

The King James Bible

This is our introduction to the following writing by Elwin Roach. He does an excellent job of explaining the historical background & origins of the King James Version of the Bible. He also summarizes the several English translations that came before it.

Tracing backwards we find the KJV was to be a revision of The Bishops Bible that was created under Queen Elizabeth Tudor. It was to be a compromise between the Catholic & Protestant tensions. It was also to maintain the wording that supported the authority of the supreme head of the church, which she declared to be herself, (as did King James when it was his turn to rule). And it was not to have any notes by the Reformation, (contrary to the very popular Geneva Bible). The Bishops Bible however was a revision of The Great Bible, the previously published Bible by the English government.

Then The Great Bible is a revision of Matthews Bible, compiled by Thomas Matthew, (a pen name for John Rogers). The Matthews Bible was the second English government published Bible. One was allowed per church building, and people had to go there to read it. This supported both political & religious control for they were one & the same. The translation had no Reformation notes because they were not allowed. The Matthews Bible was a combination of Tyndale's works and The Coverdale Bible.

The Coverdale Bible was the first Bible published by the English government. It was also the first complete English Bible to be printed. Miles Coverdale knew little Hebrew or Greek, so he depended upon other translations. They included Tyndale's, two Latin versions, and two German versions. The Coverdale Bible was free of Tyndale's notes, which were often controversial.

William Tyndale was hated by the Catholic Church for writing a Bible independent of religious-political leadership. He was despised even more for making it available to the common people. The established church tried to stamp it out by banning & burning copies. Religious & political leaders resorted to severe horrific persecutions for any who would defy them; eventually realizing that they had to print their own...a copy that was safe for the established religious-political dominance. Then a Bible could be made available and all others forbidden, making for easier control. That is the real story behind The Coverdale Bible. Lacking Bible scholars they had to resort to Tyndale's as a base from which to edit. This was OK since Tyndale had used the Vulgate as one source.

Three book sources for this introduction are: 1. "The King James Version, 400 years of bondage 1611-2011" by Clyde Pilkington, Jr., 2. "The Story Behind the Versions" by Rodney Yoder, (a Mennonite publication), 3. and "Rose Book of Bible Charts, Maps & Time Lines", (especially the diagram on page 24).

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THE PATHFINDER

#263.15

HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES

THE WRITTEN WORD THE HEBREW & GREEK THE LATIN VULGATE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS THE ANOINTING THAT TEACHES

The Scriptures have been Judaism and Christianity's primary guidebook: the Torah (*meaning Instruction-the 5 Books of Moses*) and the ^[1]Talmud (*meaning Learning*) for the Jews; and the Old and New Testaments have been the choice for the Christians. The scriptures have especially been a guiding light and an integral part of all Christian faiths. Since it is such an important factor in so many lives, it would behoove us to look into how various Bible translations as we know them came to be. Although we will not address the accuracy, or inaccuracy, of certain words or verses in particular, we believe that knowing how *the scriptures* evolved over the centuries will lead us to a greater understanding of why we believe many of the things we do. The following is not meant to be critical by any means, but only to glean from the exhaustive, yet still incomplete, research extended to this endeavor. Therefore, let us advance our understanding as we consider the history of *the written Word*.

THE WRITTEN WORD

When the scriptures were first written, which was primarily in the Aramaic, Hebrew-Chaldee, and Greek languages, and they were "*given by inspiration of God, which are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. 2 Timothy 3:16-17*. However, that which has been handed down to us in this present age, in some respects, leaves a few things to be questioned, and could cause us to wonder if that which we have been taught has been from the most accurate version(s) of the scriptures. If not, how much of what we believe is the indisputable, infallible, inspired Word of God? Ironically, there is not one translation that lays claim to being infallible.

