



Systematic Theology

A row of white classical columns receding into the distance under a bright sky. The columns are fluted and have decorative capitals. The scene is brightly lit, with long shadows cast on the ground.

Systematic Theology

Session 4: Bible Translations



INTRODUCTION


- There are two main reasons that modern English translations differ:
 - *Textual Basis*
 - *Translation Philosophy*



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Session 4: Bible Translations

TEXTUAL ISSUES



The Undisputed Facts

- The Bible was written and inspired by God in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek (NOT ENGLISH)
- We do not have the original writings of the Bible
- We have *thousands* of both Hebrew and Greek COPIES of the original writings of the scriptures
- There are MINOR differences between these copies



Incorrect Conclusions

- **The inspired word of God is hopelessly lost**
 - **God has preserved his word in all of the manuscripts**
- **There is a perfect translation that God has provided for each language on earth**
 - **The Bible no-where teaches this**
- **There is a perfect set of "copies" that all translations should be based on**
 - **The Bible no-where teaches this**

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A Little History: NT Writings

- The New Testament was written primarily in Palestine, Asia Minor, and Italy
- Much of the New Testament was written as circular letters whose recipients would either copy the letter for themselves and then send it on or would keep the original and send the copy on
- These copies would continue to be circulated and recopied throughout the known world
- By the end of the 2nd century, 27 books of the New Testament were universally accepted as the inspired writings of scripture

A Little History: NT Copies

- Emperor Constantine moved the capitol of the Roman Empire to Constantinople (modern Istanbul)
- By 397, the Council of Carthage reflecting the church's recognition of the inspired books of the NT, officially recognized the 27 books of the NT as canonical
- Christianity continued to spread throughout the Roman empire
- Throughout this time, the scriptures were still being ***copied and translated***

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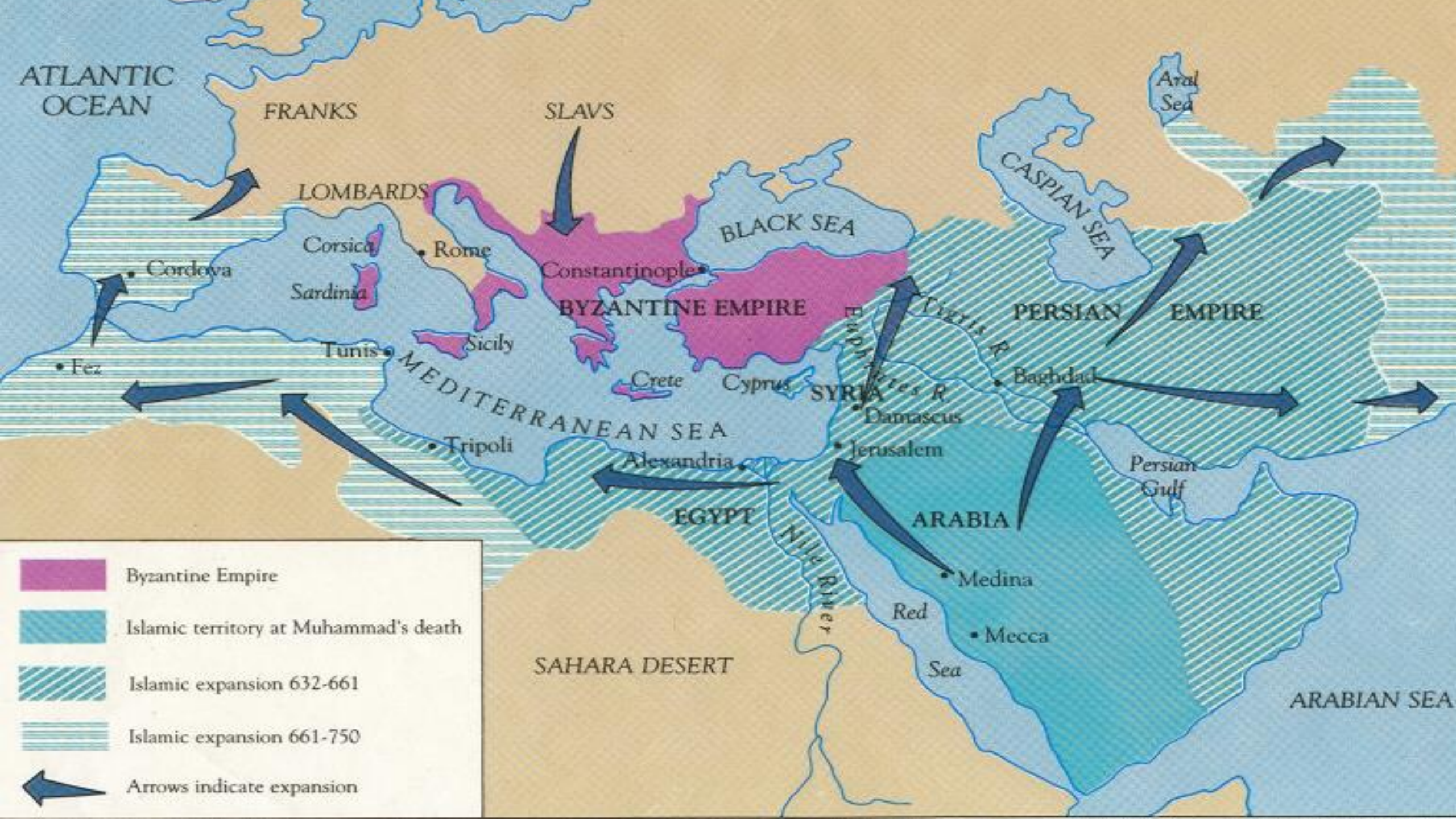
A Little History: The Rise of Islam

