

A Brief Review of Textual History

- I. God designed to preserve His word through His churches, or disciples. **ISA 8:16 c/w ACT 11:26.**
 - A. Of special mention is the fact that the Gentiles were evangelized through the ministry of the Apostle Paul, who was commissioned from Antioch of Syria.
ACT 11:25-26; 13:1-2; 14:26-28.
 - B. Syria becomes the springboard of N.T. evangelism. A translation of the Bible into Syrian appears at about 150 A.D. This is known as the Peshitto.
 - C. The gospel soon went into Italy and further. **HEB 13:24; ROM 15:28.**
 1. At about the same time, 157 A.D., a Latin translation of the Bible appeared, known as the 'Itala.' Its superiority over even the acclaimed Latin Vulgate of Jerome (circa 384 A.D.) was admitted to by Augustine (354-430 A.D.), the Catholic bishop and philosopher, in 400 A.D., "Now among translations themselves the Italian (Itala) is to be preferred to the others, for it keeps closer to the words without prejudice to clearness of expression."
(*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Christian Lit. Ed., Vol. II, p. 542)
 2. This version derived its name from the *Italic* district, the regions of the Vaudois, later known as the Waldenses.
 - D. Italy, France and Great Britain were evangelized by Christians from Asia Minor. Their Old Latin script Bibles were the Bibles of the Montanists, Donatists, and later the Albigenses and Waldenses who withstood Rome. When the Pope sent Augustine (a different Augustine than noted above) to convert England in 596 A.D., he found Christians there with Latin Bibles that they had had since the days of the imperial Roman empire.
 - E. For almost 1000 years, Europe went into a period of time known as the Dark Ages. Roman Catholicism was the dominant political power during this time, but she still had to contend with masses of dissenters who were scattered in small churches throughout Europe.
 - F. In 1453, Constantinople, the capital of the eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire fell to the Turks.
 1. In the ensuing flight, its citizens, many of whom were Christians and Greek scholars, dispersed widely into western Europe, carrying with them scores of Greek copies of the Scriptures. Over 90% of the extant Greek copies of the N.T. are Byzantine or Syriac texts.
 2. As a result of this sudden release of suppressed information the next 100 years saw a great awakening from the sleep of the Dark Ages. Thus were produced the Greek N.T.'s of Erasmus (1516, 1522), Stunica (1522), Stephens (1546, 1550, 1551, 1559), Beza (five editions from 1559-1598), and Elzevir (1624).
 - G. The Waldensians had a tremendous influence on the reformers.
 1. Olivetan, a Waldensian, translated his Bible into French, which became known as the Olivetan Bible. This in turn, became the basis for the Geneva Bible, the dominant English version up until the AV 1611.
 2. Luther used the Tepl Bible, a pre-reformation German translation of a Waldensian Bible. This spurred him to use the Greek text of Erasmus to translate the Luther Bible.
 3. An Italian version of a Waldensian Bible was translated, called the Diodati.
 4. The AV 1611 translators had four Waldensian influenced Bibles and six Waldensian Bibles to access.
 - H. The line of English Bibles are the translations of Tyndale (1534), Coverdale (1536), Rogers (1537), Taverner (1539), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1557-1560) and culminating in the AV 1611.

