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# THE BIBLE VERSION ISSUE

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**I. IS THERE NOT A CAUSE?** All of the writing and talk about the modern Bible version issue, is it much ado about nothing? That is the attitude of Bob Jones University (BJU) and others. However, we believe that there is no more important issue in all the world today than the one concerning “Where is the Word of God?” In fact, that is the issue: Where is the Word of God TODAY? It is one thing to have had an inspired, infallible Word of God 1,900 years ago, but do we have the same thing in our day? Furthermore, is it possible that four or five or twenty different versions of the Bible can all be the Word of God? I have a letter signed by Bob Jones III which says there are four or five good Bible versions; you should choose the one you like best. Does that sound reasonable to you? Did God write more than one Bible? Can these three or four different Bibles, which have hundreds, if not thousands, of differences each be the pure Word of God? Common sense tells us no! Now those of us who believe that there is one pure Bible version in the English language, the King James Version (KJV), are called trouble makers and dividers of the body of Christ. But is that really true? I am reminded of the unbeliever, King Ahab, who said to Elijah, “Art thou he that troubleth Israel?” Elijah’s quick response was, “I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father’s house.” The fact is that we have troubled none except those who are falsifying the Word of God. We are only standing where all fundamentalists stood 45 or 50 years ago, believing that they could hold the pure Word of God in their hands, and it was the KJV. Yes, there is a cause, and none is more important.

**II. WHAT IS THE ISSUE?** We need to ask ourselves, what is the doctrine of inspiration all about? Where is the Word of God today? Can one actually hold God’s Word in his hand? According to many fundamentalists you cannot. What could be more tragic than Bible believers without a pure Bible? The truth that many are not aware of is that all modern Bible versions come from a different source than the KJV. Modern versions all come from two corrupt manuscripts. One was found in the Vatican and the other in a Roman Catholic monastery at Mt. Sinai. They are from a different type of Greek and they are vastly different; thousands of changes from the manuscripts behind the KJV. It will be clear to anyone

who takes the time to look into the matter to see that all modern versions are like the Roman Catholic bible. If you do not believe me, get an inexpensive Roman Catholic bible, a New American Standard or New International (which many fundamentalists love to use), and a KJV and examine them side-by-side. One of those manuscripts has Hebrews chapters 9-13 cut out—clearly cut out of the manuscript. Why? Because there is no passage in Scripture more devastating to the Mass than that portion of the Word of God. Another reason that modern versions are like those in the Catholic Church is the beliefs of two men, Wescott and Hort, who were at the bottom of the modern Bible version movement. Look at these statements by these men: Wescott wrote, “I wish I could see to what forgotten truth Mariolatry bears witness.” In a letter to Wescott, Hort stated, “I have been persuaded for many years that Mary worship and Jesus worship have much in common.” Hort also said, “The Romish view seems to me, nearer and more likely to lead to the truth than the evangelical...we dare not forsake the sacraments or God will forsake us.”

A very important consideration is “Did God keep His Word?” God said that He would preserve it. It says in Psalm 12:6-7, “THE WORDS OF THE LORD ARE PURE WORDS: AS SILVER TRIED IN A FURNACE OF EARTH, PURIFIED SEVEN TIMES. THOU SHALT KEEP THEM, O LORD, THOU SHALT PRESERVE THEM FROM THIS GENERATION FOR EVER.” Has God kept His Word from generation to generation? Not if the philosophies of Wescott and Hort are true. We read also in Isaiah 40:8, “THE GRASS WITHERETH, THE FLOWER FADETH: BUT THE WORD OF OUR GOD SHALL STAND FOR EVER.” If Wescott and Hort’s teachings are true, then we did not have the Word of God for over 1,500 years. In Luke 21:33 Jesus said, “HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY: BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY.” I prefer to believe Jesus Christ over the modern scholars.

The doctrine of inspiration means little unless we also have the doctrine of preservation. That is, God has accomplished what He promised, that He would preserve His pure Word for all generations. Was He only concerned about a few generations? Certainly not! Another very important part of this issue is the question, “Can a copy or version of the Scriptures be

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inspired?” According to BJU, John MacArthur, and many others, whom I will quote shortly, no version of the Scripture is inspired. The scholars tell us that only the originals were inspired. However, once again, the experts are contradicted by the Word of God. Read II Timothy 3:15, 16: “AND THAT FROM A CHILD THOU HAST KNOWN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, WHICH ARE ABLE TO MAKE THEE WISE UNTO SALVATION THROUGH FAITH WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS. ALL SCRIPTURE IS GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD, AND IS PROFITABLE FOR DOCTRINE, FOR REPROOF, FOR CORRECTION, FOR INSTRUCTION IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.” We are told here that Timothy knew the Scriptures from a child and we are told elsewhere that he learned them from his mother and grandmother. We are told in that same context that all Scripture, the Scripture which he was taught, was inspired of God. Did Timothy’s mother have an original Bible? She had no portion of the Word of God which was original, that’s quite obvious. But what she did have, evidently, was an accurate copy of the originals and, therefore, inspired. And so it is today. If we have, and we do, an exact representation of the originals, it is inspired. Common sense tells us so and God tells us so.