- In 613, Muhammad began to reveal his "prophecy" and Islam began to spread in Arabia
- Just 20 years later, Muslims had cut the Byzantine Empire in half by conquering Palestine, including Jerusalem
- In 641, Muslims invaded Egypt and conquered the Byzantine empire's presence.
- By the beginning of the 7th century, most of North Africa and Egypt were completely Muslim
- Some of the oldest manuscripts in existence today come from North Africa and Egypt



A Little History: East and West Clash

- In 324, Constantinople became the capital of the Roman (Byzantine) Empire
- It fell to the Ottoman Empire and to Muslim rule in 1453
- Byzantine Christians fled into Eastern Europe following the conquest of the Ottoman Empire
- They took with them the copies of the Bible that had multiplied in Constantinople



ATLANTIC OCEAN

FRANKS

SLAVS

Aral Sea

CASPIAN SEA

BLACK SEA

LOMBARDS

Corsica

Rome

Constantinople

BYZANTINE EMPIRE

PERSIAN EMPIRE

Sardinia

Sicily

Crete

Cyprus

SYRIA

Damascus

Baghdad

Fez

Tunis

Tripoli

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Alexandria

EGYPT

Nile River

ARABIA

Medina

Mecca

Red Sea

Persian Gulf

ARABIAN SEA

SAHARA DESERT

- Byzantine Empire
- Islamic territory at Muhammad's death
- Islamic expansion 632-661
- Islamic expansion 661-750
- Arrows indicate expansion



Ottoman Empire in 1580

200 Miles





A Little History: First Published Greek NT

- In a rush to beat the publication of a Spanish Greek NT, Erasmus compiled a Greek NT in 1516
- Due to his haste in compiling the Textus Receptus, Erasmus:
 - Could not consult some of the best manuscripts available in his day
 - Made many typographical and editorial mistakes
 - Was influenced by the Latin Vulgate and pressure from Church officials to add things not found in the manuscripts available to him



A Little History: First Published Greek NT

- His Received Text (textus receptus) became the first great work of NT scholarship in the Enlightenment
- This Greek NT became the basis for most ancient English translations, including the King James Version

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A Little History: Modern Advances

- In the 18th and 19th Centuries, there was more scholarly openness in Northern Africa and Egypt as these Muslim countries began to open up
- In 1859, the most significant New Testament codex was discovered at St. Catherine's Monastery in Mt. Sinai



A Little History: Sinaiticus

- Contains the complete NT
- Is the oldest complete Greek NT, dating to 300-350.
- May be one of 50 Bibles that was ordered by Constantine to be placed in Constantinople by Eusebius

The Problem

How do I know which reading among the differences is correct?



Dealing with Manuscript Variants

- There are roughly 5800 complete or fragmented Greek manuscripts of the New Testament
- While these manuscripts agree with each other in the whole, there are areas where they vary from each other
- These differences are called “variants”
- Through the scientific process of “textual criticism,” scholars seek to determine which variant “reading” is original, weighing the evidence found in the different manuscripts



Important Terms

- **Textual Criticism:** The scientific process of attempting to ascertain the original wording of a text.
- **Manuscript:** a general term referring to an ancient copy of the scriptures
- **Papyri:** A manuscript written on ancient material, not paper, made from a plant
- **Codex:** A number of manuscripts bound together



Important Terms

- **Manuscript Family:** a group of manuscripts that all possess common characteristics
- **Uncial:** Greek lettering in all caps with no spaces, older
- **Minuscule:** Greek lettering in lower case with spaces, newer
- **Corruption:** a copyists' error that continued to be included in subsequent copies