- II. As is the case with most languages, English underwent a gradual development. English is generally divided into: 1) Old English (earliest records to about 1100 A.D.); 2) Middle English (from 1100 A.D. to about 1435 A.D.); and 3) Modern English (from the mid-1400's and onwards).
- A. Early inhabitants of England were the Celts, of whom there is relatively scant record.
 - B. Romans occupied England from 43-400 A.D.
 - C. Angles, Saxons, Jutes and Frisians occupied England. Latin words were incorporated into the language.
 - D. Scandinavians invaded England in 800 A.D., injecting their influence to the language.
 - E. The Normans seized England in 1066 A.D. French became the language of the ruling class until the mid-1300's when English again became the language of the ruling class and the literary language. French words continued to be borrowed until about 1400 A.D.
 - F. The Elizabethan period lasts from 1558-1642. The English language reached its apex of development during this period. It is during this time that the A.V. 1611 appeared.
- III. One of the arguments used by modern Bible revisers is that the older the manuscript, the closer it should be to the truth. With recent manuscript finds in the last 200 years pre-dating some manuscripts used by the AV 1611 translators (going back to the fourth century), we supposedly now have a better Bible.
- A. NOTE: The (apparent) age of the manuscript is not what is most important: it is the age of a particular reading. Some later manuscripts contain readings that were confirmed as Scripture in other ecclesial writings like church lectionaries at dates far before the so-called "oldest manuscripts."
 - B. Older does not equate with better or purer. People lied and made mistakes before the fourth century.
 - C. Corruption of the text of God's word started well before 300 A.D.
GEN 3:1-7; ACT 20:29-30; 2TH 2:2; 2CO 4:2; 2:17.
 - D. God has given strong warnings against corrupting Scripture. **PRO 30:5-6; DEU 4:2-3.**
 - E. **DEU 4:2-3** shows a connection with Baal worship. "The Baal, as the head of each worshipping group, is the source of all the gifts of nature; as the god of fertility all the produce of the soil is his, and his adherents bring to him their tributes of firstfruits. He is the presiding genius, patron or cause of all growth and fertility, and baalism, originating, probably, in the observation of the fertilizing effect of rains and streams upon the receptive and reproductive soil, became gross nature worship. Joined with the baals there are naturally found corresponding female figures known as Ashtoroth, embodiments of Ashtoreth. In accordance with primitive ideas which assume that it is possible to control or aid the powers of nature by the practice of 'sympathetic magic,' the cult of the baals and Ashtoroth was characterized by gross sensuality and licentiousness."
(*Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edition, Vol. 2, p. 834)
 - F. Around 306 B.C., Ptolemy Soter, ruler of Egypt, established a school in Alexandria, Egypt. For the next 300 years, until Alexandria was subjugated by the Romans in 30 B.C., the intellectual activity centered around scientific and literary pursuits.
 1. The second period of intellectual activity was from 30 B.C. to 642 A.D. when the Arabs destroyed Alexandria. The predominant movement of this period was of a "...character largely determined by Oriental gnosticism and containing Jewish and later, Christian elements. The second Alexandrian school resulted in the speculative philosophy of the Neoplatonists and the religious philosophy of the Gnostics and early church fathers." (*Ibid*, 14th Ed., Vol.1, p. 581)
 2. Gnosticism is a system of philosophy that incorporates the basic tenets of pagan,

mystery religions which boast a mystic revelation and secret knowledge. Gnostics believed that one must be equipped with sacred formulas and symbols in order to secure heaven. They profess the doctrine of *emanations*, which asserts that the supreme being emanated a lesser being which in turn emanated a lesser being and so on. This supreme divinity correlates with Baal, the god of fertility, the life source of the universe.

- G. The Alexandrian school would prove to play a vital role in the corruption of Scripture and the pollution of the N.T. churches. Astute individuals should be wary of looking to Egypt for something blessed by God! **EZE 30:6 c/w ISA 30:1-3.**
1. Philo. He was a Jew educated at Alexandria. He attempted to synthesize the O.T. with Greek philosophy. He allegorized the O.T. and believed God to be without quality. He thought God could not have contact with finite things without violating his purity and loftiness. God therefore generated the *logos* or *supreme idea* through whom the world was created and who is the mediator between God and man. This is gnosticism.
 2. Clement of Alexandria. This man played a founding role in a catechetical school at Alexandria, around 200 A.D.
 - a. He embraced the heresies of Tatian, who had already imbibed the gnostic position in his “Christianity.”
(*The Diatessaron of Tatian* by J. Hamlyn Hill, p. 9)
 - b. Clement expressly intended to mix Christian teachings with pagan philosophies, which he did.
(*The Revision Revised*, by Dean Burgon, p. 336)
 3. Origen (184-253 A.D.). A student of Clement, educated at Alexandria. He, like Philo, taught that the *logos* is eternally generated and is a creature. He maintained a three-fold sense of Scripture: grammatico-historical, moral, and the pneumatic or allegorical sense, which he believed was the highest. He stated that: “The Scriptures are of little use to those who understand them as they were written.” (*Origen, McClintock and Strong Ency.*)
 - a. Origen compiled the Hexapla, which was the O.T. in six columns, and made a Greek translation of the O.T. in the fifth column. He added the Apocrypha, which was never recognized in the Jewish canon of Scripture, nor by the Lord Jesus Christ (**LUK 24:44; MAT 23:35**). He also added a translation of the N.T. with deletions and alterations.
 - b. He admitted to wilful alterations of texts which did not conform with his reasonings. (Berlin, *Origenes Werke*, Vol.10, pp. 385-388)
 - c. Some time needs to be here devoted to the subject of the Septuagint (LXX), a supposed Greek translation of the O.T. made prior to the incarnation of Christ. The LXX is one of the most important articles in the modern Bible-reviser's armament. This is one of the so-called “best and most ancient” manuscripts that have been used to undermine the AV 1611. Notice this interesting admission concerning it: “The LXX translators made some palpable mistakes; their knowledge of Hebrew was often inadequate; they occasionally interpreted as well as translated, and they sometimes introduced local colour.” (*Ency. Brit.*, 14th edition, vol. 20, p. 336)
 - (1) It is claimed that the LXX was translated by 70 or 72 Jews sent to Alexandria at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (288-247 B.C.), and that it was done over a period of about 100-150 years.
 - (2) Evidence for the LXX prior to Christ is based largely on the