^[1] "The whole Talmud consists of 63 tractates (treatise, tracts, essays), and in standard print is over 6,200 pages long. It is written in Tannaitic Hebrew and Aramaic. The Talmud contains the teachings and opinions of thousands of rabbis on a variety of subjects, including Halakha (law), Jewish ethics, philosophy, customs, history, lore and many other topics. The Talmud is the basis for all codes of Jewish law and is much quoted in rabbinic literature." http://www.abgjew.net/2014_02_01_archive.html

In this pursuit, let us begin by noting:

The Process of Rendering Translations

"In order to establish the best possible text, scholars must first collect all of the significant variants and information about the manuscripts in which they occur. As a practical matter, a *critical text*—one with a version of the Greek or Hebrew on the page and...footnotes giving variations and their source manuscripts.... Scholars must then determine whether they will accept the readings in the text or adopt instead one of the alternatives.

"They may first rely on external evidence. This would include matters such as the age of the manuscript in which the variant occurs, since older manuscripts are generally closer to the original than later ones; or whether the variant occurs in manuscripts from one region. They will also use internal evidence: In general, shorter readings are preferable to longer ones, since scribes are more likely to add to a text than to delete materials (though, in the case of offensive or theologically challenging texts, deletion must be considered); difficult readings, including awkward phrases, coarse words, and poor grammar, are preferable to being deleted, since scribes might try to 'correct' such difficulties; and stylistic considerations can help judgment about how a particular author would have written.

"The task would be difficult enough if scholars could be sure that the original wording in any place with a variant reading was preserved in at least one manuscript; but even that is not necessarily the case. There are instances where no existing manuscript is likely to preserve the original wording, or where the original text does not make sense as far as current scholarship can determine. In such cases scholars must assume that the original wording of the text has been lost or distorted in the course of the copying process. They then have several options open to them. One, called conjectural ^[2]emendation, is to conjecture based on the text as it now stands or what the original wording might have been.

"This can often be based on a scholar's general knowledge of the ancient languages, just as an English speaker can notice, and mentally correct, a typographical error in a modern book without having access to the author's manuscript. Another option is the possibility of the consultation of the ancient versions. Finally, scholars may have to admit defeat and acknowledge that. Given the current state of our knowledge, it is impossible to determine what the original wording might have been. For instance, at 1 Samuel 13:1, the translation shows, by the use of ellipsis (. . .), that a word (the age of Saul when he began to reign) is missing. The translator's note points out that this number is not in the Hebrew text, and that the obvious second place to look for it is the Greek Septuagint and does not include any part of the verse. It is therefore impossible to recover the original wording unless some other ancient manuscript source is discovered."

Survey of the Old & New Testament with the Apocryphal Writings, Edited by J.K. Stewart:
<https://www.academia.edu/>

With this exegesis, we can see that it is literally impossible to render an exact translation of the original manuscripts. Notwithstanding, let us now glance briefly into the past and see how the written word has evolved, especially since the time of the apostles. I believe this will help in coming to a knowledge that will be profitable.

THE HEBREW & GREEK

All the combined books of the Bible, from Genesis through Malachi, is called the *Old Testament*, as the biblical scholars tell us that there were no original, firsthand, inspired manuscripts in existence during the first century A.D. By this time the pure Hebrew manuscripts of animal skins

^[2] emendation: a correction resulting from critical editing.

had evolved at the hands of the scribes as the modern synagogue—scrolls and written primarily in the Aramaic and Greek languages. The Greek translation of the *Old Testament* is the *Septuagint* and is regarded by most authorities as not being a very accurate translation. Notwithstanding, since the Septuagint was widely used in the synagogues, these were the manuscripts the Apostles most likely used to confirm by the letter what they were manifesting by the Spirit, according to Smith's Bible Dictionary.

When the *New Testament* was written, which were letters to various Christian assemblies, they were also written in Greek. Unlike the Septuagint, which was a translation from other translations, their words were inspired by the Spirit of Christ. Yet, there are not any known original letters at our disposal. The earliest existing manuscripts of the New Testament are the Codex Vaticanus Graecus 1209 and Codex Sinaiticus, both dating from the 4th century A.D.