Uncials

ΠΟΙΗΕΝ ΤΗ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ
ΑΥΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΤΩΣ
ΠΑΣΑΙ ΑΙ ΓΥΝΑΙΚΕΣ
ΠΕΡΙΘΗΣΟΥΣΙΝ ΤΙ
ΜΗΝ ΤΟΙΣ ΑΝΔΡΑΣΙ
ΕΑΥΤΩΝ ΑΠΟ ΠΤΩ
ΧΟΥ ΕΩΣ ΠΛΟΥΣΙΟΥ
ΚΑΙ ΗΡΕΣΕΝ Ο ΛΟ
ΓΟΣ ΤΩ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΙ ΚΑΙ
ΤΟΙΣ ΑΡΧΟΥΣΙΝ ΚΑΙ
ΕΠΟΙΗΣΕΝ Ο ΒΑΣΙ
ΛΕΥΣ ΚΑΘ' ΕΛΛΗ
ΣΕΝΟΜΑ ΜΟΥΧΟΣ

Minuscule

Es' ης αιμορροουσης :)
πτεπει προς τοις ποδας αυτης
και παρεκδλει αυτον πολλαι λε
γον· οτι το φηγατριον μου εχαι
σε· ινα ελθων επιθησ αυτη τας



Rules of Textual Criticism

- The shorter reading is the best
- The harder reading is the best
- The older reading is the best
- The reading supported in the most manuscripts is the best
- The reading that best explains the other readings is best



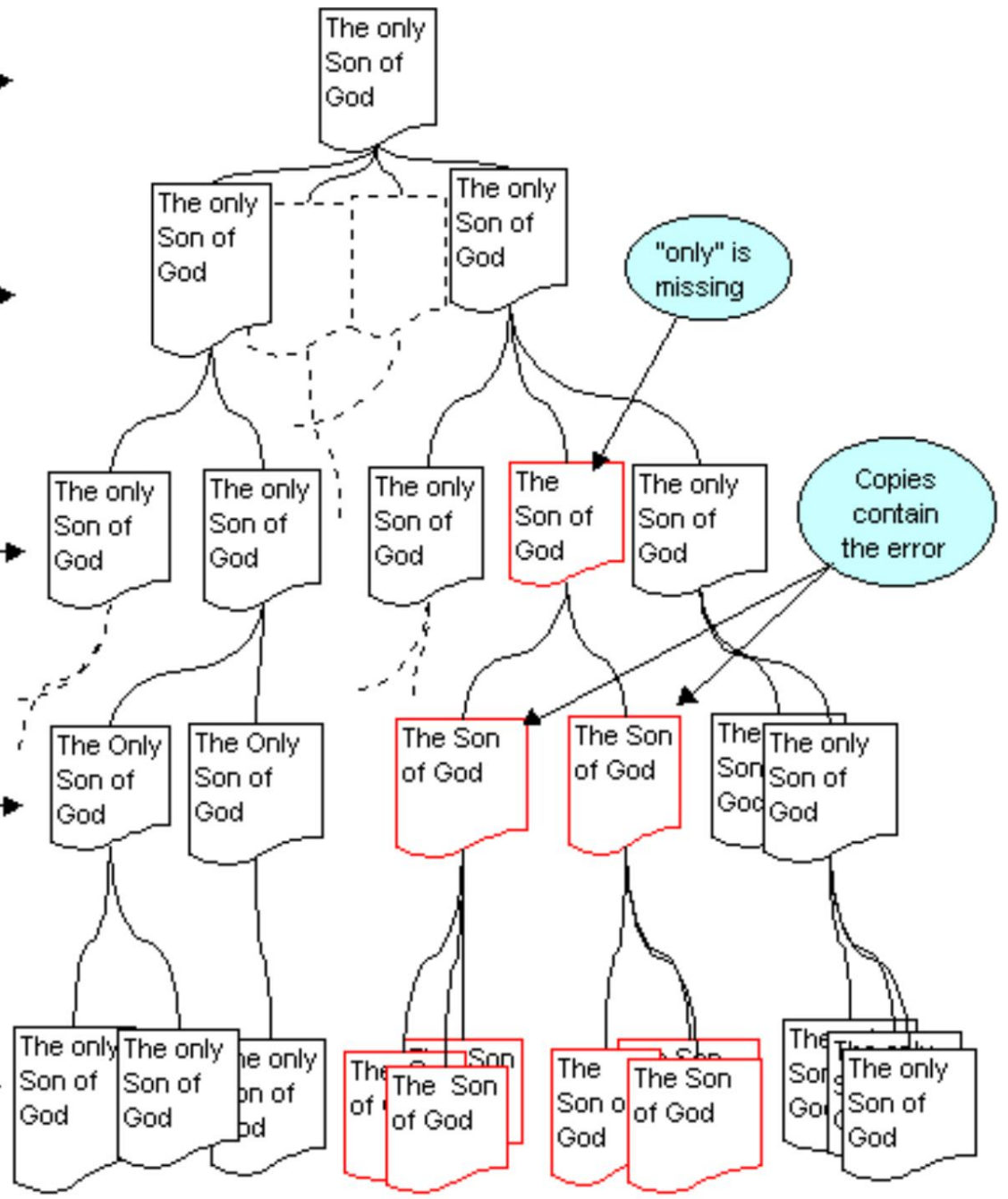
The Original Manuscript would be without error.