“Letter to Aristeas” a spurious record which purports that Ptolemy asked the translators philosophical questions to test their proficiency! Remember the warning against philosophy and vain deceit.

COL 2:8; 1CO 1:19-23.

- (3) Here is where we find some imaginative wizardry employed by modern scholars. The fifth column of Origen's Hexapla is deemed to be a *revision* of LXX while at the same time, in the absence of proof, is quoted as being LXX itself! Furthermore, whenever scholars resort to the fabled LXX, they virtually always quote from Codex Vaticanus, which is supposedly a copy of Origen's fifth column made 100 years after Origen! With quantum leaps in reasoning like this, is it any wonder that confusion abounds?
 - (4) Scholars often maintain that Christ frequently quoted LXX. But the O.T. which Christ would fulfil had *jots and tittles*, characteristic of Hebrew (**MAT 5:18**). The LXX is in Greek, which has no jots or tittles.
 - (5) The LXX was translated into *classical* Greek, not *koine* or common Greek. Christ and the apostles' ministries were aimed at and received by the common people.
MAT 11:25; MAR 12:37; JAM 2:5.
- d. Origen supposedly emasculated himself in an attempt to control lusts and enhance his dedication to God. If true, this is vain philosophy at work.
COL 2:8, 20-23.
 - e. Origen's teachings founded Scholasticism (The doctrines of the Schoolmen; the predominant theological and philosophical teaching of the period A.D. 1000–1500, based upon the authority of the Christian Fathers and of Aristotle and his commentators. 2. Servile adherence to the methods and teaching of the schools; narrow or unenlightened insistence on traditional doctrines and forms of exposition).
4. Eusebius. He was an admirer of Origen and a student of his philosophy. He was ordered by Constantine to publish fifty copies of the Bible to be used in the churches of the empire. He chose Origen's translations for the task.
 5. Jerome. About 380 A.D., he produced a Latin version of the Bible known as the Vulgate. It was based on the corrupted texts as well, containing the Apocrypha. Jerome admitted that the Apocrypha was not Scripture, but the Pope endorsed them.
 6. The Jesuits produced a Bible in English based on the Vulgate to counter the Waldensian-influenced English Bibles which were gaining great acceptance. The N.T. appeared in Rheims, France around 1582; the O.T. from Douay being compiled in 1609-1610. The Douay has been continually updated to keep pace with the AV 1611 (King James Version). Catholic Cardinal Wiseman acknowledges this. (*Douay Bible, The Catholic Encyclopedia*)
 7. The Codex Vaticanus (B) turned up in 1481 A.D. In 1859, Tischendorf discovered Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph) in a wastebasket in a convent. They are thought to be two surviving copies of Eusebius' fifty.
 - a. Believing B and Aleph to be the purest texts, Westcott & Hort prepared a Greek N.T. They dominated the Revision Committee of 1871 which produced the Revised Version of 1881. Their Greek N.T. altered the Traditional or Received Texts in more than 5700 places.
 - b. Westcott and Hort were admitted evolutionists, aionists, and Mariolaters,