The canonizing of the Bible has gone through various phases. There are many works that never found their way into the Bible. This was due to being lost or simply not esteemed as being worthy to be in the collection with other sacred writings. The book of Jasher is one that the prophet Samuel felt was worthy enough to quote from, "Behold, it is written in the book of Jasher..." 2 Samuel 1:18. It is also mentioned in Joshua 10:15, "Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" Some of the others are "The Wars of the Lord, Samuel on the Kingdom, Chronicles of David, Acts of Solomon," etc. (Young's Analytical Concordance).

Even with a Bible that could have contained more books, we still have ample information to point us to Jesus Christ in whom life is found. However, with the awful cloud of the Dark-Ages and its future influence upon Christianity, it is a wonder that any truth at all survived. From 400 A.D., after Constantine had formed a one-world church by incorporating the pagan religions of the known world, along with Christianity, to the late 10th century, there was hardly any learning at all. Knowledge from the ancient Romans survived only in a few monastery, cathedral, and palace schools. Knowledge acquired from ancient Greece almost disappeared, and the people, in their ignorance, accepted popular stories, myths, and rumors as truth.

THE VULGATE

The difficulty with anyone outside of the State-established church in being able to read the scriptures was compounded by the use of the Vulgate, which was a Latin translation of the Bible.

The Latin version of the Bible was first birthed in the 2nd century by the Latin speaking churches of North Africa, and drifted greatly from the Greek and Hebrew texts. Nevertheless, they used this inferior translation until the 4th century. A critical ecclesiastical revision was made in Northern Italy. By then they were using a version of the Latin Vulgate. This, however, was of little help; for it was very poorly translated as well, and by the end of the 4th century the Latin texts of the Bible had fallen into the greatest corruption.

Jerome (329 - 420 A.D.) was responsible for a more accurate translation of the scriptures to the Latin; but it too was lacking. His several versions were adopted by the church along with other Latin versions that became available, and by the 8th century the corruption had arrived at such a height that Charlemagne instructed Alcuin to revise the Latin text, which was considered one of the more accurate Vulgates. However, by the 15th century many others were also being used, and the invention of the printing press created a flood of *unreliable* texts. When the Council of Trent declared the Vulgate to be the authoritative text of scripture, the need of a standard text became more urgent than ever. An edition was then published in 1590 under the superintendence of the Pope

Sixtus V. This version had the famous constitution prefixed in which Sixtus affirmed the total authority of the edition for all future time. It was, however, soon found that this edition also was defective; and accordingly another edition was prepared under papal authority. It appeared in 1592 in the Pontificate of Clement VIII. This version helped some but not a great deal. All in all, the Old Testament suffered the most at the hands of the Latin translators. In the New Testament far more has been done for the correction of the Vulgate, though even here, yet to date, no critical edition has been published. Nonetheless, the vast power which the Vulgate has had in determining the theological terms and beliefs of Western Christendom can hardly be overrated. By far the greater part of the current doctrine and terminology have been based on the Vulgate. It was also the Vulgate that Martin Luther used in translating his German version of the Bible, and from Luther the influence of the Latin passed on to our own Authorized King James Version. (Above information compiled from pages 732-735 of Smith's Bible Dictionary).

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Even with the increase of education and knowledge after the 10th century, it was not until the 14th century that the first spark of light was apparently seen, and it was made manifest in the life of **John Wycliffe**. He was the pride of Oxford University—the foremost scholar of his day and the most influential preacher in England. In his preaching and many writings he openly denounced the papacy and declared that the Pope was antichrist, meaning that he was working in opposition to Christ. This boldness normally would have merited one to be burned at the stake, but some royal families befriended him and hindered the desires of the church.