2nd Century Documents
The next copies were probably 100% accurate, but could have had copy errors. These copies were distributed over the Mediterranean area.

3rd Century Documents
The copies of these copies may or may not have had copy errors. Notice the "error" in red to the right. The word "only" is missing.

4th Century Documents
The copies of errors would have the error copied down the line. Yet, other copies of the same era, from an earlier version, might not have that error in the same place.

5th Century Documents
As manuscripts were copied, errors were copied also. Sometimes, new errors were introduced.





Textual Criticism in Action

KJV Our Text: Matt 18:15 **NASB**

"Moreover, if thy
brother shall
trespass against
thee"

"If your brother sins"

ESV

NIV

"If your brother sins
against you"

"If your brother or
sister sins"

NKJV

NET

"Moreover, if your
brother sins
against you"

"If your brother sins"

To the Manuscripts...

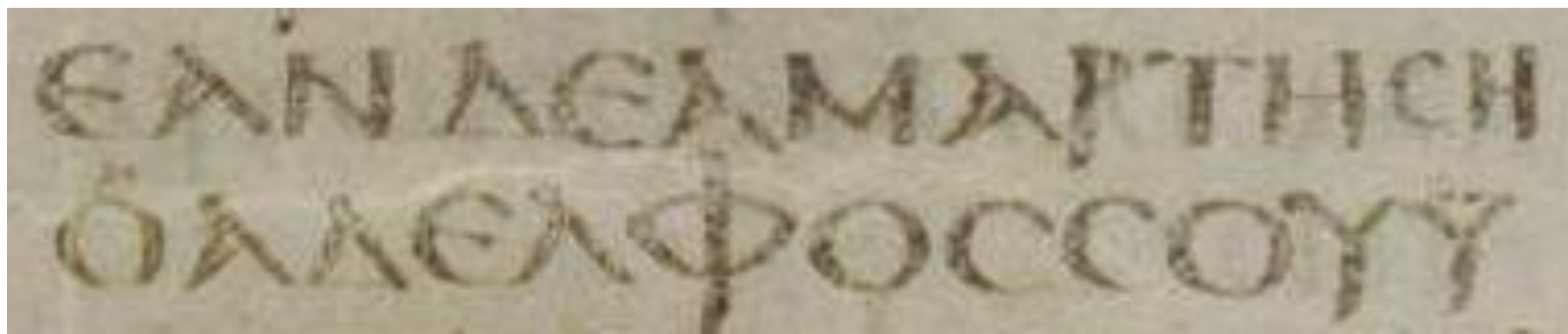
Textus Receptus

UBS (critical text)

εαν δε αμαρτηση **εις**
σε ο αδελφος σου

εαν δε αμαρτηση [**εις**
σε] ο αδελφος σου

Codex Sinaiticus





To the Manuscripts...

- The vast majority of manuscripts include the "against you"
- "against you" is not included in some of the earliest manuscripts, including some of the most significant manuscripts
- The critical Greek New Testaments produced today include "against you" but it is in brackets (indicating that there is uncertainty regarding its authenticity)
- There are legitimate explanations for why "against you" should be included and why it should not



What we Know

- We are 100% certain of the original wording of 95% of the Bible
- The majority of the 5% deal with word order and spelling
- One line per thousand could affect meaning, totaling 20 lines in the entire New Testament leaving .1% with possible changes in meaning
- **None of that remaining .1% substantively alter any Christian doctrine**



What we Know

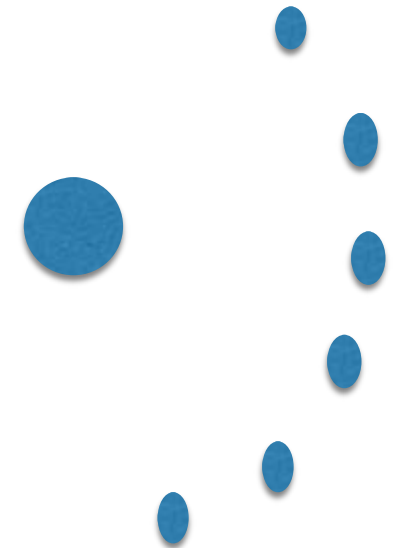
- No Christian Doctrine is affected by the remaining .1%
- I can open up any translation based on the available Greek manuscripts and read God's Word
- God has preserved the inspired message of His Word among all the available manuscripts in existence for all time!

