



Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood? (Part II)

2 Timothy 3:16: (NASB) *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.*

Special Guest: David Stein



In Part I of our series, we examined the evidence that the Bible is historically validated. Ancient manuscripts like the Dead Sea Scrolls demonstrate that what we have today in Scripture is amazingly faithful to the original. We ended that conversation by reviewing modern translations and the question of what are considered the most accurate translations into the English language. Today our trek of discovery continues with a review of biblical texts that have significant rendering differences from one translation to the next. This can be a hard study and may provoke both emotional and intellectual disagreements. Our single goal here is to understand the will and mind of our Holy God.

Joining us again on our Bible translation series is our friend and brother in Christ, David Stein. David has been a guest on Christian Questions many times. Some of the subjects have been more technical and scientific because of his background as an engineer. He is an elder of the Allentown, Pennsylvania, Bible Students.



Does having so many translations help or hinder our search for truth:

Proverbs 24:6: (NASB) *For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.*

It is always a good thing to get the thoughts and perspectives of others. We all have our blind spots, and by consulting other Christians we can better keep on the path of truth. When we come to a verse that is either unclear or challenging, having a multitude of translations available permits us to see the breadth of meaning that we can get from a verse. The opinions of Bible students and scholars, even when they might be biased, provide insight into the meaning of these verses. The main objective in our study of the Bible is to HARMONIZE EVERY VERSE OF SCRIPTURE.



What if someone is not proficient in the original languages?

One more point with respect to our individual study: most of us are not Hebrew or Greek scholars. In the past this impeded those who wanted to study the Bible. They depended solely upon those educated in these ancient languages. That is no longer true. The need for insightful knowledge and reflection from scholars is still evident. The availability of many Bible study sources permits students to investigate and study in the original languages.



We have four examples of Bible study tools:

1. **Strong's Concordance.** Published by Professor James Strong in the year 1890, it indexes every word in the King James Version of the Bible, giving the Greek or Hebrew root and a definition and usage of the word.

We believe it is the most important and useful tool we have available. We can pick any subject in the bible and look in Strong's to see everywhere that word is used. We can create a list of what the Scriptures say on a given subject. Strong's gives definitions which are tools that a non-Hebrew or Greek-speaking Bible student can benefit from greatly. Note that certain words are the most important because they are the word-for-word definitions. Beyond that, it is interpretive.

To learn what the Bible says about "earth," we can quickly find every verse containing that word

GENESIS 1:1

In the beginning **H7225** God **H430** created **H1254** **H853** the heaven **H8064** and **H853** the **earth**. **H776**

GENESIS 1:2

And the **earth** **H776** was **H1961** without form, and darkness **H2822** was upon the face **H6440** of the deep. And the Spirit **H7307** of God **H430** moved **H7321** over **H6440** of the waters. **H4325**

GENESIS 1:10

And God **H430** called **H7121** the dry **H3004** land **Earth**: **H776** and the gathering together **H4723** of the waters **H4325** called **H7121** he Seas: **H3220** and God **H430** saw **H7200** that it was good. **H2896**

Beside each word is an assigned number that correlates back to the Hebrew or Greek word in the original text

Our podcast regularly quotes from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, easily found online or in hard copy.

2. **Greek and Hebrew Interlinear Bibles.** A line of biblical text is given with the word-by-word English translation just below it, so we see a translation and the flow of the sentences. Hebrew is a little more challenging because it reads from right to left!

Examples: Last week we took a look at "caperberries." What does that have to do with the Hebrew/English Interlinear Bibles?