Wycliffe had seen that there were four primary ways that Satan had used antichrist and his worldly clerks of the religious system to destroy Holy writ along with true doctrine. These four *accursed ways or false reasons*, as he stated, are:

- 1) ***The church** is of more authority, and more to be believed than any gospel.*
- 2) *As Augustine said, the gospel cannot be believed unless **the church** teaches it.*
- 3) *No man alive knows what the gospel is, unless **the church** approves it.*
- 4) *There is no cause to believe any gospel unless **the church** confirms and teaches it.*

(Great Voices of The Reformation, H.E. Fosdick, pg. 18).

Wycliffe (1320 - 1384) recognized that men had taken over the affairs of God and had made His written word of none effect by preaching and driving these four points deep into hearts and minds of the uneducated people. They had taken doctrinal truths of living Gold and replaced them with iron-clad shackles of death; and a large portion of Christendom is still bowing obediently to many of these erroneous doctrines and ideas of old.

Regardless of the gross darkness that had covered the souls of men for so many ages, this did not hinder God from shining His light into this Hungarian vessel of honor, and He did not allow that light to be snuffed out after he died and then forty-one years later in 1425 Wycliffe was exhumed and burned along with his books and Bibles, especially his dreaded English Bible, and the ashes of his bones and books scattered into the River Swift. The living flame was not extinguished by religious men's spiteful acts of hatred.

In 1572, a picture was published in a Bohemian psalter representing Wycliffe striking a spark, John Huss kindling the coals, and Martin Luther brandishing the flaming torch. This is a perfect

picture of how God had used these three men to begin the enlightenment of His people out of the apostasy of the Dark Ages. Not only has that torch been carried by other members of His body, but today we look to the hour when His ministers are seen as **flaming fire**, as in *Psalm 104:4*.

William Tyndale (1492 - 1536) was another light and lively stone that God used to lift His chosen people out of the awful pit of the Dark Ages. He, being a pious man of God, and well accomplished in the Greek and Hebrew languages, spent many hours studying the few manuscripts that were available at that time. Despite his handicap of not having reliable texts of the ancient languages, seeing the error of the Church's many doctrines and the pitiful condition of the people's souls, he set out to translate the New Testament into the English of his day, hoping to print and distribute them to the common people of England. However, he was not able to get the support of the Bishop of London while translating it, and getting it printed was even a greater obstacle. Both, the Church and State declared that the laity had no business with Bibles—that it would only add confusion and disorder to the Church. Therefore, the printing of his translation of the New Testament was prevented in England.

He continued to pursue this great quest however, and by crossing the Channel to Wittenberg, Germany, he met Martin Luther. In 1525, with Luther's aid and encouragement, they were able to get prints made of his English manuscripts. They then smuggled these manuscripts into England, but not without the endeavor costing Tyndale his life. Although he did not personally go back to England at that time with his illegal contraband, the Church was so outraged by the Truth-bearing Light that his translation had brought to England, they sent a friend to betray him. He was deceitfully persuaded to come back to England, where he was arrested and imprisoned in the castle of Vilvoorden, tried and convicted. He was first strangled, and then burnt in the prison yard, Oct. 6, 1536. His last words were, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes."

In the face of adversity and strong opposition, **Myles Coverdale** was another beacon of light who carried the torch of Truth one step further. Just before Tyndale died, Coverdale translated the first complete Bible into English, which was based on the Latin Vulgate, Tyndale's New Testament, and Luther's German Bible. He was also the first to separate the Apocrypha from the Old Testament and place it as an appendix. King Henry VIII was very much opposed to Tyndale's book, declaring very severely that: *"...It is not necessary that the scripture should be in the English tongue, and placed in the hands of the common people; but that the distribution of the scripture, and the believing or denying of them, depends only upon the discretion of the superiors, as they think it convenient. And that the translation of the New Testament and the Old into the vulgar tongue of English would cause the people to be inclined to erroneous opinions, and would increase the errors among the said people, without any benefit or commodity toward the good of their souls. And that it shall now be more convenient that the same people should have the holy scripture expounded to them, by preachers in their sermons, according as it has been of old time accustomed before this time."*

Although the written word was coming to be more common, and certainly not perfect, there was always something hindering its evolution. Renowned men who were steeped in tradition and fearing loss of control would undermine these works; but they continued, nevertheless.