- which would account for their tenacious clinging to the two Catholic texts when they had 3000 mss. available.
- c. Furthermore, Westcott and Hort were spiritualists who had strong leanings towards occult philosophies. They founded at least two societies which were steeped in “new-age” pursuits: the Hermes Club and the Ghostly Guild (Hermes is acknowledged among occultists as another name for Satan). The manuscripts which they preferred, interestingly enough, were from the pens of corrupted individuals like Origen and Marcion, who were principals of the Gnostic theology which sought to synthesize occult, pagan religion with Christianity. It is also interesting that Madame Helen Blavatsky, one of the most important occultists of all time, derived much of her Luciferian doctrine from Philo's Alexandrian school. She has nothing but praise for the efforts of Westcott and Hort, believing them to have done great service for the cause of Lucifer by revising the bible to reflect the “secret doctrine.”
8. All modern English versions after the AV1611 (KJV) stem from this line of texts. The NIV, Living Bible, Good News Bible, etc. are available in Catholic versions with an official imprimature. Even the New King James Version reflects the corruptions of B and Aleph.
 - a. It should be noted here that there have been some attempts made to update (not revise) the AV1611, such as the KJ21 or 21st century King James Version.
 - b. The jury is still out on such efforts, and those efforts beg the question as to why, if the KJV is God's word in English, would one risk altering a known, reliable standard when it would be better to simply educate oneself in the language of the KJV with a good dictionary?
 - c. The Flesh-Kincaid research company's Grade Level Indicator shows that when comparing versions, 23 out of 26 comparisons showed the KJV to be easier, and the average grade levels of readability were:
 - (1) NKJV - 6th grade.
 - (2) GNMM (Good News for Modern Man) - 7th grade.
 - (3) NIV - 8th grade.
 - (4) NASB - 6th grade.
 - (6) KJV - 5th grade.
 - d. If the goal of modern versions was to come up with a more readable bible, then consider these comparisons:
 - (1) **EPH 4:16.** *supporting ligament* (NIV) c/w *joint* (KJV).
 - (2) **2CH 2:2.** *conscripted* (NIV) c/w *told out* (KJV).
 - (3) **EXO 32:6.** *indulged in revelry* (NIV) c/w *rose up to play* (KJV).
 - (4) **EZE 31:4.** *rivulets* (NKJV) c/w *little rivers* (KJV).
 - (5) **MAT 14:24.** *the boat was already many stadia away* (NASB) c/w *was now in the midst of the sea* (KJV).
 - (6) **LUK 7:32.** *sang a dirge* (NASB) c/w *have mourned* (KJV).
 - (7) **ACT 12:21.** *rostrum* (NASB) c/w *throne* (KJV).
 - (8) **2CO 11:32.** *ethnarch* (NASB) c/w *the governor* (KJV).
 - (9) **1TI 3:3.** *pugnacious* (NASB) c/w *striker* (KJV).
 - (10) **JOB 6:6.** *slime of a purslane* (RSV) c/w *white of an egg* (KJV).

IV. **MAT 7:20** shows how to discern God's book from the counterfeit. God's word is His prophecy

(**REV 19:10; 2PE 1:21**) and prophets are known by their fruits.

- A. Let the preface of the RSV bear witness to the fruits of the AV1611: “The King James Version has with good reason been termed ‘the noblest monument of English prose.’ Its revisers in 1881 expressed admiration for its ‘simplicity, its dignity, its power, its happy turns of expression...the music of its cadences, and the felicities of its rhythm.’ It entered, as no other book has, into the making of the personal character and public institutions of the English-speaking peoples. We owe to it an incalculable debt.”
- B. **PRO 8:1-21**. The effects of wisdom can be readily seen where the AV1611 has been widely preached, believed and obeyed! The AV1611 is wisdom's words.
- C. **COL 1:5-6; 1TH 1:5-6; 2:13-14; ROM 10:17**. It is the word of God that works effectually in the believer, not the word of men. The Bible is either the word of God or it is the word of men about the word of God.
- D. By the text of **MAT 7:20**, the AV1611 is the inspired word of God in English. It was translated from the Masoretic Text of the O.T. and the Textus Receptus of the N.T., which comprised over 90% of all extant Greek manuscripts. No modern version has displayed the fruits that the AV1611 produced among English-speaking peoples.
- E. (**PRO 13:13**) Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded.