honored by the world accepted the popular festival.” GC88 574.2.

These people mentioned here are the same people who ordered the compilations of the versions containing the corruptions of Origen of which the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus are the surviving “most ancient, most reliable” manuscripts. [TC note: apparently, from newly discovered information, this is not true, but instead the both MSSs and others like them, were forgeries, on of the 1400s and the other the mid 1800s!]

We do not have to dwell on the numerous errors in the Vulgate, but this version, together with Vaticanus B, forms the basis of Roman Catholic versions. The Westcott and Hort text is based largely on the Vaticanus, which was written in the infamous fourth century. Dr. Ruckman writes, “The Westcott and Hort text is substantially the Roman Catholic Vaticanus (B). No Bible student has ever handled it, except Catholic scribes.” i.

George Burnside notes that Westcott and Hort called the Vaticanus a “neutral text” preserved on an “ocean of purity” ii. (can we call the Vatican an ocean of purity?). This manuscript omits Genesis 1: to Genesis 46:28, Psalms 106–138, Matthew 16:2,3; Romans 16:24; Most of Paul's

epistles, all of Hebrews after Hebrews 9:14 and all of Revelation. The beginning, the end, and some parts in the middle are cut out of the Bible. To make up for the lack, the Apocrypha and the Epistle of Barnabus, which are also in the other flagship the Sinaiticus (in fact, according to the Catholic Encyclopaedia, the Codex Sinaiticus serves as the authority for that text), are added.<sup>iii</sup> The Vaticanus leaves out at least 1491 whole clauses. It bears evidence of a very careless copyist on every page, it drops 2877 words from the Received Text, adds 536 words, substitutes 935 words, and changes 2098 words, making 7578 differences in all. The Sinaiticus is even worse. iv. This is interesting in the light of the Biblical injunction given in Deuteronomy: “Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” Deuteronomy 4:2

The irony is that these two “most reliable,” “most ancient” texts (A and B) contradict each other 3036 times in the Gospels alone, according to the textual researcher Herman Hoskier.v. Rome has declared the Apocrypha canonical and would obviously embrace the statements regarding the transfer of the Sabbath to Sunday, found in the Epistle of Barnabas, so as to substantiate their claims. Even Erasmus entirely rejected the Vaticanus as unreliable.<sup>vi</sup> This so-called “pure” manuscript apparently “preserved on an ocean of purity” is thus filled with outrageous nonsense, as the following quotes from the Epistle of Barnabas show:

“Moreover, ‘Thou shall not,’ he says, ‘eat the hare.’ Wherefore? ‘Thou shall not be a corrupter of boys, nor like unto such.’ Because the hare multiplies, year by year, the places of its conception; for as many years as it lives so many it has. Moreover, ‘Thou shall not eat the hyena.’ He means, ‘Thou shall not be an adulterer, nor a corrupter, nor be like to them that are such.’ Wherefore? Because that animal annually changes its sex, and is at one time male, and at another female. Moreover, he has rightly detested the weasel. For he means, ‘Thou shalt not be like to those whom we hear of as committing wickedness with the mouth, on account of their uncleanness; nor shall thou be joined to those impure women who commit iniquity with the mouth. For this animal conceives by the mouth.’ (Epistle of Barnabas Chapter 10)

This must rank as the poorest biological exposé ever written. Moreover the corruption of the Sabbath, as enforced by Constantine, is also neatly interpolated in that document.

“Further, He says to them, ‘Your new moons and your Sabbath I cannot endure.’ Ye perceive how He speaks: Your present Sabbaths are not acceptable to Me, but that is which I have made, [namely this,] when, giving rest to all things, I shall make a beginning of the eighth day, that is, a beginning of another world. Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day also on which Jesus rose again from the dead. And when He had manifested Himself, He ascended into the heavens.” (Epistle of Barnabas Chapter 15)

Modern Biblical criticism is a post-reformation phenomenon, and the question of who the harborers of God’s true Word are, is vital. Today, the modern translations are based largely on the witness of the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus texts (which come out of the Vatican stable) and a handful of uncials in juxtaposition to the cloud of manuscripts testifying to the opposite. The Vaticanus manuscript was the prime witness to counter the Reformation Bible and the Sinaiticus adds its voice to form the bulwark of the modern translations.

Isn't it fascinating that the foreword of the New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses states so clearly what its source of inspiration was? Also remember the furor this translation created when it first appeared because of its numerous alterations, deletions, and perversions. The foreword of the Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures states this on page 9:

"The Greek text that we have used as the basis of our New World Translation is the widely accepted Westcott and Hort text (1881), by reason of its admitted excellence. But we have also taken into consideration other texts, including that prepared by D. Eberhard Nestle and that compiled by the Spanish Jesuit scholar Jose Maria Bover and that by the other Jesuit scholar A. Merk. Where we have varied from the reading of the Westcott and Hort text, our footnotes show the basis for our preferred reading. We give some definiteness to the background for the renderings of our text by showing in our footnotes the most ancient manuscripts and versions on which we call for support." vii.

The basis for modern Bible translations is the Nestle-Aland text, which is based on the same handful of manuscripts described above. In fact, Nestle makes it clear in stating explicitly that "the Vatican manuscript is to be preferred above every other manuscript" viii.

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i Peter Ruckman, *The Christian Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* (Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1997): 24.

ii George Burnside, *The New International Version or the King James Version* (Leaves of Autumn).

iii Catholic Encyclopedia <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04085a.htm>

iv George Burnside, *The New International Version or the King James Version* (Leaves of Autumn): 163.

v Rudolf Ebertshäuser, *Der überlieferte Text des Neuen Testaments und die heutigen Bibelübersetzungen* (2003): 14.

vi Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (Greyden Press, 1895): 202-203.

vii As quoted in George Burnside, *The New International Version or the King James Version* (Leaves of Autumn).

viii Peter Ruckman, *The Christian Handbook of Manuscript Evidence* (Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1997): 25.

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Furthermore, their text, by their own admission, is based on ecumenical considerations and is a dynamic (ever changing) text as the ecumenical climate dictates. In 1968 the United Bible Societies (UBS) and the Vatican reached an agreement that only this text may be used as a basis for the new translations, in churches and Bible studies. ix. With such an agreement it is obvious that this text is the preferred Roman Catholic text and as such signals their victory over the Reformation and its Bible. Kurt and Barbara Aland state the ecumenical basis for their text very



clearly: "It does not concern a particular text, but forms the basis for the interpretation of the New Testament by all theologians of all confessions and denominations in the whole world" . x.

They freely admit that the text is subject to change at any time. This seems similar to what happened to their Alexandrian preferred texts, which were subject to alteration by successive scribes until they were fit for only the waste paper basket where some of them were found. Kurt and Barbara Aland admit that faith in verbal inspiration and infallibility would favour the *Textus Receptus* (TR). xi.

However, the pen of inspiration states clearly that the Bible is our infallible guide. Also, we are not to let the fathers or any theologian determine for us what God is saying in His Word. We do not need a unitary text that satisfies them all just as little as we need a New Age messiah that satisfies them all (as suggested by the Jesuit Teihard de Chardin). In this regard, the following quotes from the Spirit of Prophecy are enlightening:

"The great error of the Romish Church is found in the fact that the Bible is interpreted in the light of the opinions of the fathers. Their opinions are regarded as infallible, and the dignitaries of the church assume that it is their prerogative to make others believe as they do, and to use force to compel the conscience. Those who do not agree with them are pronounced heretics. But the word of God is not thus to be interpreted. It is to stand on its own eternal merits, to be read as the word of God, to be obeyed as the voice of God, which declares His will to the people. The will and voice of finite man are not to be interpreted as the voice of God" FE 308.1.

"Now began the Romish persecutions; but in the midst of fagots and torture the believers continued to multiply, steadfastly declaring that the Bible is the only infallible authority in religion, and that 'no man should be coerced to believe, but should be won by preaching'" GC88 238.1.

"We all need a guide through the many strait places in life as much as the sailor needs a pilot over the sandy bar or up the rocky river, and where is this guide to be found? We point you ...to the Bible. Inspired of God, written by holy men, it points out with great clearness and precision the duties of both old and young. It elevates the mind, softens the heart, and imparts gladness and holy joy to the spirit. The Bible presents a perfect standard of character; it is an infallible guide under all circumstances, even to the end of the journey of life. Take it as the man of your counsel, the rule of your daily life" Mar 44.2.

At the funeral service of Ellen White this was said: "No Christian teacher in this generation, no religious reformer in any preceding age, has placed a higher value upon the Bible. In all her writings it is represented as the book of all books, the supreme and all-sufficient guide for the whole human family. Not a trace of 'higher criticism,' 'new thought,' nor sceptical, destructive philosophy can be found in any of her writings. Those who still believe that the Bible is the inspired, infallible word of the living God will value most highly the positive, uncompromising support given this view in the writings of Mrs. White" LS 471.3.

It is unthinkable that God would have led the Reformation to unearth truth by supplying them with the very worst manuscripts (as modern critics view the Received Text). It is unthinkable that He should leave His people groping in darkness for close to 2000 years before providing the manuscripts that would prove that Rome was right all along and make her the harbinger of truth. The Spirit of Prophecy states emphatically that the Church in the Wilderness, and not

Rome, had God's truth unadulterated, and that their precious manuscripts were the basis of the Reformation Bible. The text that the reformers used is the text that God led them to. Rome opposed this Bible and persecuted those who held to its precepts. For many years Rome banned and burned Protestant Bibles and those who owned or promoted them. Finally, however, the papal Church discovered that her opposition to the Bible only portrayed the sad fact that, instead of being the divinely instituted Church of the Bible, she and the Scriptures were deadly enemies. A new approach was needed to halt Protestantism, but she must make it appear that she was not opposed to the Scriptures, as such, but only opposed to the erroneous Protestant Bible.

To turn the Protestants away from their Bible, Catholic authorities advanced the claim that Jerome's Latin Vulgate Bible was more correct than any copy of the original Hebrew and Greek texts. At the Council of Trent (1545-1563) Catholics decided that the Latin Vulgate should be the standard Bible for the Roman church. Jesuits reverted to the Vaticanus manuscript and the Vulgate as the basis for their Douay translation. Since 1844, a number of ancient manuscripts (including Sinaiticus) from the Alexandrian family that harmonise with the Vatican documents have been discovered. Since then the new translations have appeared on the scene of history and the same battle that raged in the 16th century seems set to rage again.

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ix Rudolf Ebertshäuser, *Der überlieferte Text des Neuen Testaments und die heutigen Bibelübersetzungen* (2003): 19.

x Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament* (Eerdman's, 1987).

xi *Ibid.*

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Westcott and Hort were the two "Protestant" scholars that were entrusted with the work of producing a Greek New Testament text that would be used to create a new translation of the Bible to replace the KJV, which was considered archaic. The KJV has many areas that can be improved upon, such as the archaic language and pertinent mistranslations of particular terms, but these factors concern semantics rather than doctrinal issues. The same, of course, applies to the old Luther Bible and any translation in any other language. The purpose of the new translation was not originally to totally revise the KJV or any other version, but to bring the language in line with modern usage and to correct any mistranslations that were prevalent because of the misunderstanding of certain Greek terms at the time of the Reformation. It was also not the intention to change what was a direct translation of the Greek into a dynamic equivalent translation that would predigest for the reader what they think God was saying.

The question we have to ask ourselves when reading modern translations is, are we dealing with a direct translation that gives as accurate a rendition of the original words as possible, or are we dealing with a dynamic equivalent translation which places the original words in a new setting, reflecting the paradigms of the translators? In the latter case, the translation may turn out to be dynamic but anything but equivalent.

While all the manuscripts found since the KJV was printed have increased our knowledge about language, background, and culture, the basic approach, methods, and principles of textual

criticism that determine the text have not changed. The new information has simply been used to uphold the basic premises. It is well known that the principles of intrinsic and transcriptional probability, and the eclectic genealogical approach to textual criticism made popular by Westcott and Hort, are the methods that textual critics have used for the last 100 years and are still using to determine the “best Greek.” The preface to the NIV states, “The Greek text used in the work of translation was an eclectic one.”

Eugene A. Nida, a language expert of the UBS, is the one who developed the so-called “dynamic equivalent” method of translation so prevalent in modern translations. The Bible must be translated in “culturally relevant” terms, and “current mindsets” must determine the translational objectives. This, of course, opens a whole new can of worms by creating space for popular humanism, feminism (as found particularly in the TNIV), and all the other “isms” in vogue. The Nida method places humans in the center of this debate, and not God as Author of the inspired Word: the Word must be brought down to our level rather than us being brought up to the level of the Word. A direct translation, they conclude, is no longer understandable to modern readers (this is academic arrogance of the highest order).

Therefore, the translator is the key to this dilemma and it is the translator who determines what God really said. We can understand why Rome loves this method, because after all she is the infallible interpreter of God’s Word. If she can make one believe that God said it in the first place, all the better for her.

Eclecticism is the other method whereby the Biblical witnesses can be reduced to only those which serve their purpose. Eldon Jay Epp states, “The ‘eclectic’ method is in fact the twentieth century method of NT textual criticism.” xii.

Wilbur N. Pickering says, “An eclecticism based solely on internal considerations is unacceptable for several reasons...It ignores the over 5000 Greek MSS now extant,...It has no history of the transmission of the text. Therefore the choice between variants ultimately depends upon guesswork.” xiii. Both Elliott and Colwell recognise this. Pickering’s book was recommended reading by the *Ministry Magazine* of July 1978, and according to D.A. Carson is: “The most formidable defence of the priority of the Byzantine text yet published in our day”. Anyone who studies this book with an unprejudiced mind must come to the conclusion that “editing of an eclectic text rests upon conjectures.” xiv. and also that eclecticism grew out of the Westcott and Hort theory of textual criticism. xv.

According to K.W. Clark, “The two most popular manual editions of the Greek text today, Nestle-Aland and U.B.S., really vary little from the Westcott and Hort text,” because, “All are founded on the same Egyptian recension and generally reflect the same assumptions of transmission.” Therefore, “the Westcott-Hort text has become our Textus Receptus” xvi.

“The agreement between our modern editions...is due to the simple fact that their editors follow one narrow section of the evidence, namely the non Western old uncials.” xvii.

“The grouping of MSS led to the separation of the relatively few early MSS from the mass of later ones and the process reached...its classical statement in the work of Westcott and

Hort (1881-1882).” Hort resolved the question of the original text, not on the basis of the history of the text, but on the terms of inner quality of the texts, and on the grounds of largely subjective judgments of that quality.” xviii.

Colwell observed that, “Hort organized his entire argument to depose the *Textus Receptus*.”<sup>xix</sup> Pickering added, “It appears that Hort did not arrive at his theory through unprejudiced intercourse with the facts.

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xii Eldon Epp and Gordon Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Eerdman’s, 1993): 98.

xiii Wilbur Pickering, *The identity of the New Testament text* (Nashville/New York: Nelson, 1977).

xiv Ernest C. Colwell, “Scribal Habits in Early Papyri: A Study in the Corruption of the Text,” *The Bible in Modern Scholarship* (1965): 372.

xv Wilbur Pickering, *The identity of the New Testament text* (Nashville/New York: Nelson, 1977): 26.

xvi K. W. Clark, *The gentle bias and other essays* (Brill, 1980): 159-160.

xvii G. Zuntz, “The Byzantine Text in New Testament Criticism,” *Journal of Theological Studies* (1942).

xviii Eldon Epp and Gordon Fee, *Studies in the Theory and Method of New Testament Textual Criticism* (Eerdman’s, 1993): 87.

xix Ernest C. Colwell, “Hort Redivivus,” (Brill): 158.

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Rather, he deliberately set out to construct a theory that would vindicate his preconceived animosity for the Received Text...He felt that the genealogical method enabled him to reduce the mass of manuscript testimony to four voices—‘Neutral, ‘Alexandrian,’ ‘Western,’ and ‘Syrian.’”<sup>xx</sup>

What a clever ruse—to dump the thousands of witnesses under one heading and then to pretend that the others outnumber them three to one. Westcott’s and Hort’s hatred for the Received Text is well documented and their Roman Catholic sentiments are reflected in their own writings. This has prompted many scholars, including Dean Burgon, Charles Spurgeon, and even modern authors such as Rudolf Ebertshäuser and Adventist writers such as George Burnside to suspect them of being closet Jesuits. Admitted in their own writings, Westcott and Hort dabbled with occultism, Darwinism, secret societies, Mariology, and were totally opposed to the New Testament and Reformation theology on the atonement. They hated the *Textus Receptus*, calling it “villanous” and “vile,” and yet it is they that were entrusted with this great work of creating a modern Greek text of the Bible.

In a letter written by Hort to John Ellerton in 1851 Hort writes this: "I had no idea till the last few weeks of the importance of texts, having read so little Greek Testament, and dragged on

with the villainous Textus Receptus. Think of that vile Textus Receptus leaning entirely on late MSS.; it is a blessing there are such early ones". xxi.

Abundant evidence from top textual scholars reveals that the eclectic, genealogical method of textual criticism was deliberately developed by Westcott and Hort to introduce the Alexandrian uncials of the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus so as to neutralise the witness of the majority text of New Testament manuscripts. Thus the work of the Reformers has been undermined and the erroneous manuscripts from Rome have become the *Textus Receptus* of our day.