AUTHOR	BOOK	DATE WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPIES	TIME GAP	NO. OF COPIES
Homer	<i>Iliad</i>	800 B.C.	c. 400 B.C.	c. 400 yrs.	643
Herodotus	<i>History</i>	480-425 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs.	8
Thucydides	<i>History</i>	460-400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs	8
Plato		400 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs	7
Caesar	<i>Gallic Wars</i>	100-44 B.C.	c. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs	10
Livy	<i>History of Rome</i>	59 B.C. – A.D. 17	4 th Cent. (partial) mostly 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs c. 1000 yrs	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus	<i>Annals</i>	A.D. 100	c. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs	20
Pliny the Younger	<i>Natural History</i>	A.D. 61-113	c. A.D. 850	c. 750 yrs	7
New Testament		A.D. 50-100	c. 114 (fragment) c. 200 (books) c. 250 (most of NT) c. 325 (complete NT)	+50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs. 225 yrs.	5366



New Testament Manuscripts

Ancient Greek
Manuscripts



**WE CAN BE CONFIDENT
THAT WE HAVE ALL OF
GOD'S WORD**



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Session 4: Bible Translations

TRANSLATION PHILOSOPHY




Major Translation Philosophies

- All translation work seeks to, as accurately as possible, convey the meaning of the original in the language it is being translated into.
- There are two main philosophies of how this should be accomplished:
 - **Dynamic Equivalence:** Focuses on communicating thought rather than the exact words
 - **Formal Equivalence:** Seeks to find exact words in the receptor language that correspond to the words of the original
 - **Paraphrase:** Not a true translation per se.



Dynamic Equivalence

- At some level all translations have to utilize some form of thought equivalence, otherwise, the translation would be non-sensical.
- The main point, or thought of a sentence is what is most important to be clearly communicated in the language.
- Examples include: NIV, CEV, NLT, CEV, The Living Bible*, The Message*

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Formal Equivalence

- While the main point must be communicated, that main point is communicated using specific words.
- As long as the meaning is not lost, the translator should seek to find individual words that correspond with the receptor language.
- Examples include: KJV, NASB, Amplified, ESV, NKJV, RSV.



Dangers with Both Philosophies

- **Dynamic Equivalence:** The translator is more susceptible to allowing his interpretation to dictate translation.
- **Formal Equivalence:** The translation can be rigid, difficult to read, and can allow the thought to get lost in the translation.

Example: Colossians 3:12

- **KJV:** Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, *bowels of mercies*,
- **NKJV:** Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on *tender mercies*,
- **NASB:** So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a *heart of compassion*
- **ESV:** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, *compassionate hearts*
- **NIV:** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with *compassion*
- **NLT:** Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with *tenderhearted mercy*
- **The Message:** So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you:
compassion



Some Guiding Principles:

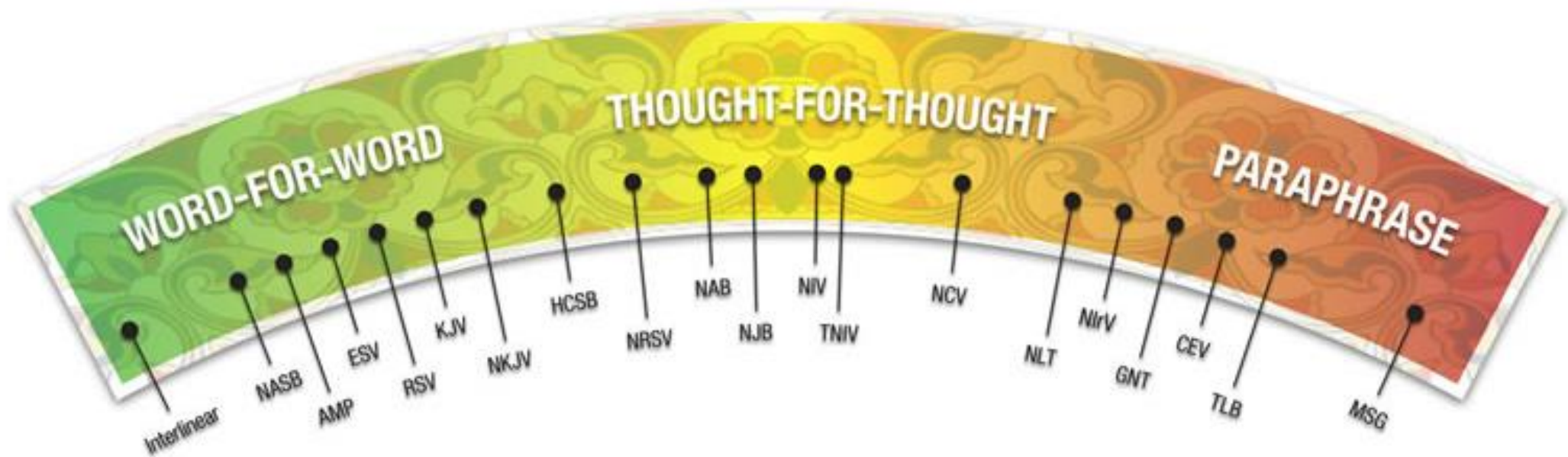
- Hebrew is a much more idiomatic language meaning that a less rigid approach to translation of the Old Testament is necessary for readability in any receptor language.
- Greek is a much more precise language, lending itself to more formal equivalence.