Ecclesiastes 12:5: (KJV) *Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:*

When we read the word-for-word translation, *the caperberry* is mentioned. Yet, when we read many of the Bible translations, they do not talk about caperberries at all. Instead, they talk about *desire failing*. The *desire shall fail* is what is meant but when we see *the caperberry* in the interlinear we can start to do a little Bible interpretation ourselves. When we look up *caperberry* we find out it was an appetizer, and so it is saying "the appetite goes away." Then, if we look at the other Bible translations that do not use the word *caperberry*, it confirms this is an interpretation, but a correct one. It is best to stay with the literal reading and having an interlinear Bible is helpful.

recap
recap





12:5	גַּם	מִגִּבְהָ	יִרְאוּ	וְחִתְחֻתִּים	בְּדֶרֶךְ	וַיִּנְאֵץ
	gm	m·gbe	irau	u·chthchthim	b·drk	u·inatx
		moreover	from·lofty	they-are-fearing	and·consternations	in·the·way
						and·he-is- ^c spurning
	הַשֶּׁקֶד	וַיִּסְתַּבֵּל	הַחֲבִיב	וְתִפְרֶה	הָאֲבִינִיָּה	
	e·shqd	u·isthbl	e·chgb	u·thphr	e·abiune	
	the·almond	and·he-is- ^s being-burden	the·grasshopper	and·she-is- ^c annulling	the·caperberry's	effect
	כִּי	הֵלֶךְ	הָאָדָם	בֵּית - אֵל	עוֹלָמוֹ	וְסָבְבוּ
	ki	- elk	e·adm	al - bith	oulm·u	u·sbbu
	that	going	the·human	to	house-of	eon-of·him
						and·they-turn-about
						in·the·road
						the·ones-wailing

(Source: <https://scripture4all.org/OnlineInterlinear/OTpdf/qoh12.pdf>)

There are both Hebrew and Greek Interlinear Bibles. As we mentioned, Hebrew is a little challenging because it reads from RIGHT TO LEFT. Greek, like English, reads from LEFT TO RIGHT. It is almost like reading a sentence. The order of words in English is different than in many languages. When learning the English language, people are often confused because its word order is different from their native language. It is the same way with Greek. When we look into the Greek Interlinear sometimes the word order is a little bit strange, at least for those who speak English. We chose the following example because it will come up in our next point when we talk about another tool (Vine's Expository Dictionary). We will look specifically at the term "eleutheria," which means freedom or liberty.

Galatians 5:1: (KJV) *Stand fast therefore in the **liberty** wherewith Christ hath made us **free**, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Galatians 5:1: (ESV) *For **freedom** Christ has set us **free**; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*

Galatians 5:13: (KJV) *For, brethren, ye have been called unto **liberty**; only use not **liberty** for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.*

Galatians 5:13: (RSV) *For you were called to **freedom**, brethren; only do not use your **freedom** as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another.*

Greek-English Interlinear for Galatians 5:1:

3588 [e]	1657 [e]	1473 [e]	5547 [e]	1659 [e]	4739 [e]	3767 [e]	2532 [e]	3361 [e]	3825 [e]	2218 [e]
Tē	eleutheria	hēmas	Christos	ēleutherōsen	stēkete	oun	kai	mē	palin	zygō
1 Tē	ἐλευθερία	, ἡμᾶς	Χριστὸς	ἠλευθέρωσεν	; στήκετε	, οὖν	, καὶ	μὴ	πάλιν	ζυγῶ
In	freedom	us	Christ	has set free	stand firm	therefore	and	not	again	in a yoke
Art-DFS	N-DFS	PPro-A1P	N-NMS	V-A1A-3S	V-PMA-2P	Conj	Conj	Adv	Adv	N-DMS
1397 [e]	1758 [e]									
doubleias	enechesthe									
δουλείας	ἐνέχεσθε									
of slavery	entangle yourselves									
N-GFS	V-PMM/P-2P									

(Source: <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/galatians/5.htm>)



3. **Vine's Expository Dictionary.** This is helpful when you need a bit more information regarding the meaning and uses of biblical words. The author, William Edwy Vine, goes much deeper into word use, sometimes referring to usage and examples outside of the Bible. On occasion, he gives historical use of the word that illustrates how appropriately it was used.