In 1537, John Rogers, an associate of Tyndale, translated his version of the Bible, which was later recognized as the **Matthew Bible** and then as the **Cranmer Bible**. He did not have an understanding of Hebrew, so it is acclaimed that two-thirds of his Bible was from Tyndale and one-third from Coverdale. Rogers was martyred in 1555, and two years later Thomas Cranmer, the

Archbishop of Canterbury, was also burned at the stake following his conversion to Christ and true doctrine. However, it is to Cranmer that England is indebted for the legacy of an **Open Bible**, and for this enlightenment, it is certain that he did not die in vain.

The Great Bible was printed in 1539, and Coverdale played a major part in its processing. For the most part however, this Bible was translated from the Tyndale and Coverdale's own Bible and ironically, although King Henry VIII gave royal approval of The Great Bible, he issued an order that Tyndale's and Coverdale's could not be received or owned by anyone.

The legacy left by **Queen Mary** (1553—1558) was that during her reign, **no Bible was printed in England**. However, in 1560 a group of scholars in Geneva produced an English version called **The Geneva Bible**, followed by a second edition in 1652. **This was the first English version to use numbered verses as separate paragraphs**. It was designated as **The People's Book** and was the Bible that was brought over on the Mayflower. The Puritans used it, and it held preeminence over all other English versions for seventy-five years. During that time there were one hundred-forty editions of The Geneva Bible to appear.

The Bishops' Bible was next in line to be printed in English. The popularity of The Geneva Bible persuaded the Anglican authorities that they should produce a Bible which could bear the authority of the Church of England. Therefore, Archbishop Parker appointed a committee to accomplish this task. They were to use The Great Bible as their basis and were also to check with the Greek and Hebrew texts. The reason for using another translation as their foundation, rather than adhering strictly to the Greek and Hebrew, was that the scholarship of these Bishops was lacking greatly in these two languages. By using The Great Bible as a guide, they were in essence compiling **The Bishops' translation from Tyndale's translation of Coverdale's translation from Cranmer's translation**. Therefore, this translation was far inferior to the Geneva Bible, even so, it is **The Bishops' Bible to which the King James Version is so closely related**.

The last two Bibles to be considered before the King James Version are those known as the **Rheims New Testament** (1582) and the **Douay Old Testament** (1609), both Roman Catholic volumes. Until the recent translation by the late Monsignor Ronald A. Knox, these two, combined as one complete Bible and called the **Douay Bible**. It was the only Bible approved by the Roman Catholic Church. The New Testament part of the Douay Bible was extensively used by the king James revisers.

It is now time to consider the most important English version of the Bible ever to be produced, sometimes called **The Authorized Version**, but is usually referred to as **The King James Version**.

When James the 1st ascended the throne of England in 1605, he found himself heir to a religious turmoil and confusion that had characterized the entire 16th Century. In the hope of bringing order out of chaos, he called a meeting of churchmen early the following year. The only fruitful suggestion brought forth was a proposal that a new translation that would be acceptable and useful to the entire church system and be made of holy writ. Most of those present were against this thought, but the King ordered it to be done. Forty-seven clergymen and lay-scholars were chosen for this task. The group was divided into six companies, each taking a part of the text. Each man worked independently, then as a company. They considered their individual efforts until all were in agreement. As sections were completed, they were handed to other companies for criticism. Finally, a committee of two members from each company harmonized the entire undertaking.