A Theological Starting Point:

- We believe in verbal, plenary inspiration
 - The very ***words*** written by the prophets and apostles were inspired.
 - ***All of the words*** of scripture written by the prophets and apostles were inspired.
- This then should lead us to accept, as much as is possible, a word for word, or formal equivalent translation.

Where do Modern Translations Fall?





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Session 4: Bible Translations

DANGERS OF INSISTING ON
ONE TRANSLATION/KJVONLYISM



An Understandable Error

- Bible believing Christians hold the Word of God in the utmost respect.
- For nearly 400 years of Protestant, Christian history, the Bible that has been read by the majority of Christians in the English-speaking world has been the King James Version
- Christians have, inadvertently, transferred our reverence of the Word of God to the King James Version



An Understandable Error

- In the past 75-100 years, as there have been more manuscripts that have been discovered and as the English language has changed, new translations that do not agree with the King James Version, that we revere, have caused considerable alarm
- Many, in response to this alarm, have “doubled down” on the King James Version and have rejected and shown contempt for anything that diverges from the King James Version
- These individuals and groups have come to be known as the King James Only movement



The Spectrum of the Movement

- Preference for the King James Version
- Superiority of the Manuscript Tradition
- Preservation of the Manuscript Tradition
- Preservation of the English King James Version
- Inspiration of the English King James Version



The Spectrum of the Movement

- Preference for the King James Version
 - Appreciates the place the KJV has in Church History
 - Prefers its use both devotionally and corporately
 - May consider it the best translation available today
 - Not hostile towards other translations



The Spectrum of the Movement

- Superiority of the Manuscript Tradition
 - Holds that the manuscript tradition underlying the KJV (Masoretic & Byzantine/Majority Text) is superior to other textual traditions (Critical or Eclectic)
 - General sense of suspicion towards recently discovered texts
 - Would advocate for modern translations that use the same textual family as the KJV (NKJV/MEV)
 - Would view translations using a different textual basis as not as reliable as translations using the Majority Text



The Spectrum of the Movement

- Preservation of the Manuscript Tradition
 - This position holds that God supernaturally preserved his word through the manuscript tradition underlying the King James Version
 - Two variations:
 - God Preserved the Byzantine Text Type
 - God Preserved the Textus Receptus
 - Translations that do not use these manuscripts traditions are corruptions of God's Word



The Spectrum of the Movement

- Preservation of the English King James Version
 - This position holds that God supernaturally preserved his word for English speakers through the King James Version
 - This would hold that any attempt to produce an updated translation is a corruption of God's Word
 - May refer to the KJV as a "perfect" translation
 - Generally, this position is very divisive



The Spectrum of the Movement

- Inspiration of the English King James Version
 - This position holds that God inspired the translators of the KJV (Sometimes referred to as Double Inspiration)
 - Does not even consider the question of manuscript traditions
 - Modern translations in other languages **MUST** be translated from the KJV
 - Any use of other English translations is illegitimate
 - This position is heresy!



FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS OF KJVONLYISM

- Misunderstanding of the Doctrine of Preservation of Scripture
 - In deciding to save sinful humanity, God ordained both the inscripturation and the preservation of His Word
 - The Bible clearly describes both the process and result of inscripturation.
 - It DOES NOT describe the process and result of preservation.
 - Two views:
 - Miraculous
 - Providential



FUNDAMENTAL FLAWS OF KJVONLISM

- Misunderstanding of the Doctrine of Preservation of Scripture
- Elevation of the Wrong Standard



KJV

Why did Jesus come
to earth?

Luke 9:56

For the son of man is not
come to destroy lives, but
to save them. And they
went to another village.

Matthew 18:11

For the son of man
is come to save
that which was
lost.

NIV

Why did Jesus come
to earth?

Luke 9:56


and they went to
another village.

Matthew 18:11

(missing)



nick_nape



King James Bible

**MAT 9:13 ...for
I am not come to
call the righteous,
but sinners
to repentance.**

New International Version

**...For
I have not come to
call the righteous
but sinners.**



Matthew 20:20 King James Bible

Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, **worshipping him**, and desiring a certain thing of him.

Matthew 20:20 New King James Version

" Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, **kneeling down** and asking something from Him.



JOHN 6:47

KJV

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth **on me** hath everlasting life.



NIV

Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life.



NASB

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.



ESV

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.



CSB

Truly I tell you, anyone who believes has eternal life.



NLT

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life.



BEWARE OF FALSE BIBLES

DON'T TRADE THE SWORD FOR A BUTTER KNIFE. USE THE KJV

Popsicle?



*What is
your
favorite
flavor?*

It's ok to pick a popsicle this way, just not a Bible.