Vine comes up with beautiful historical nuances or additional meanings that help us understand what is being said. The example we mentioned is the word "eleutheria," which in Greek means *freedom* or *liberty*. Paul was talking about having freedom in Christ. Vine says, there is something in this word that is even more interesting. In ancient Greek times, if you were the owner of a slave and wanted to reward him with freedom, you would go down to the local temple and perform an act called "manumission." This means that you would sell that slave to the local god. The manumitted slave was "purchased" by a god. As the slave could not provide the money, the master paid it into the temple treasury in the presence of the slave. A legal document was drawn up containing the words "for freedom." No one could enslave him again, as he was the property of the god.

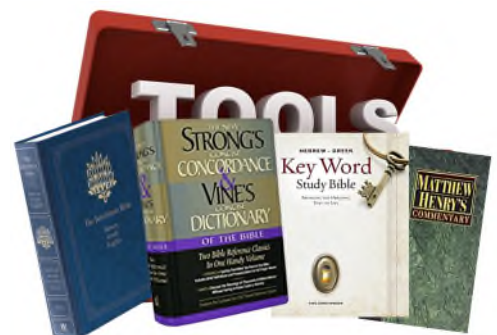
This is the idea of the freedom the Apostle Paul is talking about. When we give our lives to our God, we are manumitted from the slavery of this world. This is a wonderful description of consecration!

4. **Bible Commentaries:** In general, we want to be a little wary of commentaries because of the doctrinal slant that they, by definition, provide. Opinion/commentary can easily be biased. But they can at times be helpful for a brief word study when considering certain verses. They are also helpful when giving us historical perspective on ancient traditions, history and lifestyle.

Commentaries add color to what we read. By definition, a commentary is someone's opinion about the understanding of verses. It can be helpful to go to a commentary to get an idea of the meaning on a verse we do not understand - but remember it is that one person's perspective. We need to see if their perspective is in accord with other areas of truth in Scripture.

One tool is not going to open up all of the doors for us. All of these tools need to be used in conjunction with one another. That is part of becoming a true student of the Bible.

Even though we are ignorant of ancient Bible languages, we are NOT locked out of understanding their meaning.





With all these tools available, shouldn't we all be able to grasp the intended meaning of God's word?

In an ideal world where each and every one of us did not have pre-determined viewpoints on pretty much everything, we could theoretically agree. However, our world is sinful, and we all carry inherent bias pertaining to our world and scriptural views. We will, therefore, focus on examining several Scriptures, not to learn or unlearn any specific doctrine, but to simply isolate their true meaning.

This segment will focus on some "spurious" verses. What does that mean?



Let's begin with a well-known spurious verse:



1 John 5:7-8: (KJV) ⁷For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. ⁸And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

Let's read these verses from two other translations:

1 John 5:7-8: (NASB) ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

1 John 5:7-8: (NIV) ⁷For there are three that testify: ⁸the spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

We can see the difference between the King James Version and the others above - there are huge phrases missing. Remember, our definition of spurious is SOMETHING THAT HAS BEEN ADDED. These later translations have recognized that these are added pieces that DO NOT BELONG in the Scriptures and therefore, they left them out.



In our King James Version above, the underlined red words are not found in the earliest manuscripts and were added at some point in the Middle Ages. There are no known New Testament manuscripts with this phrase prior to the 7th century, and no Greek manuscript of credible accuracy.

Let's return to Jim Parkinson who joined us on Part I of this series. Jim is an authority on this topic. He has worked on a translation of the Bible (Revised Version Improved and Corrected) for the last 50 years and has a great deal of knowledge of Greek and Hebrew.



1 John 5:7-8, Jim Parkinson

- *1 John 5: 7-8 on the three heavenly witnesses: There are only nine manuscripts that have the extra part there, and they come in seven different forms. Whereas there are 500 manuscripts that exclude those words. Today our Bibles don't include the extra words.*



This is a plain example of bias in translating or copying Scripture. The overwhelming absence of the added phrase in early manuscripts brings us to a serious question as students of Scripture and followers of Jesus.