Fifteen rules were to bind this large number of revisers. The first was: *"The ordinary Bible read*

in the Church, commonly called the **Bishops' Bible**, is to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit." *A Brief History of the King James Bible By Dr. Laurence M. Vance*. The Bishops' Bible is the one that was compiled from the Tyndale, Coverdale, and Cranmer translations.

The Old Testament rested upon the same Masoretic Hebrew text as did all subsequent versions; but inasmuch as no ancient manuscripts of the Greek New Testament arrived in England until 1628, those responsible for this "*greatest of all versions*", did not have the advantage of the best Greek text. It is of no wonder therefore, that, according to one source: "*Blaney's Bible (1769) added thirty thousand four hundred and ninety-five passages, and further additions were made by Clark (1810) and Scott (1822). Bagster's Bible (1846) contains five hundred thousand references, but this number was so large that it proved to be an encumbrance.*"

http://www.worldinvisible.com/library/anstey/5a0n.0106_04b.htm

If all the original errors of the King James Version of the Bible were corrected with the Authorized marginal references, we would not be able to recognize it as the King James Bible. And then, if we corrected all the errors that this new translation would still have, we might not be able to recognize the new translation either.

Nonetheless, the team of translators did a marvelous job with what they had to work with, and the poetry and prose of the King James Version was a literary marvel. It crowded out all preceding translations. For the first time, England was reading one Bible at home and hearing the same one read in church. "*It thus became bound up with the life of the nation. Since it stilled the controversy over the best rendering, it gradually came to be accepted as absolute truth, and in the minds of myriads there was no distinction between this version and the ancient texts, and they may almost be said to have believed in the literal inspiration of the very words which composed it*" (Albert S. Cook). Let me add that many of those in today's Christian religions still feel the same way.

We can understand why people would take the *written word* and mold their lives by it, that is, if the word was the original manuscripts in its pure form or even an exact translation. However, after knowing the transformations that the *letter* has gone through and having understanding of the present condition of our modern versions of the Bible, we are simply amazed to see the reverence and worship given to *every jot and tittle* of something that was never meant to be worshiped, much less that which has gone into such aberrations and change.

Many of us, and perhaps all of us, have been guilty, or are presently guilty, of esteeming God's written word above Him. This, I believe, is attributed to not knowing Him, and the less we know Him the more we are prone to substitute knowing about Him for the reality of His person, which, of course, is found in Jesus. *Everything that is real, all the life and mysteries of God, are found only in Him. Colossians 2:2-3*. God-life is not found in a book, not even if the book is the Bible. Have you ever noticed, when the Lord does speak a truth to us by a revelation from His Spirit within our very being, that before we will believe it, we sometimes go to one of our favorite translations, which is usually the King James Version, to make sure what we heard is true, as if we either misheard or hypothetically, the Holy Spirit might lie to us. However, if we do not know our Lord well enough to be able to distinguish His voice from our own, or some other's, then let it be our confirming source, but not without the use of some good Greek and Hebrew concordances, lexicons, and Greek-English interlinear New Testaments. The Strong's Exhaustive Concordance is good, but even Dr. Strong did not have the final say on every Greek and Hebrew word contained in the original manuscripts; therefore, a variety of study aids are sometimes useful if we want to get a more accurate

rendering of the Scriptures.

I pray that I am not misunderstood in what is being related concerning the *scriptures*. To set the record straight, I am not saying that we do not need the Bible, nor am I suggesting we should discard it and stop reading and comparing scripture with scripture; but I am saying that we should put the letter in its proper perspective and use it as the tool for which it has been designed, and to stop placing it over God and His living word of inspiration. Therefore, let us compare that which is in writing to that which is spoken by the anointing.

In the book of John, Jesus referred to the scriptures as being the instrument for which they were designed; but because of the omission of one word by the King James translators, it has led some to believe that we can find the life of God in something else other than Jesus Christ. The KJV, among some others, has it as: "**Search the scriptures:** for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me." *John 5:39*. It sounds as if **He is giving them a command to search the scriptures** in order to have eternal life. If this verse was really examined, even as it is in the KJV, we could see that this is not what Jesus was saying.