New International Version-----Missing 64,000 words!
New King James Version-----Over 100,000 total changes!
New Living Translation....Jehovah's Witnesses "bible" Jesus<God!
English Standard Version-----Phil. 2:6 Jesus is less than God!
Holman Christian Standard Bible-----Leaves 2000 words out!
New International Readers Version-----Corrupts 1st Timothy 3:16!
The Message-----Uses the word SEX 199 times, Lord 71 times!
New American Standard Bible--__Dr. Frank Logsdon renounces!
New Revised Standard Version-----MIA Acts 8:37. Mark 7:16...!
Modern Versions are based upon the corrupt Alexandrian Greek Text!

Kids will pick a popsicle when they should be eating meat!



Jesus said:
 "Heaven
 and earth
 shall pass
 away: but
 my words
 shall not
 pass away."

PROVEN TRACK RECORD

400 YEARS OF GOOD FRUIT
 PURE LINEAGE (TEXTUS RECEPTUS)
 UNTOUCHED BY WESTCOTT AND HORT



GOD PROMISED PRESERVATION!

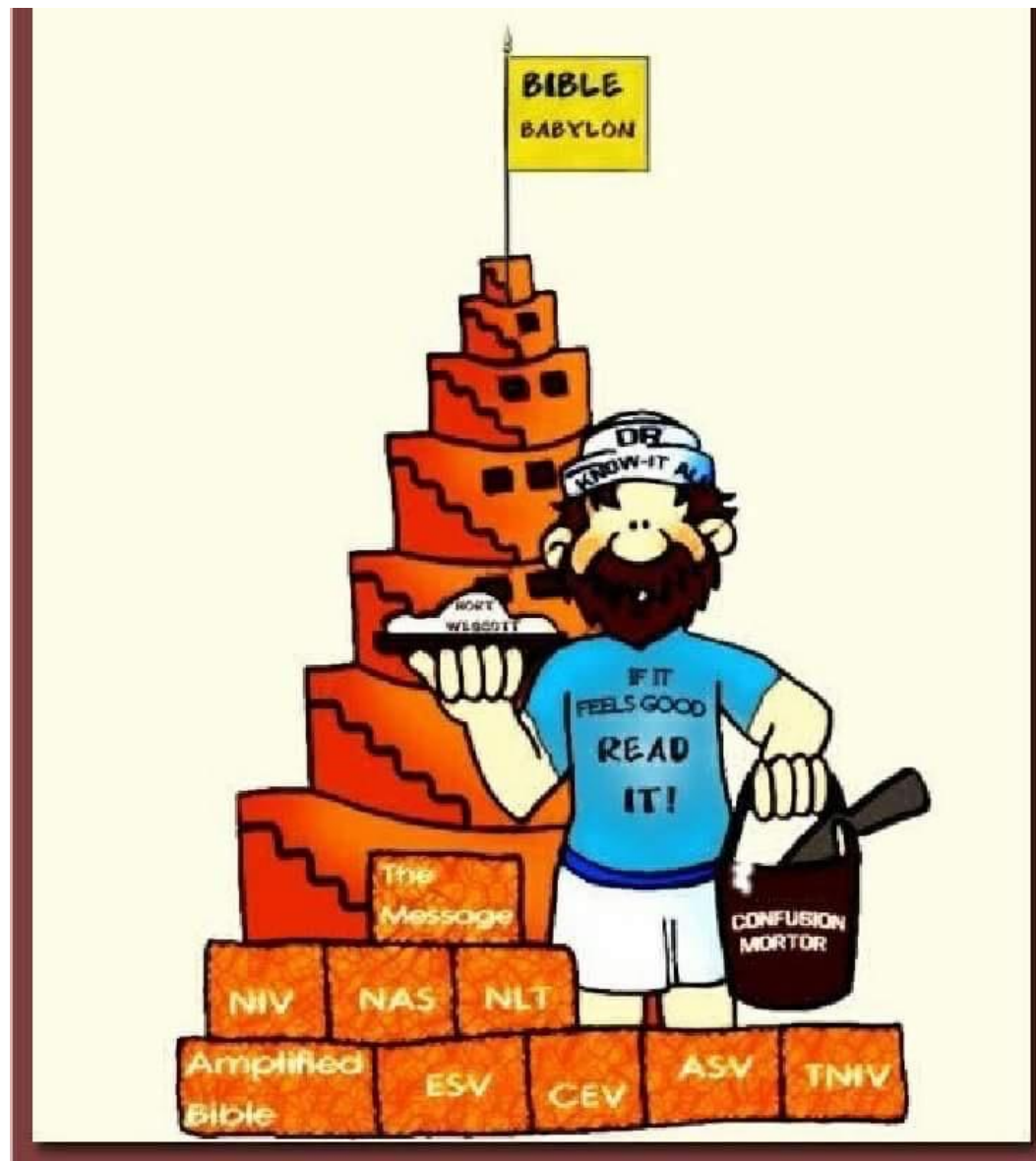
THE KING JAMES BIBLE

THE INSPIRED, PRESERVED, WORD OF GOD

BECAUSE INSPIRATION WITHOUT PRESERVATION IS USELESS.