We need to base our understanding of Scripture in accordance with God's word, therefore, it is important to know if something is not in the original. Bible scholars use two terms to describe understanding Scripture - *exegesis* and *eisegesis*. *Exegesis* means using the words of the text in Scripture through the lens of their original context in order to determine their intent. *Eisegesis* means reading into the text with our own preconceived notion. Clearly *exegesis* is what we want to do as a Bible student.

Another questionable verse:

Mark 16:18: (KJV) *They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

This entire verse is spurious. This single verse spawned a Christian cult started in 1910 by George Went Hensley, where snake handling is part of their worship. Mr. Hensley read the verse and decided that Jesus ordered him to show his faith by handling snakes. Although it was many years later, he eventually died from a snakebite.



This is an example of a Scripture that can spawn something like this cult existing mostly in Kentucky and Tennessee. They interpreted the Scripture to say this must be how Jesus wants us to demonstrate our faith. They started handling snakes, and of course the outcome is that many have died from snakebites.

Jesus did not say to do that.



Mark 16:18, Jim Parkinson

- *Mark 16:18 is a problem - "They shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing it shall in nowise hurt them." The earliest evidence is that Mark didn't write these words, though. They likely were added thinking that Mark ended the book too abruptly.*



Isn't there a question whether Mark 16:9-20 is also spurious?

In some of the oldest texts, the book of Mark ends at verse 8 and seems to end abruptly with no conclusion. This led some to believe verses 9-20 should be added. THIS IS A QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE ADDITIONS OR PART OF THE ORIGINAL - it is not clear.

1 John: 5:7-8 is not controversial - the spurious part definitely does not belong there. There are certainly reasons to reject verse 18 because it was very outlandish, and there is no evidence in early Christian history of snake handlings or drinking poisons. This practice came up in the 20th century. The other verses, other than verse 18, are not in contrast or in opposition to other verses in Scripture, so they *could* be accepted. Most Bible translations stop at verse 8 and add a footnote from verses 9-12 stating it is included but *possibly* spurious.

Eminent scholars have come down on both sides of the issue and there are many manuscripts that contain these verses. With the exception of verse 18, these verses do reflect things found in the other gospels. However, there is good reason to be skeptical of their inclusion:

Here are five basic reasons translators believe Mark 16:9-20 does NOT BELONG in the original manuscript:

1. These verses are lacking in the oldest and most reliable Greek manuscripts - the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus - as well as lacking in important Old Latin, Syriac, Armenian and Ethiopic manuscripts.
2. Some of the ancient church fathers (1st, 2nd and 3rd centuries) reveal no knowledge of these verses, including Clement and Origen.
3. Many manuscripts that do have these verses place a mark by it indicating a suspicion that it may be a spurious addition to the text.
4. This longer ending of Mark comes in four different varieties. The fact that there are variations throws a little more suspicion on whether it should be included.
5. Scholars subjectively point to the fact that the style and vocabulary are not the same as the rest of Mark's Gospel.

Bottom line: These are good reasons to reject the entire section as spurious.

Let's look at a verse that we see as having a portion of Scripture that does not belong and is spurious:



Revelation 20:5: (NIV) *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.* This is the first resurrection.

The suspected spurious section is red/underlined above.



Reading verses 4-6 shows us the logical interruption with this added text:

Verse 4. ...they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.



Verse 5a. *The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.*

Verse 5b. *This is the first resurrection.*

Verse 6. *Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection.*

The first section in verse 5 does not logically seem to fit.

Verse 4 - ...they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. **This is referring to the church.**

The first part of verse 5 – The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed.

Who is the rest of the dead?

The second part of verse 5 – *This is the first resurrection.* **What is the first resurrection?**

Verse 6 – *Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection...*



Spurious section!