Much more evidence could be brought forth to show conclusively that the principles of textual criticism that Westcott and Hort developed underlie all modern versions of the Bible. That is not to say that all the thousands of people who have poured over the manuscript evidence of the New Testament since Westcott and Hort have had the same evil intent to distort God's Word, but the textual evidence is conclusive that they have been influenced by their methods to produce a similar Greek text! Today the Nestle-Aland text forms the basis of the new translations and this is a consensus text that suits the international religious climate of the day. The New International Version (NIV—the most popular version of the day—is not called by this name for nothing; it is the version which is to satisfy the needs of the international religious communities.

Ecumenism, after all, means "the whole inhabited world" and that includes all the religious systems of the world. This definition comes from the World Council of Churches' own profile: "The word 'ecumenical' is derived from the Greek term *oikoumene*, which may be translated as 'the whole inhabited world'. It is in seeing this world as God's that we see ourselves as one. It is in seeing all the world's people as made in God's image that we are called to protect the welfare of every one." xxii.

The word "catholic" means "universal". In order for religious peace to be brought about, all religions must be considered equal, and for that to happen Jesus Christ must be downgraded to the level of all the other prophets or religious founders. Robert Muller (former Undersecretary General of the United Nations) says this:

"The world's major religions must speed up dramatically their ecumenical movement and recognize the unity of their objectives in the diversity of their cults. Religions must actively cooperate to bring to unprecedented heights a better understanding of the mysteries of life and of our place in the universe. 'My religion, right or wrong,' and 'My nation, right or wrong' must be abandoned forever in the planetary age." xxiii.

This statement of necessity negates Jesus as the only means of salvation, as confirmed by Professor Chung Hyun Kyung, professor of theology and spokesperson for the World Council of Churches. Dr. Kyung declared that to witness about Jesus Christ to another person is in reality 'an act of violence.' When reminded that Jesus said in John 14:6 that He is the only way, Kyung said Jesus 'was mistaken.'" xxiv.

Before looking at some of the pertinent and subtle changes found in modern Bible translations, it would be useful to note the influence of occult views on the mindsets of those involved in these practices and on the interpretation of Scripture by those who would wish to harmonize occultism and the Bible. This is not intended to be an exhaustive account of these paradigm

amalgamations so important to New Age thinking and ecumenism today, but I believe a few pertinent observations are warranted.

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xx Wilbur Pickering, *The identity of the New Testament text* (Nashville/New York: Nelson, 1977).

xxi A. F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (London: Macmillan, 1896): 211.

xxii <http://maic.jmu.edu/Journal/4.3/Profiles/WCC/wcc.htm>

xxiii Robert Muller, *New Genesis: Shaping a Global Spirituality* (New York: Image Books, 1984): 183.

xxiv Ralph Colas, "The Apostates Boldly Declare Their Heresies," *The Review* (2001): 2.

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Westcott and Hort were both involved in occultism and were also members of secret societies as the following quotes substantiate: "Among my father's diversions at Cambridge was the foundation of a 'Ghost Society,' the forerunner of the Psychical Society [meaning the S.P.R.] for the investigation of the supernatural. Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort were among the members. He was then, as always, more interested in psychical phenomena than he cared to admit."

"Lightfoot and Westcott both became bishops, and Hort Professor of Divinity. The S.P.R. has hardly lived up to the standard of ecclesiastical eminence set by the parent society." [parenthesis in original]" xxv.

"Yet he found time to attend the meetings of various societies, and in June joined the mysterious company of the 'Apostles.' He remained always a grateful and loyal member of the secret Club, which has now [ca. 1896] become famous for the number of distinguished men who have belonged to it. In his time the Club was in a manner reinvigorated, and he was mainly responsible for the wording of the oath which binds the members to a conspiracy of silence." xxvi.

There is no doubt that the Greek text of Westcott and Hort differs from the Received Text, but differences need not necessarily be dramatic in order to alter the meaning of a text or provide an avenue for alternative interpretations. Hort himself admits this in a letter written on July 7, 1870: "It is quite impossible to judge the value of what appear to be trifling alterations merely by reading them one after another. Taken together, they have often important bearings which few would think of at first...The difference between a picture say of Raffaele and a feeble copy of it is made up of a number of trivial differences...We have successfully resisted being warned off dangerous ground, where the needs of revision required that it should not be shirked...It is, one can hardly doubt, the beginning of a new period in Church history. So far the angry objectors have reason for their astonishment." xxvii.

Even more important is the way in which the occult world interprets these subtle changes. Helena Blavatsky, a contemporary of Ellen White, is highly esteemed in esoteric circles and her writings are to theosophists what the writings of Ellen White are to Adventists. Ellen White interpreted Scripture just as it stands:

“Brethren, cling to your Bible, as it reads, and stop your criticisms in regard to its validity, and obey the Word, and not one of you will be lost. The ingenuity of men has been exercised for ages to measure the Word of God by their finite minds and limited comprehension. If the Lord, the Author of the living oracles, would throw back the curtain and reveal His wisdom and His glory before them, they would shrink into nothingness and exclaim as did Isaiah, "I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5) 1SM 18.1

She also believed that God’s Word was infallible: “When God's Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union; all who bow to this Holy Word will be in harmony. Our own views and ideas must not control our efforts. Man is fallible, but God's Word is infallible. Instead of wrangling with one another, let men exalt the Lord. Let us meet all opposition as did our Master, saying, "It is written." Let us lift up the banner on which is inscribed, The Bible our rule of faith and discipline.”-- *The Review and Herald*, Dec. 15, 1885 (1SM 416.2).

Contrary to this direct approach to Bible understanding, the esoteric world believes in esoteric and exoteric interpretation of Scripture, the esoteric meaning being hidden and only understood by the initiates, whereas the exoteric, or direct interpretation, is for the general consumption of the unenlightened populace. To theosophists, Lucifer is the God of light whereas the God of the Bible is at best a tribal deity and is associated with evil. Moreover, of the two main streams of Bible manuscripts, the esoteric world favours the Alexandrian stream as the subtle differences in the text serve to open the door for the eclectic methodologies and also minimise the exclusivity of Christ as the only means of salvation. In the collective writings of H. P. Blavatsky we read the following enlightening interview with regards to the meaning and goals of the theosophical society:

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xxv William Salter, *The Society for Psychical Research: An Outline of its History* (London: Society for Psychical Research, 1948): 5-6.

xxvi A. F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (London: Macmillan, 1896): 170-171.

xxvii A. F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (London: Macmillan, 1896): 138-139.

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“THEOSOPHY AND THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY THE MEANING OF THE NAME ENQUIRER:  
Theosophy and its doctrines are often referred to as a new-fangled religion. Is it a religion?

THEOSOPHIST: It is not. Theosophy is Divine Knowledge or Science.

ENQUIRER: What is the real meaning of the term?

THEOSOPHIST: "Divine Wisdom," (Theosophia) or Wisdom of the gods, as (theogonia), genealogy of the gods. The word theos means a god in Greek, one of the divine beings, certainly not "God" in the sense attached in our day to the term. Therefore, it is not "Wisdom of God," as translated by some, but Divine Wisdom such as that possessed by the gods. The term is many thousand years old.

ENQUIRER: What is the origin of the name?

THEOSOPHIST: It comes to us from the Alexandrian philosophers, called lovers of truth, Philaletheians, from phil "loving," and aletheia "truth." The name Theosophy dates from the third century of our era, and began with Ammonius Saccas and his disciples, who started the Eclectic Theosophical system.

ENQUIRER: What was the object of this system?

THEOSOPHIST: First of all to inculcate certain great moral truths upon its disciples, and all those who were "lovers of the truth." Hence the motto adopted by the Theosophical Society: "There is no religion higher than truth." 2 The chief aim of the Founders of the Eclectic Theosophical School was one of the three objects of its modern successor, the Theosophical Society, namely, to reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities.

ENQUIRER: What have you to show that this is not an impossible dream; and that all the world's religions are based on the one and the same truth?

THEOSOPHIST: Their comparative study and analysis. The "Wisdom-religion" was one in antiquity; and the sameness of primitive religious philosophy is proven to us by the identical doctrines taught to the Initiates during the MYSTERIES, an institution once universally diffused. "All the old worships indicate the existence of a single Theosophy anterior to them. The key that is to open one must open all; otherwise it cannot be the right key." xxviii.

To "reconcile all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities" will of necessity require a downgrading of the exclusivity of Christ as well as a deliteralizing of the Word of God.

The clash between the Adventist worldview and that of the theosophical world is obvious, and the two are mutually exclusive. The Adventists are to take the Word as it stands and the theosophists are to interpret it esoterically. Let us look at one of the key doctrines of Adventism, the Second Coming of Christ, and see how the Westcott and Hort Greek text favoured the esoteric interpretation.