**III. WHAT ABOUT SOME POPULAR MODERN VERSIONS?** BJU tells us that the best version of the Bible is the New American Standard (NASV). Others feel the same way. Others believe the New International Version (NIV) in the best version. Others prefer the New King James Version (NKJV). Again, one can easily check this out by looking into these versions along with the KJV. These modern versions have many, many alterations, too many to mention here. Some take the liberty of changing the word “blood” to “death”. It seems a small matter to them, but not to God or those of us who believe His Word. It was Jesus’ blood—His real blood—which was shed for our sins. Many, many other alterations are made. There are hundreds of omissions, from whole passages to single verses and single words. For example, just about every modern version eliminates I John 5:7, perhaps the strongest single passage in the Word of

God concerning the Trinity. The NASV eliminates it without so much as a footnote. However, they maintain a verse 7 so the unsuspecting will not know the difference. They divide verse 6 in two. The NIV does the same, however, it splits up verse 8 so there will be a verse 7. These bibles, by their footnotes (although Wescott & Hort actually eliminated them), remove the last 12 verses of Mark as well as John 7:53-8:11, the account of Jesus and the adulteress woman. Acts 8:37 is removed from these bibles; and if you read that passage without that verse you will see why those who believe in baptismal regeneration, like Roman Catholics, Church of Christ, and many others, love these translations. The Ethiopian eunuch, according to them, is baptized without any profession of faith whatever. I do not have room to include it here, but all modern versions teach error of one form or another. My taped sermon on this subject clearly shows that the NIV, NASV, and NKJV (those that many fundamentalists think best) all contain definite, serious doctrinal errors. Do you think that God would author a Bible with errors in it? Some fundamentalists think He would. Every one of these versions waters down the deity of Christ. Certainly they teach it but not as often and strongly as the pure Word of God. Do you think the Holy Spirit would be the author of a Bible that was very strong on the deity of Christ or very weak?

**IV. BIBLE BELIEVERS WHO DON’T BELIEVE THE BIBLE.** Now I am sure that sounds like a very strange statement to make, but I will show you that that is true. I am going to take just a few that I have space for of supposed fundamentalists. If they do not claim that, at least these men claim to believe the inspired Word of God. We will show you that they do not believe in an inspired Word of God today. I have before me a letter on the stationery of Thomas Road Baptist Church, of which Jerry Falwell is the pastor. Dr. Ed Hindson is answering a letter, quite obviously for Dr. Falwell. Big men, of course, can afford to do this and of course, it doesn’t put them in the middle. In this letter he states, “The King James Authorized Version is not inspired but a translation of the inspired

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text. To rely upon it as the inspired Word of God is dangerous, verging on cultish.” I don’t think that letter requires much comment if you are a true Bible believer. Then I have an article written by Dr. Allan A. MacRae. Mr. MacRae is the head of Biblical Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. He writes, “When we study it (the Bible) in the original languages and compare Scripture with Scripture, every idea that we can properly draw from it represents God’s truth and is without error.” Notice, when we study it in the original languages. Unless you read Hebrew and Greek, according to this man, you cannot know the Word of God. Even then, there are no originals. Here is a quotation from a letter by Dr. John MacArthur, “There are three Bible versions I consider very good: the King James, the New American Standard, and the New International Version.” After stating that we cannot be dogmatic about which one is best, John MacArthur goes on, “About the only thing most everybody seems to agree on is that there is no such thing as an inerrant version.” Here you have a very popular so called Bible believer who says that most everybody agrees that no version is inspired or inerrant.

I have in front of me a copy of part of a sermon by Dr. Ian Paisley, which was delivered at BJU just a year or two ago. I have heard the complete tape of this message on the Word of God, and particularly he dealt with the Bible version issue. On that tape he condemns most all the popular modern versions except the NASV, which he does not mention. Of course, Bob Jones thinks that’s the best. If you just heard isolated passages of that message, you may think that Dr. Paisley believed that the KJV was truly inspired and the only Word of God. But that is not true. Here is a quote from that sermon, “And let me emphasize that inspiration has only to do with the writing of the original Scripture and is divinely limited to that. Inspiration has not to do with the translation of the Bible into English or any other language. Inspiration ceased when the canon of Scripture was completed...Now let me state emphatically that no translation is given by inspiration of God.” So Paisley

simply prefers the KJV but says that it is not the Word of God. Bob Jones will not find fault with that position, only the position that the KJV is the true, pure Word of God and all others are false. Now let me show you the official position of BJU concerning the Word of God. “Inspiration refers to the original manuscripts. The record for whose inspiration we contend is the original record...Not any particular translations or translations of them whatever.” (*The Fundamentals, Inspiration of the Bible.* p.127). While BJU loves to proclaim that they use only the KJV in their public meetings, in the classrooms (especially with the ministerial students) they tear it apart and promote the NASV. I have heard this from many individuals. BJU’s official position is that the NASV is the best translation available (though we have shown it contains obvious errors). Stewart Custer, head of their Bible department has stated, “The NASV is unsurpassed in its accuracy.” What kind of logic is it that proclaims one version to be the best and then uses another one (inferior according to them) in public meetings. The Dean Burgon Society takes essentially the same position as BJU, except they prefer the KJV, not the NASV. They state, “The DBS from 1978 in the very beginning, 25 years ago, in its Articles of Faith, has never stated nor believed that the King James Bible (or any translation) was either ‘inspired’ ‘given by inspiration of God,’ or ‘God-breathed.’ Our Articles of Faith clearly limit ‘inspiration’ or ‘inspired’ to the words of the Old Testament Hebrew or Aramaic and the New Testament words of Greek that the Lord caused the writers to put down in writing.” (from Dean Burgon News - 8/02-3/03).

**A FINAL WORD!** As we have said before, Inspiration doesn’t mean much without Preservation. God promised to preserve His Word forever. Psalm 12:6,7; Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:8; Matt. 5:18; Luke 21:33; John 10:35; I Peter 1:23, 25; etc. We believe God! When we say, “THUS SAITH THE LORD,” that is what we believe and mean. Other Bible believers may not believe the Bible, but we do. Amen!

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