Revelation 20:4-6 (NIV) ...they came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. *This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection...*



Spurious section removed:

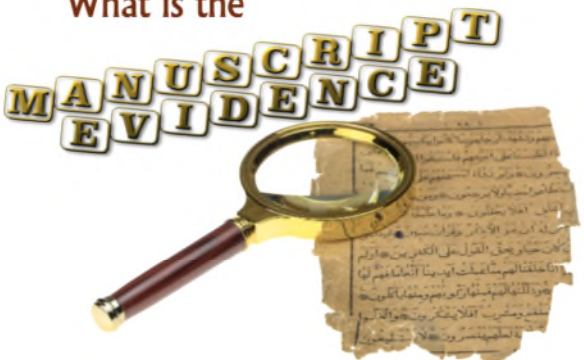
Of course, just because it does not “flow” does not mean it is incorrect. We have to look further.

Revelation 20:5, Jim Parkinson

- *Revelation 20:5 - the first sentence is a later edition, likely in the 4th century. Cursorily, it looks like the scribe's eye accidentally skipped from thousand years in verse 4 to the same at the end of the first sentence in verse five, but there are five ways to compare an earlier form of this verse with the later form in the manuscripts. And in all five, it is the earlier form that omits the sentence. After all, the sentence would say that the first resurrection is the absence of a resurrection.*

What is the

MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE



for Revelation 20:5 as spurious?

- These words are not found in the Sinaitic and Syriac.
- About 40 percent of the available manuscripts of Revelation do not have these words.
- 50 percent of the manuscripts from the 4th to the 13th centuries do not have these words.
- One of the earliest, if not the earliest commentary manuscript by Victorinus of Pettau (from 300 AD), does not include these words.
- In the manuscripts where it is included, we find variations between them.

(Source: Daniel Whedon's Commentary on the Bible) "There is a suspicious number of variations in copies containing the sentence. There are three variations in the Greek of the words but the rest; three variations of the word for lived; two for until... The sentence, like an interpolation, interrupts the current of the style. It breaks in between the next word, this, and the antecedent to which its affirmation refers. The sentence reads like an explanatory note by some copyist, which has been wrought into the text, and that in a very awkward position... no sound biblical scholar will now consider it worthy reliance..."

This can be so overwhelming. Thank God we have such a vast library of ancient manuscripts to rely upon.

What about Scriptures that do belong in the Bible? How do we understand their real meaning?

Now we will shift our attention to the translations of some Scriptures that the original text shows us are misleading. These verses belong in the Bible but are easily and often misrepresented.

Here again the same fundamental principle applies - focus on examining Scriptures, not to learn or unlearn any doctrine, but to simply isolate their true meaning.



TO: Inspiration@ChristianQuestions.com

Annie asks: If having the Bible is so important, what about those faithful Christians before the printing press and before the Bible was widely available to the public? How did they do it?

Starting with the 1st century when Jesus and the apostles were on the scene, the presence of these individuals made up for the lack of a physical Bible. In addition, God gave His holy spirit through miraculous gifts of the spirit. These combined to provide all that was necessary for a basis of faith at that time.



Once Jesus and the apostles died, we have come to a time where the Scriptures are complete and available. The Epistles and Gospel books were spread by copies to many local churches. Not all of the early churches had every book, but they were all available and distributed by the end of the first century.

During the Dark Ages, the Bible was not widely available. Yet, God only makes us responsible for what we know of the truth. They were responsible for whatever truth was present.

Today, all of us have different levels of understanding. We are responsible for what we can know and can do. We have immense knowledge and must make use of it.



Here is a dramatic yet subtle mistranslation:

Philippians 2:6: (KJV) *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

What does text's core teaching *look* like in this translation, and what is it actually?

In the opinion of our guest, David, this is one of the most egregious mistranslations in the King James Bible because the actual Greek text says the opposite of the King James Version rendering.

Looking at the text from the Greek Interlinear (see box below), we read:

Who in the form of God existing not something to be grasped considered to be equal with God.