Writing on the subject of the esoteric character of the Gospels, Blavatsky explains the esoteric interpretation of verses in the Gospel of Matthew relating to the Second Coming of Christ, and makes some interesting comments about Adventists:

"...Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the consummation of the age?"\* asked the Disciples of the MASTER, on the Mount of Olives. The reply given by the "Man of Sorrow," the Chrêstos, on his trial, but also on his way to triumph, as Christos, or Christ,† is prophetic, and very suggestive. It is a warning indeed. The answer must be quoted in full. Jesus...said unto them:

Take heed that *no man* lead you astray. For many shall come in my name, saying, I

am the Christ; and shall lead many astray. And ye shall hear of wars...but the end is not yet. *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be famines and earthquakes in divers places.* But all these things are the beginning of travail...And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray...then shall the end come...when therefore ye



see the abomination of desolation which was spoken through Daniel ...Then if any man shall say unto you, *Lo, here is the Christ*, or there; believe him not...If therefore they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the wilderness, go not forth: Behold, he is in the inner chambers; believe them not. For as the lightning cometh forth from the east, and is seen even unto the west: so shall be the *presence* of the Son of man, etc., etc.”xxix.

The footnotes to this portion of Scripture are enlightening. Blavatsky here quoted the revised rendering of the verses after the 1881 revision of the King James Version. The footnotes say this: “\*St. Matthew, xxiv, 3, et seq. The sentences italicised are those which stand corrected in the New Testament after the recent revision in 1881 of the version of 1611; which version is full of errors, voluntary and involuntary.

The word “presence,” for “coming,” and “the consummation of the age,” now standing for “the end of the world,” have altered, of late, the whole meaning, even for the most sincere Christians, **if we exempt the Adventists.**”

“He who will not ponder over and master the great difference between the meaning of the two Greek words—ΠΡΟΣΧΕΙΝ and ΠΡΟΣΧΕΙΝ must remain blind for ever to the true esoteric meaning of the Gospels; that is to say, to the living Spirit entombed in the sterile deadletter of the texts, the very Dead Sea fruit of *lip*-Christianity.”

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xxviii Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The key to theosophy* (The Theosophical publishing company, 1889).

xxix Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, *The esoteric character of the gospels* (Kessinger Publishing, 2005).

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Why would the Adventist be exempt in this regard? Is it because of their literal interpretation of the text or is it that the King James rendering is in line with the Adventist view? Or perhaps both? Blavatsky continues to explain why the changes in the rendering of the text are so important:

“Two things become evident **to all** in the above passages, now that their false rendering is corrected in the revision text: (a) ‘the coming of Christ,’ means **the presence** of CHRISTOS in a regenerated world, and not at all the actual coming in body of ‘Christ’ Jesus; (b) this Christ is to be sought neither in the wilderness nor ‘in the inner chambers,’ nor in the sanctuary of any temple or church built by man; for Christ—the true esoteric SAVIOUR—*is no man*, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being. He who strives to resurrect the Spirit **crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions**, and buried deep in the ‘sepulchre’ of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back the stone of matter from **the door of his own inner sanctuary**, he has the risen Christ in him. **The ‘Son of Man’** is no child of the bond-woman—flesh, but verily of the free-woman—*Spirit*, the child of man’s own deeds, and the fruit of his own spiritual labour.

“On the other hand, at no time since the Christian era, have the precursor signs described in Matthew applied so graphically and forcibly to any epoch as they do to our own times. When has nation arisen against nation more than at this time? When have ‘famines’—another name

for destitute pauperism, and the famished multitudes of the proletariat—been more cruel, earthquakes more frequent, or covered such an area simultaneously, as for the last few years? **Millenarians and Adventists of robust faith**, may go on saying that ‘the coming of (the carnalised) Christ’ is near at hand, and prepare themselves for ‘the end of the world.’ Theosophists—at any rate, some of them—who understand the hidden meaning of the universally=expected Avatars, Messiahs, Sosioshes and Christs—know that it is no ‘end of the world,’ but ‘the consummation of the age,’ i.e., the close of a cycle, which is now fast approaching.” xxx.

**Subtle changes in wording can thus mean little to the uninformed, but can have major philosophical implications that profoundly affect doctrine.** A comparison of some of the more significant differences between old and modern Bible translations and their respective manuscript sources can thus take on a totally new meaning. Modern versions undoubtedly alter the Biblical witness about Jesus Christ and downplay His deity and supremacy. It is also noteworthy to study the role of the Nestle-Aland (NA) text in this regard. It is not the intention of this document to list all the hundreds of omissions and alterations found in modern versions based on NA, but a few pertinent ones are worthy of note and are here adapted largely from Rudolf Ebertshäuser’s document, *Der Überlieferte Text des Neuen Testaments und die heutigen Bibelübersetzungen*.

**a) The Equality of the Son with the Father: 1 Timothy 3:16** NA renders “God was manifest in the flesh” as “He was manifest in the flesh.”

This rendition is based on five majuscules (among which Sinaiticus) and a few minuscules thus, excluding the great cloud of witnesses to the contrary. This opens the way for Jesus to be just a created being as gnosis would have it. The NIV here follows the lead of the NA:

1 Timothy 6:14,15 “That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall shew, who is [referring to Jesus Christ] the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” KJV

“To keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time—God [**not necessarily Jesus Christ**], the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords” NIV

In their context, it is possible that these verses can refer to the Father, but the title King of kings uniquely belongs to Christ in the New Testament, and so it is rendered in the KJV. However, the NIV adds the word “God” twice in verse 15 although it does not appear in the original so that Jesus is deprived of His place and title in these verses.

**1 John 3:13** NA deletes, “who is in heaven,” which is found in the great majority of manuscripts. Their witnesses are P66, P75, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and eight further manuscripts.

John 1:18. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son (*Gr. Monogenès huios*), which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.” KJV

NA drops the article for the begotten Son and changes the rest to begotten God (*Gr. Monogenès theos*), making nonsense of the entire verse. The NIV thus translates this verse as: “No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.” This is based on P66, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, two further manuscripts, and Origen. It

can be traced to early Gnostic attempts to create a discrepancy between the *Logos* of John 1:1 and the Son.

In Matthew 1:18 Gnostic writers have changed just one letter in the Greek to make Christ a created being, whose origin started at his birth. This perversion is found only in P1, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, six majuscules, and a few minuscules. Almost all of the modern translations don't dare to include this perversion but follow the *Textus Receptus* rather than their preferred "most ancient manuscripts." The Jesuit inspired Douay, of course, shows no such sensibilities.

xxx Ibid.

Matthew 1:18. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ (Gr. Gennesis) was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." KJV

"Now the generation of Christ (**Gr. Genesis**) was in this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child, of the Holy Ghost." (Douay)

Mark 1:1 "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" KJV

NA questions the authenticity of the "Son of God" based on the Sinaiticus and one further majuscule. In NA 25 they actually leave the words out. NA also leaves out Acts 8:37, which also testifies that Jesus is THE "Son of God."

John 6:69 "And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." KJV.

The NIV renders this text: "We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God." This suits Gnostic and Arian sentiments but is based on just seven manuscripts among which are P75, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and D as opposed to the thousands of witnesses to the *Textus Receptus* version.

It is interesting that NA changes "Son of God" in John 9:35 to "Son of Man" and that P75, Sinaiticus, and one majuscule leave out verse 38 which reads, "And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him." Most modern versions include the text, but a number of them leave out or modify the portion on worshipping Jesus Christ. In Luke 24:25, NA 25 left out "and they worshiped Him" on the basis of one manuscript (Codex D).

Revelation 1:8. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." KJV

The setting of this verse together with verse 11 testify that this is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, the one speaking the words, the Alpha and the Omega and is one of the strong arguments for the deity of Christ in the Bible. NA robs Jesus of this position of equality with the Father and shifts it to the Father only by creating the impression that it is the Father who is speaking. Following the NA, the NIV renders Revelation 1:8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'"

"Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come." John 7:8. KJV

NA replaces the “not yet” with “Not going” making Jesus either a liar or robbing Him of His foreknowledge. The Douay and the ASV follow the NA rendition of the verse.

“Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” 1 Corinthians 12:3. KJV

Here the Alexandrian scribes smuggled a diabolical perversion into the rendition of the text. In almost all manuscripts the verse is rendered in indirect speech, but the Alexandrian manuscripts have it in direct speech, thus forcing the reader inadvertently to curse the Lord when reading the text out loud. Direct speech is used in the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, two majuscules and seven minuscules. The NIV follows these manuscripts and also uses the direct speech.

“Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, ‘Jesus be cursed,’ and no one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit.” 1 Corinthians 12:3 NIV

**b) The Witness that Jesus Came in the Flesh.** Gnosticism denies that Jesus came in the flesh in that it denies that God became fully human by incarnating as the Son of Man.