WHY WOULD YOU TRADE 400 YEARS OF TRUTH
 FOR SOMETHING ELSE?

II PETER 1:20-21	PSALMS 12:6-7	MARK 13:31	II PETER 1:21	DEUT. 4:2	PSALMS 119:89
II TIMOTHY 3:16	PSALMS 33:11	LUKE 16:17	I COR. 14:33	JER. 23:26	JOHN 1:1
MATTHEW 4:4	PSALMS 100:5	I PETER 1:23, 25	REV. 22:18-19	PSALMS 11:3	LUKE 21:8
II PETER 3:5	JAMES 1:18	PROVERBS 22:28	JER. 6:16	GAL. 1:9	II COR. 11:4
JER. 23:29,30	MATT. 7:20	HEB. 9:19	PS. 138:2	JOHN 16:13	DEUT. 30:14





Elevation of the Wrong Standard

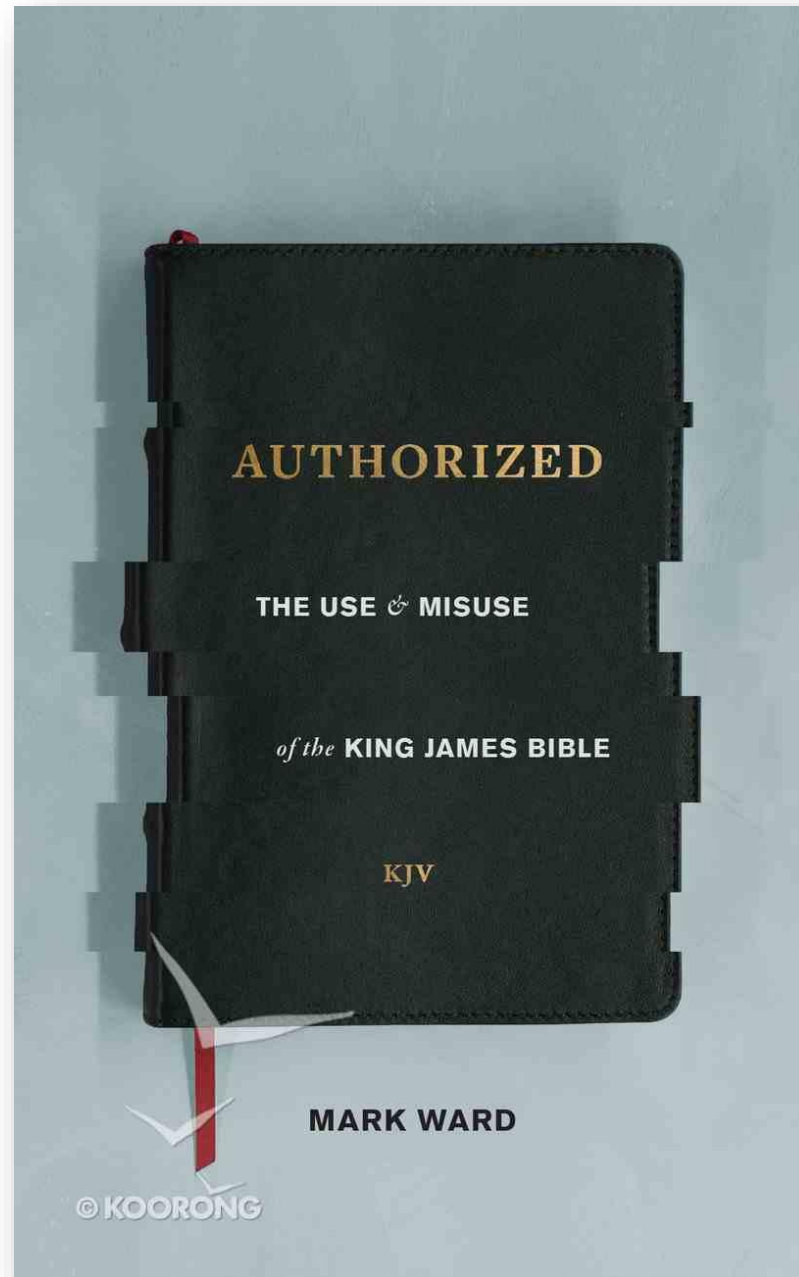
- What is it that God inspired and, thereby, is inerrant?
- God inspired the writings of the apostles and prophets, not the copying of their writings and not the translation of the their writings.
- You will NOT find any passage extending inspiration and inerrancy to those processes.
- When we elevate a particular translation, textual basis (the TR), or textual family (Byzantine) to levels of perfect preservation, we fall into the error of elevating tradition over truth.



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MOVING ON FROM THE KJV





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