3739 [e]	1722 [e]	3444 [e]	2316 [e]	5225 [e]	3756 [e]	725 [e]	2233 [e]	3588 [e]	1510 [e]	2470 [e]	2316 [e]
Hos	en	morphē	Theou	hyparchōn	ouch	harpagmon	hēgēsato	to	einai	isa	Theō
6 ὅς	ἐν	μορφῇ	Θεοῦ	ὑπάρχων	, οὐχ	ἄρπαγμόν	ἡγήσατο	τὸ	εἶναι	ἴσα	Θεῷ
Who	in	[the] form	of God	existing	not	something to be grasped	considered	-	to be	equal	with God
RelPro-NMS	Prep	N-DFS	N-GMS	V-PPA-NMS	Adv	N-AMS	V-AIM-3S	Art-ANS	V-PNA	Adj-ANP	N-DMS

The idea is he (the Logos, Jesus in his pre-human form) existed with God but did not grasp for equality with God.

Compare this to the rendering in the King James Version:

Philippians 2:6: (KJV) *who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*

Who in (the) form of God existing not something to be grasped considered to be equal with God.

The King James makes it sound as though Jesus thought it would not be considered stealing if he were to be equal to God. But the actual Greek says he did NOT CONSIDER BEING EQUAL TO GOD - it was just the opposite.

Here is a better English translation of the Greek:

Philippians 2:6: (RVIC) *who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped.*



The immediate context of this verse reveals the contradiction of the mistranslation in the King James Version.



The context begins with our responsibility to humility:

Philippians 2:3-9: (KJV) ³Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

The context continues with Jesus as our primary example of the humility we strive for:

⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:



Philippians 2:6: (KJV) who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:



Is this the mindset we should have - thinking it not robbery to be equal to God? That this is okay? Is that the lesson? Obviously not. Let's look at the rest of the verses to confirm.

⁷But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

But made himself of no reputation - the Greek is even stronger. It says *he poured himself out*, in other words, he emptied himself; he made himself as a humble servant.

The context is powerful in showing us the verse does not mean he wanted to be equal to God like the King James implies.

Here is what God did to reward Jesus' humility:

⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.



This shows that Jesus did not previously have *a name which is above every name*. It was given to him because of his humility, sacrifice and faithfulness.

What does this mean? *Who in (the) form of God...* (See box above).

Paul explains:

Colossians 1:15: (NASB) *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*

Paul explains here, too:

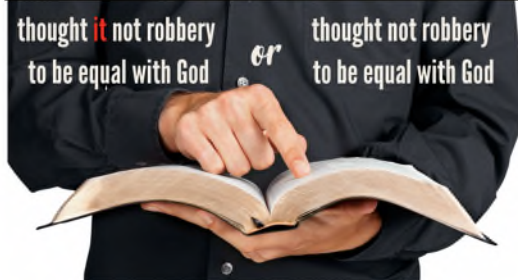
2 Corinthians 4:4: (NASB) *in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Being in that form, he humbly accepted his position as God's son, not equal to Him just as a son is not equal to his father. A son is an "image" of a father - a son is like his father but not the same person.



Jehovah God and His son are in complete unity.

One more criticism of note regarding the King James Version. The addition of **"it."** The word **"it"** does not appear in the original Greek. Notice how it changes the meaning of the verse:



In the first example with the word *it* included, there is an implication of equality. Without the word *it*, it says there is no equality or thought to gain such equality, i.e., he never thought such a thing.

Jesus did NOT aspire to try to be equal to God. Even in the honored position of being with God, he showed his humility by relinquishing it all to become a man.

Here are a few more accurate translations:

Philippians 2:5-6: (New American Bible) ⁵Your attitude must be that of Christ: ⁶Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at.

Philippians 2:6: (Goodspeed) Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he possessed the nature of God, he did not grasp at equality with God.

Philippians 2:6: (Weymouth 1929 version) From the beginning He had the nature of God. Yet He did not regard equality with God as something at which He should grasp..