Roman Catholicism does not deny that Jesus came to the earth in human form, but they deny that He came in the flesh, the *same flesh* that we as humans have. Through the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which makes Mary sinless, Jesus receives His human form in a totally different way to other human beings. They don’t deny His humanity; they deny Him the same human form that is common to all humanity. This keeps Jesus aloof from humankind and introduces the need for intermediaries such as saints and priests to minister on His behalf. He was not altogether such as we are, nor can He meet us where we are, having been tempted in all things such as we are.

The new versions once again reflect Roman Catholic sentiments, with the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts once again acting as crown witnesses:

1 Timothy 3:16.

“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” KJV

“Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: **He appeared in a body**, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.” NIV

The NIV rendition of “He appeared in a body” leaves plenty of room for Gnostic Roman Catholic sentiments.

In 1 John 4:3 and Acts 2:30, the NIV also leaves out the term “in the flesh,” again following the NA text.

Act 2:30.

“Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne.” KJV

“But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne.” NIV

This pitiful change is based on the witness of Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and 4 further manuscripts.

Hebrews 2:16.

“For verily he took not on **him the nature of angels**; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” KJV

“For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.” NIV

The NIV makes no sense whatsoever and is not even Biblical. Hebrews 2:16 deals with the nature of Christ’s humanity, He was from the seed of Abraham, fully human and the verse confirms what the apostle John said. Does God not help angels? Did Michael not come to the aid of Gabriel when the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood him?

Hebrews 2:17.

“Wherefore in all things it **behoved him to be made** like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” KJV

“For this reason he **had to be made like his brothers** in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest **in service to God**, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” NIV

“For this reason he had to be made like his brothers and sisters in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.” TNIV

Both the NIV and the TNIV make Christ a created being and subordinate to God. The TNIV adds gender neutrality and humanism by having Christ made a created being like His brothers and sisters. Note the progression; the same committee that created the NIV now introduces feminism and humanism to meet the “progress of society”.

1 Corinthians 15:47.

“The first man *is* of the earth, earthy: the second man *is* **the Lord** from heaven.” KJV

“The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven.” NIV

The omission of “the Lord” is once again in line with Gnostic thinking, as it was unthinkable to them that God would condescend to become one of us. That Jesus should suffer and die for us in His humanity, with the same basic needs as we have, would therefore also be denied by Gnosticism. That is probably why the verses describing the human weakness of Jesus, and the need for special attention by angels in His hour of need, were also removed by these Gnostic scribes.

The NA thus lists Luke 22:43-44 as “later additions,” using as witnesses P75, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, five majuscules and two minuscules and D as opposed to the overwhelming witnesses (including five minuscules) to the Textus Receptus version.

**c) The Witness Regarding the Power and Glory of Christ.**

Ephesians 3:9.

“And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been **hid in God**, who created all things by Jesus Christ.” KJV

The last part of this verse is omitted by NA and most modern translations including the NIV.

Philippians 4:13.

“I can do all things through **Christ** which strengtheneth me.” KJV

“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” NIV

Here NA leaves out Christ and sets the tone for most modern translations on the basis of the witnesses Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, and the Gnostic Clemens. Clemens, bishop of Alexandria, is listed in the Masonic handbook *Morals and Dogma*, as a Gnostic together with Tertullian, Eusebius, and Origen. Moreover, these men were members of the enlightened esoteric society and held to the doctrine of the innate deity of humankind and the pantheistic view of God being an essence or force pervading the entire universe, and not a separate entity as Moses depicted Him. xxxi

This same occult view is also the Jesuit view, as expounded by the Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin: “Teilhard dreamed of humanity merging into ‘God’ and each realizing his own godhood at the Omega point. This belief has inspired many of today’s New Age leaders. xxxii.

Teilhard wrote, “It is a law of the universe that in all things there is prior existence. Before every form there is a prior, but lesser evolved form. Each one of us is evolving towards the godhead... What I am proposing to do is to narrow that gap between pantheism and Christianity by bringing out what one might call the Christian soul of Pantheism or the pantheist aspect of Christianity... I can be saved only by becoming one with the universe.” xxxiii.

In the following verses in Galatians, the NA has ripped the heart out of the covenant relationship we have with God through Jesus Christ. It is unbelievable that a document can systematically destroy its main Hero and strip Him of His power, and this by the testimony of Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and two majuscules. The NIV clearly shows this horrendous travesty of justice by leaving Christ out of the equation.

Galatians 3:17.

“**And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ**, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” KJV

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xxxi Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma* (Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2004): 544, 667.

xxxii D. Hunt and T. A. McMahon, *The Seduction of Christianity: Spiritual Discernment in the Last Days* (Eugene: Harvest House, 1985): 80.

xxxiii Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Christianity and Evolution* (Mariner Books, 2002)

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“What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.” NIV

Galatians 4:7.

“Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.” KJV

“So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.” NIV

Galatians 6:15

“For in **Christ Jesus** neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.” KJV

“Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation.” NIV

#### **d) The Witness Regarding the Bodily Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.**

The questioning of the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20 removes a valuable witness regarding the physical resurrection of Jesus, the ascension of Jesus, and His place at the right hand of God, as well as the great Gospel commission. This bold act is based on just three witnesses, as opposed to 5400 that vouch for its authenticity.

The three crown witnesses are again the Vaticanus, the Sinaiticus and one minuscule. Supporting Church Fathers are Clemens of Alexandria, Origen, and Eusebius; all of them Gnostics. On the side of the authenticity of the verses, we have not only the great majority of manuscripts including five majuscules, but the support of the following Church Fathers: Irenaeus (second century) and Tertullian (third century).

NA 25 also questioned the authenticity of Luke 24:6 “He is not here, but is risen”. Luke 24:12 and 24:40 were placed in brackets as a later addition based on one single manuscript, namely Codex D. Luke 24:12 reads: “Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.” It is true that NA 26 brought these verses in Luke 24 back, but the fact that they were willing to ignore all the other witnesses in order to question their authenticity tells us that we have something to be concerned about.

The notion that no doctrine is lost in the New Versions is thus not true, as many of the missing and changed passages do deal with important Bible doctrines. The fact that they may be found in other places in the Bible is not in question. The danger is that they open the door to erroneous teachings.

Moreover, the Bible is the Word of a Covenant God, and a covenant is a legal document. All legal documents must be authenticated by at least two witnesses or the document is not legal. Every land transaction must be signed by two witnesses before it can be considered legal and the Bible uses the same principle: “But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” Matthew 18:16

“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.” (John 5:31) The new versions systematically eradicate the 2nd and 3rd witnesses under the pretext that they are scribal repetitions not in the original versions. Important statements of Jesus are thus reduced to non-legality from a covenant perspective. Also, if, like the KJV, the new versions were to put all inserted words that are not in the original Greek in italics, then one would realise just how much they have been changed. The modern dynamic paraphrased methods of translation add to the problem of the Bible student, who is now more dependent on the translators’ interpretation of the original text.

The assumption that the oldest extant manuscripts must be the best manuscript, the most reliable, the closest to the original text, is nothing more than that; an assumption. But how do we determine what is closest to the original text, when we don’t have the originals? How do we determine which manuscripts are most reliable? There are at least 50 old known apocryphal New Testament books which prove that just because a manuscript is old, it is not necessarily the most reliable. The history of the Old Testament apocryphal writings and why they were included in the Septuagint Greek Alexandrian version and the early KJV is an interesting story.

The Hebrew Scriptures did not include them in their canon and that is why the early Protestant Bible Societies after 1800 excluded them from the Bibles they printed. Since then, Catholics have been trying to have them reintroduced into the modern translations but informed Christians have never accepted them as part of the inspired writings of the Bible.

The history of the text and of God’s Church in the Wilderness is vital to determine which is closest to the original, which manuscripts God’s people considered most reliable.

“The church in the wilderness, and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world’s great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world” GC 64.

All Bibles except the Douay, written before the Westcott and Hort text, came from the same base as the KJV, or the Majority Received Text. Many textual critics are beginning to admit that the Majority Byzantine Syrian, is in fact nearer to the original than the old uncials. The Peshito or Syrian Bible contains the oldest Christian version of the New Testament known to the world. The fact that it was probably a translation of many original manuscripts gave it an authority almost equal to the originals themselves. It is very likely that parts of it were written in Apostolic times under Apostolic direction.” xxxiv.

xxxiv Charles Leach, *Our Bible: How We Got It* (Moody Press, 1898).

Many more verses could be cited here, but I believe the point has been made and we can move on to a very pertinent question. Do the new versions affect Adventist doctrines and does it matter? Adventist leaders and scholars have often been on the forefront of this debate. In the book *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* Professor Wilkinson writes a fervent defence for the Received Text in his foreword”

“With regard to the different versions, it is necessary, while confirming the glorious inspiration of the Bible, to warn the people against Bibles, which include false books, and, especially at the present time, against the dangers of false readings in genuine books. There are versions of the Bible, prepared by men of scholarship, with certain books and readings we cannot accept. Such



versions may be of use for reference or for comparison. In certain passages, they may give a clearer rendering. But it is unthinkable that those who use such versions would be unwilling to have the public informed of their dangers.” xxxv.

George Burnside, who was Ministerial Secretary of the Australian Division, writes this: “Any serious fundamental Adventist who takes the time to investigate the differences between the NIV and King James Version will be amazed at what the translators have done. You cannot teach Adventist doctrine from this new version or from most of the other modern versions”. xxxvi.

This same sentiment is echoed in our time by Professor P. Gerhard Damsteegt, Professor of Church History, SDA Theological Seminary, Andrews University. He writes this: “The early Adventists solved their perplexity over the interpretation of prophecies through the help of Bible translations that gave a literal reading of the Greek New Testament text. So today Seventh Day Adventists can still find the best support for their understanding of the sanctuary from translations that stay as close as possible to the original text. Such translations follow the principle of “complete equivalence,” which attempts to preserve all the information of the original text.” xxxvii.

After continuing to show how the new versions, including the New International Version, a new dynamic translation that was touted by its proponents as the most accurate product of Biblical scholarship, make our sanctuary doctrine obsolete by interpolating the Jerusalem restorative theology of the day and having Christ entering into the Most Holy rather than the Holy, he states this regarding the NIV: “But have its advocates tried to use it to share the Adventist understanding of the sanctuary doctrine with others? Those who are on the cutting edge of evangelism know that this translation directly contradicts the New Testament foundations of the sanctuary doctrine.” xxxviii

Not only is the sanctuary message undermined, the doctrines regarding clean and unclean foods, the physical state of a prophet in vision (so important for the manifestations experienced by Ellen White and other prophets of God), the Sabbath issue, and the nature of the Second Coming are highly compromised by the new versions.

### **New Translations Used by Ellen White**

It is often claimed by those defending the modern dynamic equivalent texts that these versions are freely quoted in the Spirit of Prophecy and must therefore be considered as acceptable. George Burnside answers some of these objections: “According to the Index, there are listed 15,117 Scripture references in the 25 Volumes that are listed. 95% of these references are from the King James Version (KJV) and 5% from all the other versions. The Revised Version came out in 1881. Since 1881 more than three quarters of Sister White's writings have been produced. Therefore several of the revised versions were available during most of Sister White's writing years.” xxxix.

George Burnside also noted that Ellen White used the modern versions less and less over time. In Testimonies Volume 9, which was the last volume she wrote, she never quoted from a revised version once. The same is true for her book Prophets and Kings. Regarding the many missing verses in the modern versions Burnside notes that: “We should notice that verses that are omitted by the N.I.V. and other modern versions are quoted as the word of God by Sister

White. For instance:-Acts 8:37 The N.I.V. omits this passage of Holy Writ, but Sister White quotes it as inspired.” xl.

This is true for numerous verses where Ellen White consistently quotes only from the King James Version even though the other versions were available to her. For instance, several times she quotes Revelation 22:14 “do His commandments,” but she never quotes the erroneous “wash their robes” as found in the NIV and other modern versions. Nor would you find her quoting Job 19:26 (ARV) “Then without my flesh shall I behold God.” Also, in cases where there are apparent “minor” differences between versions Ellen White is very precise in her choice.

Ron du Preez writes this:

“Remember the story of the thief on the cross. Well, according to the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus manuscripts (and thus all the modern New Testament translations based largely on these manuscripts), the thief did not call Jesus ‘**Lord.**’ Vaticanus, and Sinaiticus record that the thief simply said, ‘Jesus, remember me...’ However, in my research I came across this extended statement in that classic volume on the life of Christ, *The Desire of Ages*, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as we Adventists believe.

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xxxv Benjamin Wilkinson, *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* (TEACH, 2005)

xxxvi George Burnside, *The New International Version or the King James Version* (Leaves of Autumn).

xxxvii P. G. Damsteegt, “The Role of Bible Translations,” *Adventists Affirm* (1992).

xxxviii Ibid.

xxxix George Burnside, *The New International Version or the King James Version* (Leaves of Autumn).

xl Ibid.

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Here is what Ellen White says: “Hope is mingled with anguish in his voice as the helpless, dying soul cast himself upon a dying Saviour. ‘**Lord**, remember me,’ he cries, ‘when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.’...How grateful then to the Saviour was the utterance of faith and love from the dying thief! While the leading Jews deny Him, and even the disciples doubt His *divinity*, the poor thief, upon the brink of eternity, calls Jesus **Lord**. Many were ready to call Him **Lord** when He wrought miracles, and after He had risen from the grave; but none acknowledged Him as He hung dying upon the cross save the penitent thief who was saved at the eleventh hour. The bystanders caught the words as the thief called Jesus **Lord.**”

Ron continues: “Ellen White wrote **The Desire of Ages**, which was published 13 years after the publication of the Revised Version (which was based largely on the manuscripts that had been relatively recently discovered). And

more significantly, Ellen White had that Revised Version available to her at this point in time. How do we know? She actually quoted passages from the Revised Version or its marginal readings about two dozen times right there in *The Desire of Ages*. Yet, even though she was

fully aware of that Bible translation and quoted from it repeatedly, she never used it when it came to the passage in Luke 23:42.”xli.

The Spirit of Prophecy thus clearly quotes the words of Scripture as recorded in the Received Text, and the bystanders heard the thief say “Lord.” This is a significant statement, as the reference to Jesus as “Lord” here is used in affirmation of His deity. The fact that the bystanders “caught the words as the thief called Jesus Lord” is not recorded in the Bible and must therefore have been written under inspiration, thus confirming the Received Text. Any other conclusion would place the Spirit of Prophecy on shaky ground.

Ron du Preez uses the further example of Ellen White’s use of 1 Timothy 3:16:

“Similarly, when we look at Ellen White’s use of 1 Timothy 3:16, it is interesting that she clearly uses this text, from the King James Version, to prove that Jesus is divine – that Jesus was indeed ‘God “manifested in the flesh.”’ For example, to demonstrate the divine character of Jesus, Ellen White states: ‘The union of the divine with the human nature is one of the most precious and most mysterious truths of the plan of redemption. It is this of which Paul speaks when he says: “Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh.”’

In fact, in 1898, while attending the Queensland Camp Meeting in Australia, she was given a vision, which called for ministers and workers ‘to present truth in its simplicity.’ In Testimonies for the Church, volume 6, she informs us that Jesus, the ‘Great Teacher,’ specifically called for skill in Bible study, for ministers and workers to ‘read and study’ several passages, all relating to the deity of Jesus Christ, including 1 Timothy 3:16. Again, the choice is rather stark, especially when we remember that Ellen White did utilize the available Revised Version on occasion including in that very volume of Testimonies for the Church. Either, Ellen White was deluded about her vision (since these modern versions, based on essentially the mid-nineteenth century discoveries, allege that the “original” text of 1 Timothy 3:16 never states that Jesus is “God”); or the “Great Teacher” Jesus Christ did indeed instruct Ellen White that 1 Timothy 3:16 should be used to demonstrate His deity (which is clearly shown in the basic text of the King James Version here)!”xlii.

Again we have a choice to make. Either we accept the Spirit of Prophecy as inspired or we don’t.

Ron du Preez summarises the Spirit of Prophecy use of versions other than the King James as follows: “Whenever a newer translation said in a clearer manner, what was already in the KJV, then she used that version (for example, to avoid archaic terms, outdated phrases, etc.)

Even without knowing the original biblical languages, Ellen White, evidently by divine direction, selected a translation that actually communicated more correctly what was stated in the original Hebrew or Greek (i.e., the Greek manuscripts that formed the basis of the New Testament of the KJV)

Whenever there were crucial concepts or vital doctrinal issues at stake, she remained firmly with the KJV. This we demonstrated above, where we showed that Ellen White used the KJV to support the divinity of Jesus (in Luke and in 1 Timothy); and loyalty to the Decalogue (in Revelation 22:14), etc.”xliii

Let us now take a closer look at some of the key doctrines affected by the new versions:

### The Sanctuary Service:

Professor Damsteegt writes regarding the NIV, "In its rendering of the book of Hebrews, this translation portrayed the total scope of Christ's heavenly ministry in the framework of the Day of Atonement. Consequently, the translators did not leave readers in any doubt that after His ascension Christ entered the Most Holy Place and began His Day of Atonement ministry. Notice these examples: our hope 'enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain;' 'the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing;' and Christ 'entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood' (Heb.6:19;9:8,12 NIV) xli xliiv P. G. Damsteegt, "The Role of Bible Translations," Adventists Affirm (1992).

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xli Ron du Preez, No Fear for the Future.

xlii Ibid.

xliii Ibid.

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In the book of Hebrews the Greek for "Most Holy Place" (hag'ia hagian) is used only in Hebrews 9:3 and never again thereafter. In all other verses the Greek word (**hagion**) is used which could be translated as "sanctuary" or "Holy Place." This is vital to Adventist theology because without it the remnant theology is destroyed and the Seventh-day Adventist Church becomes just one of many proclaiming the Gospel.

Before discussing the changes made to Daniel 8:14, let us first see what the Spirit of Prophecy makes of this verse. "The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and central pillar of the Advent faith was the declaration, "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." [Daniel 8:14.] These had been familiar words to all believers in the Lord's soon coming. By the lips of thousands was this prophecy repeated as the watchword of their faith. All felt that upon the events therein foretold depended their brightest expectations and most cherished hopes. These prophetic days had been shown to terminate in the autumn of 1844" GC 409.

Daniel 8:14.

"And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."KJV

"He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated." NIV

The word "cleansed" is changed to "reconsecrated". The heavenly sanctuary is consecrated once and then cleansed once; it is never reconsecrated. The entire 2300-day prophecy is destroyed by this rendition. The Spirit of Prophecy clearly states this:

"For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued in the first apartment of the sanctuary. The blood of Christ, pleaded in behalf of penitent believers, secured their pardon and acceptance with the Father, yet their sins still remained upon the books of record. As in the typical service there was a work of atonement at the close of the year, so before Christ's work

for the redemption of men is completed, there is a work of atonement for the removal of sin from the sanctuary. This is the service which began when the 2300 days ended. At that time . . . our High Priest entered the most holy, to perform the last division of His solemn work—to cleanse the sanctuary” FLB 207.3.

If Christ started his ministry in the Most Holy Place after His ascension, then when did He start His service in the Holy Place? This could then only have taken place before His incarnation. If He ministered in the Holy Place before His incarnation, then with what blood did He enter there, because without blood it was impossible to minister in the sanctuary. The Scriptures are clear; He entered not with the blood of sheep and goats but with His own blood. Therefore, the ministry in the Sanctuary could only have begun after the death of Christ when His own blood had been shed. He must have thus begun His ministry in the Holy Place and not the Most Holy.

When did He then start His ministry in the Most Holy Place? There is only one prophecy that depicts the time of the cleansing of the sanctuary (the antitypical Day of Atonement) and that is the 2300-day prophecy which ends in 1844. This is the time of the investigative judgement, a message unique to the Seventh-day Adventists.

Remove this prophecy and the Seventh-day Adventists cease to be the remnant entrusted with the final message of warning to the world. They become just another denomination heralding the soon coming of Christ. Their unique judgement message calling people back to the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus becomes obsolete and they might as well join the ecumenical movement and worship the Beast and its image.

Does it matter that the new translations destroy the sanctuary prophecy? Of course it matters if our very identity is linked to it.

### **The 70-week Prophecy**

Daniel 9:25-26.

“Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined.” KJV

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’ It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two ‘sevens,’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. NIV

When Jesus said the time is fulfilled in Mark 1:15, it was in reference to this prophecy. “The Anointed One” could be any priest or king, but the Messiah who was cut off but “not for himself” puts the issue beyond doubt. What does it mean that the Anointed One will have nothing? It means exactly that: nothing. Jesus gained “everything” and not “nothing” when He was cut off for our transgressions. He regained what had been forfeited to Satan and will rule as

King of kings for all eternity. The foe was vanquished and the eternal victory was achieved. Rendering the verses as they are in the new translations makes it possible to wrest any interpretation from them. No wonder dispensationalism can flourish, substituting the Antichrist for Christ in these passages of Scripture.

Does it matter whether the Messiah gained everything or nothing? Of course it matters. Our salvation depends on it.

### **The Sabbath and the Law of God**

Exodus 20:8 -11

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.” KJV

“Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.” NIV

The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; not just a Sabbath. Never in Scripture is the seventh-day Sabbath referred to as a Sabbath, so the absence of a definite article in the Hebrew does not give one the right to substitute “a” for “the.” The NIV repeats this travesty of justice in Deuteronomy 5:14. In Genesis 2:1-3 God emphasizes that it is the Sabbath three times and there is no record of Him having rested on any other day:

“Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.” Genesis 2:1-3

Most modern translations include this same perversion in the Sabbath commandment as recorded in Exodus and Deuteronomy, which opens the door to any Sabbath to be kept as long as there is a Sabbath. Modern translations repeat this deception in Colossians 2:16, 17:

“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. NIV

Here the Sabbath of Exodus 20 is abolished. In order to achieve this, a plural noun (sabbath days) is translated as a singular noun (a Sabbath day). Instead of ceremonial Sabbaths, which were a shadow of things to come pointing to Christ, being abolished at the cross, the Sabbath of the Lord is under attack. There is also an attempt to unlink the Sabbath from the day kept by the Jews, thus opening the door for interpolating Sunday in the place of the Seventh-day Sabbath. This is seen in the modern version renditions of Acts 13:42:

Acts 13:42

“And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.” KJV

“As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath.” NIV

The Scriptures are clear here in the KJV that Sabbath is the day on which the Jews worshiped. Why do the new versions leave this reference to the Jews out and hide this simple statement of fact? Is it because it reflects poorly on Sunday keeping? The KJV makes it clear that both Jews and Gentiles received this message on the seventh day Sabbath.

This brings us to Revelation 22:14, a key verse in Adventist theology. What about our obligation to keep the commandments so that we may enter into the city?

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. KJV

Rev 22:14 “Blessed are those who **wash their robes**, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” NIV

The claim for the NIV is that the rendition “wash their robes” is found in the Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, Vulgate and a few other Alexandrian manuscripts.

However, the church fathers that quoted these verses long before they were written in these manuscripts all quoted “do his commandments.” These include Tertullian (AD 299), Cyprian (AD 248-258), and Tertionius (AD 390). The first to quote “wash their robes” was Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria in the fourth century (AD 326-373). The early writers thus knew nothing of “wash their robes.” xlv.

The ancient Syriac also reads “do his commandments” as also the Coptic Version. The Spirit of Prophecy quotes this verse many times, and always from the KJV. In *Early Writings* she mentions how corrupt scribes altered words of Scripture.

Note how easily this verse is altered: Hoi poiountes tas entolas autou, (“that keep his commandments”)

Hoi plunontes tas stolas autōn, (“that wash their robes.”)

The following two quotes are extracts from *Early Writings*:

“Jesus threw open the gates of the golden city, and led us in. Here we were made welcome, for we had kept the ‘commandments of God.’ And had right to the tree of life.” EW 35

“All, all who keep the commandments of God, will enter in through the gates into the city and have right to the tree of life” EW 51.

xlv George Burnside, *The New International Version or the King James Version (Leaves of Autumn)*: 12.

George Burnside was also confronted with the question as to why the other verses regarding the commandments were not also changed in Revelation 12:17 and Revelation 14:12, if this is some Roman plot to make the commandments of none effect. His answer was that in

Revelation 22:14 the issue of commandment keeping is an issue of salvation. Only those that keep the commandments have a right to the Tree of Life (of course as a consequence and not a means of salvation). Regarding the other verses Burnside writes: “..in meeting opponents they nearly all brushed aside Revelation 12:17 and 14:12 as referring to the Jews who have been left on earth after the Rapture. They were nearly all futurists. To refute them is not difficult, but takes time and that is usually limited in a debate. Futurism as you are well aware, originated in the Vatican and so we are back to the source of corruption.” xlvi

Regarding a question on whether Revelation 7:14 is also a Catholic perversion, he writes, “To me this is a striking contrast, Revelation 7:14 states that the saints have “washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb.” What a glorious statement of a wondrous truth. It reveals the only means of our cleansing. This is a truth that often needs repeating and is seldom heard. What a full and complete statement.

By way of contrast, note Rev. 22:14 in these modern (to me) “perversions.” “Wash their robes.” What does it mean? It means nothing! Is it laundry work? It does not give any idea how the washing is to be done. Like too many statements in these modern versions they are almost absurd. I can see the hand of the enemy here. May we ever be able to say with Christ’s servant of old “We are not as many which corrupt the word of God.” 2 Cor. 2:17.” xvii.

Does it matter that the new translations remove the sanctity of the seventh-day Sabbath and thus attack the very authority of God as King and Lawmaker? Of course it matters, for without it we would not know which God we serve.