Let us notice how it is worded according to Bible scholar Benjamin Wilson in the Emphatic Diaglott: "**You search** the writings (*graphē*), *because you think in them life aionian to have, and they are those testifying concerning me; and you are not willing to come to me so that life you may have.*" *John 5:39-40*. By using the personal pronoun **you** (*as the verb is in the second person*) and noticing the words, **you think** (*which is very often overlooked*), enables us to see what He was actually saying to the religious leaders of that day. Rather than Jesus encouraging or commanding them to read the letter of the word so that they could have Life, He was making a statement about something that they were already doing but were missing the mark in their efforts. They were **searching the scriptures and thinking that this is where eternal life was found**. They were seeking life, seeking more knowledge, seeking more information; but they refused He to whom it all pointed, the only One that could give them that wonderful Life—**JESUS!** And I do not hesitate to say that we are not so much unlike those to whom He spoke that day.

We may have prided ourselves in not only being able to search and dig out knowledgeable or truth (facts) from the Bible, but we have also congratulated ourselves for memorizing the scriptures. Brethren, it matters not if we know every verse in the entire Bible, if we do not know Jesus in the reality of Himself and become the word that we have learned by rote, then we have gained nothing in the realm of His Life and are as a sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. A lot of clamor and clatter may have been streaming from our lips, but where has the essence of **THE WORD, CHRIST JESUS**, been? If He has not been in that *shout, in that war cry, in that Word of 1st Thessalonians 4:16*, we then may be spiritually dead. For sure, if He is not in the words that we have been declaring, those words are as much of the letter that kills as the letter of the scriptures. The letter without the Spirit, whether written or spoken, always kills; but the Spirit always gives life. Some of us may have had a more accurate word because of our understanding of the Hebrew and Greek, but without the Life of Christ being in our word, we are not much better off than those who can quote thousands of scriptures from the King James Bible or some other translation.

Paul gave us some insight concerning the *letter* in these words, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament (*Jesus*); **not of the letter, but of the Spirit:** for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." *2 Corinthians 3:6*. Like it or not, Brethren, we are going to have to come to the place in Christ where we can see what the letter IS and what the letter IS NOT. It is good to apply the written word to our lives as it was intended, as a guide to the greater glory which is Christ;

however, when we dogmatically and religiously follow every jot recorded, and then call ourselves holy and righteous—this is death! When we are looking at the printed word and doctrines as our Life, our whole life can be caught up in reading, in searching, in studying, and we have no time for our Lord. When *death is our life*, then how *dead is that life*.

There was a time when the letter had some glory, as Paul continued in 2nd Corinthians 3:7-18; stating that even though it was "**the ministration of death**...it was **glorious**, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; **which glory was to be done away**. But their minds were blinded; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament (*covenant*); which veil is done away in Christ. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory (*of the law*) to glory (*of Christ*), even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (*parentheses supplied*). Is the veil still over our eyes? If we are looking to the **glory of the letter** for our source of Life, then indeed, our eyes are veiled from the reality of the Truth; however, when the Spirit is LORD, as Paul wrote, the veil of the law is removed and we begin to fulfill it by nature rather than by works of the flesh. There is a difference, Brethren, whether we fulfill the scriptures due to it being our nature, or we do them out of the resources of our own religious efforts.

We can teach a chimpanzee to sit and display perfect manners at the dinner table, but even so, this does not make it a human being, it remains a chimpanzee. The same principle can be applied to us. We can act religious and quote scriptures until the cows come home, but that avails nothing in the economy of God; for we must be by the Spirit or it avails little, if anything. This is one kingdom that we are not going to talk or impress our way into. Again, we are not saying that we must discard our Bibles or to stop studying, but since Jesus is the only way unto Life, then let us not try to use the letter as a vehicle to enter the glory of God, especially a letter that has become so degraded and inaccurate.