Philippians 2:5-6: (Wilson's Diaglott) ⁵Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though being in God's form, did not meditate a usurpation to be like God.

Philippians 2:6: (World English Bible) who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Conclusion: This verse is poorly translated, and as a result, completely hides the true meaning of Jesus' humble journey as a man and the ransom for all.

For more on the pre-human existence of Jesus and his change of natures:



**Episode 1100:
Do People Turn Into Angels
When They Die?**

Question for all of us: Am I willing to take the truest and most authentic rendering of Scripture I can find and build my faith upon it?



Understanding authentic scriptural meaning is challenging and it places the burden of upholding truth upon us.

What should we do with Scriptures that have many manuscripts that disagree on specific words?

We want to be accurate with words and will continue to be open and honest with challenges. When such a dilemma may arise, our thought process should focus on authenticity first.



If the wording is still unsure, the next question should be - Is there a difference in teaching if it goes one way or the other?

Example:

John 1:18: (NASB) *No one has seen God at any time; **the only begotten God** who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.*

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

Is the correct translation *God* or *son*?

This is a good question, and we may not be able to answer it definitively. The Greek texts vary, but *the only begotten God* might be right because it occurs in a number of early Greek manuscripts.

Although it is true that these early Greek manuscripts contain the word *theos*, meaning God, every one of those texts is of the Alexandrian type - all related manuscripts. Virtually every other reading of the other textual traditions, including the Western, Byzantine, Caesarean and secondary Alexandrian texts, read *huios*, the Greek word for son.

The word *huios* in the Greek looks very similar to a shortened form of *theos*. It is postulated that *theos* may have crept into the Alexandrian texts due to a smudge or misreading.



The result is there are foundational manuscripts for either translation - *only begotten God* or *only begotten son*.



The word in Greek for son is Strong's #5207 - *uios*. (<https://biblehub.com/greek/5207.htm>) There is no "h" in Greek, but it is supplied by a diacritical mark indicating rough breathing, in this case the pronunciation of the "h" sound - "Hwee-ahss." The Greek spelling is upsilon-iota-omicron-sigma. (*uios*) Sometimes the upsilon is anglicized with a "Y," which accounts for why sometimes it is spelled *yios* or with the breathing *yhios*. Our preference is *huios*.

However, a large number of the early Catholic church leaders, such as Irenaeus, Clement and Tertullian, quoted the verse with *son* and not *God*. This is especially weighty when one considers that Tertullian argued aggressively for the incarnation of Jesus and is credited with being the one who developed the concept of "one God in three persons." If Tertullian had that text that read *God* in John 1:18 he certainly would have quoted it, but instead he always quoted it as *son*. The fact that he did not use John 1:18 to try to



prove that Jesus and God are the same person, suggests that *son* was the correct version in the early manuscripts Tertullian had available to him.

An examination of all the evidence shows it is probable that *the only begotten son* is the original reading of John 1:18. However, let's look at it both ways and see how it changes the meaning. Sometimes different translations have profound effects on what we believe, and sometimes it does not make a difference one way or another.

What if we take the translation to be *the only begotten God*?
What does that mean?

This phrase is NOT used anywhere else in the Bible. In contrast, the phrase *the only begotten son* is used three other times by John himself in John 3:16, John 3:18 and 1 John 4:9 (KJV).

If *begotten* implies a beginning, then a *begotten God* had a beginning, but consider Psalm 90:2 which says God did NOT have a beginning. Jesus, although now a divine being after his resurrection, did have a beginning.

Psalm 90:2: (NASB) *Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.*

This verse in Revelation, also written by John, talks about Jesus as the beginning of the creation of God, so we find consistency here among John's writings:

Revelation 3:14: (RVIC) *And to the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God:*

One more note: The New International Version translation tries to have it both ways and ends up adding words that are not in the literal Greek:

John 1:18: (NIV) *No one has ever seen God, but the one and only son, (this is completely in accord with most of the Greek manuscripts) who is himself God (NOT found in any Greek manuscripts) and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*



The translators for NIV added *huios* AND *theos*, which is not correct. We do not want to add to the Bible.