### **The State of the Dead**

Although many verses could be quoted here, we will quote only two that are painfully contrary to sound doctrine in the modern versions.

2 Peter 2:9 “The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” KJV

“if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. NIV

The NIV questions the previous statement by commencing the sentence with “if this is so,” and then they confuse “temptations” with “trials.” God promises to “keep us from temptations” (in the Lord’s prayer), but assures us that we will have trials, which proves the NIV rendition erroneous and not even Biblical. Moreover, the verse opens the way for erroneous readings of Scripture including the false doctrine of purgatory and everlasting hell, which we also find in the following verses:

Job 26:5

“Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof.” KJV

“The dead are in deep anguish, those beneath the waters and all that live in them. NIV

Does it matter that the dead are perpetually punished? As this rendering misrepresents the character of our gracious Saviour, it certainly does matter.

### **Clean and Unclean**



Mark 7:18, 19

“And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?” KJV

“Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him ‘unclean’? For it doesn’t go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods “clean.”) NIV

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xlvi George Burnside, The New International Version or the King James Version (Leaves of Autumn): 143.

xlvii The NIV Study Bible (Zondervan, 1985).

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That last bit is typical of a dynamic equivalent translation, whereby the interpretive rather than the actual meaning of the text is rendered. The context of this verse does not deal with the issue of unclean foods, but rather with the state of the unregenerated heart. Does it matter that the new translations remove the obligation to observe God’s health laws? Of course it matters. Without it our health message and the Spirit of Prophecy become a byword.

#### **Physical State of a Prophet in Vision:**

Numbers 24:4.

“He hath said, which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open.” KJV

“The utterance of him who hears the words of God, who sees the vision of the Almighty, who falls down, **with eyes wide open.**” NKJV

In these two exact equivalent versions the prophet’s eyes are open during vision, but look what happens in the NIV and the Catholic Douay version. Here this truth is spiritualized away:

“The oracle of one who hears the words of God, who sees a vision of the Almighty, who falls prostrate, and **whose eyes are opened.**” NIV

“The bearer of the words of God hathsaid, he that hath beheld the vision ofthe Almighty, he that falleth, and so **his eyes are opened.**” Douay

In some Roman Catholic versions the eyes are even closed, such as the german Good News Bible – ISBN3-438-01553-6)

#### **What about breathing during vision?**

Daniel 10:17

“For how can the servant of this my lord talk with this my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained **no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me.**” KJV

“How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe.” NIV

In vision, the prophet first falls down weak, has no strength, and is then strengthened by God. He has no breath (even while speaking) while in vision. "And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision...there remained **no strength** in me...and I retained **no strength**...when I heard the voice of his words, then I was in a deep sleep on my face...**neither is there breath left in me**...Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and **he strengthened me.**" Daniel 10:7-18 KJV

All of these phenomena are thus superhuman and can only be affected by God. Also, when Samson was given strength by God, he was invincible; the divine strength given him exceeded any human power. The physical signs in Daniel chapter 10 can thus be summarised as follows:

The prophet:

1. Falls down weak
2. Is raised up and strengthened by God
3. Has eyes wide open during vision
4. Does not breathe during vision, but can speak.

Let us see how Ellen White qualifies as a prophet in exhibiting the same physical signs described in Daniel 10, and also how God made sure that these would be verified and recorded for all. Many of her visions took place in the public arena so that the circumstances could be witnessed by eyewitnesses.

"In passing into vision, she gives three enrapturing shouts of 'Glory!' which echo and re-echo, the second, and especially the third, fainter but more thrilling than the first, the voice resembling that of one quite a distance from you, and just going out of hearing.

For about four or five seconds she seems to drop down like a person in a swoon, or one having lost his strength; she then seems to be instantly filled with superhuman strength, sometimes rising at once to her feet and walking about the room. There are frequent movements of the hands and arms, pointing to the right or left as her head turns. All these movements are made in a most graceful manner. In whatever position the hand or arm may be placed, it is impossible for anyone to move it. Her eyes are always open, but she does not wink; her head is raised, and she is looking upward, not with a vacant stare, but with a pleasant expression." 1BIO 122

A further eyewitness account of June 12, 1868 vision records: She walked back and forth and talked to us, and as she walked, she fell right down. She fell down gently. She went down as if an angel's hands were under her...Sister White lay perfectly quiet and unconscious. **Her eyes were open**, with a pleasant expression on her face. Nothing unnatural or unusual...Brother White said to these large men,

"Take her hands apart. You have two hands to her one. Just pull her hands apart." So they tried. They pulled and pulled till some of us got anxious that they would hurt her. Brother White said, "Don't be anxious; she is safe in God's keeping, and you can pull until you are perfectly satisfied." They said, "We are satisfied now. We don't need to pull anymore." He said, "Take up one finger at a time."

That was impossible. They could not do so much as move a finger. It seemed like a block of granite...Brother White said to these men, "Now hold her." I think they thought they could.

They grasped her by the wrists, but they could not retard the motion. It looked like any child could hold her, but she went on just the same...Now we must see if her eyelids will close."

There was a large Rochester [kerosene] lamp close by on the stand. He removed the shade and put this light right in front of her eyes. We thought she would move her eyes to protect them. She didn't. She was perfectly unconscious... the eyelids did not close...

"Now," Brother White said, "we must see if there is any breath in her body." There didn't seem to be any. Everything looked all right, only there was no breath Brother White said, "Now we will send out and get a mirror, and we will test it." So someone went to the next door and got a mirror, and it was held close to her face, but no moisture gathered. So there was no breathing. 2BIO, 232-234.

As an evangelist, I am aware of the resistance the outside world and some from within display towards the prophet of the remnant theology. All the more important that we have a "Thus saith the Lord" to support the case. It is my experience that it never pays to hide something under a bushel, if it is from God then it must be able to stand in the light. Does it matter that it is no longer possible to apply these verses to Ellen G. White according to the new Bible versions? Is it too uncomfortable to have a prophet of the remnant? Has dialectic praxis (conflict of opposites to bring about synthesis) so blunted our identity that we no longer feel comfortable with this exclusivity? I believe it is vital to our identity and without it we would be without anchor drifting towards Rome.

### **The Little Horn of Daniel**

"I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and, behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things." Daniel 7:8 KJV

The footnote in the NIV Study Bible identifies this little horn power as the Antichrist. This is what they say: "7:8 another horn, a little one. The Antichrist, or a world power sharing in the characteristics of the Antichrist' mouth that spoke boastfully. See 11:36; 2 Thessalonians 2:4; Revelation 13:5-6" xlvi.

Now, we would concur with this exegesis, but what do they do with Daniel 8:8,9 where they deal with this same power?

### **Daniel 8:8-9**

"Therefore the he goat waxed very great: and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones toward the four winds of heaven. And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land." KJV

"The goat became very great, but at the height of his power his large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven. Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land." NIV

The NIV here at least has the translation right but look what it does with its explanation:

“8:8 his large horn was broken off. The death of Alexander the Great at the height of his power (323 BC). 8:9-12 “Another horn” (v9) emerges not from the ten horns belonging to the fourth kingdom (as in 7:8), but rather from one of the four horns belonging to the third kingdom. The horn that “started small” is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who during the last few years of his reign (168-164) made a determined effort to destroy the Jewish faith. He in turn served as a type of the even more ruthless beast of the last days, who is also referred to in 7:8 as a “little” horn ... “xlviv.

Here the NIV violates the grammar of Daniel 8:8-9 by ignoring the gender of the wind direction and the horns. The gender excludes the little horn from coming out of one of the previous horns (making him a Greek king); he comes out of one of the wind directions (to which the “them” must refer in view of the gender). So they translate it right but explain it wrong. The Good News Bible increases this perversion by getting both the translation and the explanation wrong.

“Out of one of these four horns grew a little horn, whose power extended toward the south and the east and toward the Promised Land.” Daniel 8:9 Good News Bible In the NIV explanatory notes we have the full catastrophe of confusion. The Antichrist is future and also past. He is the Beast that arises in the future (Revelation 13) and he is at the same time Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Both futurism and preterism are accounted for in one exegesis, and Rome is left off the hook.

Does it matter whether the Antichrist comes out of Greece or is still to come in the future? Does it matter that millions of people died because they believed and taught that the Antichrist came out of the fourth beast and was the papal system? Does it then matter that the beast of Rev. 13 is the papal system? Does it matter that that Beast has a mark which will be enforced on all humankind? Does it matter that God has called a remnant “that keep the commandments of God and hold to the testimony of Jesus” to warn the world against receiving the mark of the beast at the peril of their soul? May God help us to realize that it does matter! xlviii Ibid.

“The church in the wilderness.’ and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world’s great capital, was the true church of Christ, the Guardian of the Treasures of truth which God has committed to his people to be given to the world.” —Ellen White