THE ANOINTING THAT TEACHES

Although the written word, regardless of how accurate it is in the ancient manuscripts, it is still dead. But please know, it was not dead when it was written, but most likely was by the time the ink dried, yet not dead to the penman, but to those who read it. When the prophets and apostles received and wrote the Word of God, it was very much alive because of the anointing that it was received and written by. However, when we read those same scriptures, and they are not read by the same anointing wherein they were written, they are then dead.

It may be hard to imagine how such a holy word could possibly produce death, but hopefully we can explain. In Romans 14:23 it is stated, "...whatsoever is not of faith is sin," and of course we know that "the wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23; therefore, when we apply a dead word to our lives, in essence we are receiving death rather than life. How then, we might ask, are we to read the Bible without it being more of a danger to us than a help?

One thing that is very important to remember concerning this: "Faith cometh by hearing, and **hearing by the word of God.**" Romans 10:17. Paul did not say that faith, His faith, comes by reading or hearing the scriptures quoted, but by **hearing by the word of God**. There is no place in the Bible where the scriptures are called "the word of God." Therefore, the hearing is **by the living, vibrant, anointed word coming from God**. This word is heard as an inspiration, as a revelation, as an unction from the holy One, which cause some to simply say, "I may not be able to explain it; but I know that I know." it is **hearing** a word by the anointing of the holy Spirit that abides in us, and this is what produces the faith that enables us to do or be whatever it is that He quickens to us. We

can also remember that we are saved (delivered) "...through **faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.**" Ephesians 2:8.

When He gives us His gift of faith by us hearing His word, it then becomes our own, such as, when a mother bakes and decorates a cake from all the ingredients that belong to her, and then she gives it to her son for his birthday, the cake becomes his. He owns it. Likewise, once the Lord gives us His faith, it is then our faith, and that faith will make us whole as noted in Matthew 9:22. His faith, now our faith, has the power to remove mountains, Matthew 17:20; for what He gives to us becomes ours; but presumptive thoughts and desires that are formed in our minds *is not faith* that we are bringing before us today. Wishful thinking or doctrinal teachings cannot save us nor can it remove mountains that are set before us.

And according to the record, when a prophet was guilty of presumption, saying that God had said something when He had not, they were put to death. This is what is happening to so many of us today. We are saying, "*Thus saith the Lord*" when we sometimes should be saying, "*Thus the Lord once said, for it is written...*" Therefore, when we assume that God has spoken but has not, we pass the sentence of death upon ourselves. On the other hand, however, if we have been speaking words that we have received by the anointing, then we live and those who hear by the Spirit live also. The apostle John related this in reference to the anointing and its function in our lives: "But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." 1 John 2:27. With this we can see that it makes no difference whether it is the written word from the Bible or from some other writings or the spoken words from men's lips, if the *anointing* that abides within quickens it to us; that word will produce *the gift of faith* and strength enough to slay the dragon that is in the sea. This is the **Word, the Anointed, Living Word** that we can hold to and not be ashamed or found guilty of moving in presumption.

There is nothing wrong with Christians being positive thinkers, and *it is a good thing to live a positive life in Christ, knowing that "greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."* But we should never confuse our natural positive thinking as being that thing which will solve all of our earthly and spiritual problems.

In closing, let us know that **it is good to read, study, and prove what are scriptural truths; but it is better to rightly divide the word (logos) of truth.** The **Logos**, of course, is not the written word. **The Logos is the essence, the substance of Jesus Christ who is the truth.** Therefore, in all of our reading musing over the scriptures, let us store these bounties in our spiritual minds until the time comes for them to be quicken and made alive in us. Christ's Life will then spring forth that will produce a living, working, effectual faith unto salvation and the manifestation of the sons of God!

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