In this instance, an absolute decision is tough to determine. It is a toss-up as to which Greek word was intended here. The context of *being begotten* allows us to harmonize either *God (huios)* or *son (theos)* without doing any injustice to our understanding of truth.

Let's shift gears and look at another verse with a questionable translation. This is a verse we at Christian Questions have often cited as proof that the gifts of the spirit came to an end.

Notice the emphasis on what is being said in this translation:



1 Corinthians 13:8: (NIV) *Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.*

Based on the meaning of the Greek words, the following commentary challenges our interpretation:



1 Corinthians 13:8 issues, *Top Ten List - Mistranslation Errors of the Bible*, John Noe

- *NIV poorly translates verse eight as four declarative statements. “Love never fails.” Hear the declaration in that? “But where there are prophecies, they will cease.” Declarative statement. “Where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away.” The RSV translates it like this: “Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.” Here's a revealing tidbit: three of these four statements in 1 Corinthians 13:8 are not declarative if you go back to the original translations, the original language, nor facts as maintained by the secessionists. In the original Greek language, this verse is comprised of one declarative statement: Love never fails and three conditional clauses.*

We agree! These are three conditional clauses here:

1 Corinthians 13:8: (NASB) *Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.*

1 Corinthians 13:8: (New Jerusalem Bible) *Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; and if knowledge, it will be done away with.*

We see the literal Greek translation of the language the same way as the speaker - as conditional statements.

We see that in these last two translations that they do, indeed, translate as John Noe said - as conditional statements. We see the literal translation of the language of this verse in the same light. The issue arises when we interpret what is being referenced.

We agree on the translation but disagree on the interpretation.

Let's hear more on this:



Three absurdities, *Top Ten List - Mistranslation Errors of the Bible*, John Noe

- *Here's the exegetical (an explanation or critical interpretation of a text) support. The declarative statement that we can all agree on is, “Love never fails,” but the other three statements all begin with the Greek participle of conditionality, “etie,” and it does not mean “where” or “as.” It means “if” or “whether.” Now King James uses “whether” three times and NAS uses “if” three times, but the better translation according to BAGD, which is Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich-Danker Greek Lexicon of the New Testament recommends “but if,” “and if,” and those carry the meaning of “may” or “may not.” In other words, those are hypotheticals. We have this one statement emphasized by the literary device of conditional hypothetical hyperbolic clauses. Not four declarative statements. This construction, Steven, utilizes three absurdities to dramatize Paul's main point throughout this passage of 1 Corinthians 13 of the supreme value of love.*



John Noe goes on to explain in this interview that the absurdities are that languages (tongues) are not going to go away. Of course, knowledge is not going to stop. He is saying that Paul is setting up knowledge, prophecies and tongues ceasing as absurdities. It is absurd to think that all knowledge or language will cease! This is in contrast to the certainty of love never failing.

But Paul is talking about *specific categories* of tongues, prophecy and knowledge - those of the spiritual gifts. These were prophecies given by God's inspiration; tongues (languages) - the ability to intuitively know how to speak in a language other than your own through God's gift; and exceptional knowledge and understanding given by God to some in the early church to help the church grow quickly. Paul is not talking about general knowledge or language disappearing as an absurdity. Rather, he is talking about gifts that had a purpose in establishing the early church rapidly, and that they would come to an end when its purpose was accomplished, but love will never come to an end.

How do we know this? This now comes down to interpretation. We agree on what the words mean and how the grammar frames the sentences. Now we are interpreting the application of those words. On one hand, we have Paul setting up the contrast between the absurdity of language and knowledge disappearing compared to the certainty of love. On the other, we have the understanding that this is not talking about general language and knowledge, but about the actual spiritual gifts. Let's see how to approach this conundrum.

Absurdities? Theoretically that could be, except for the context of this verse. Both the immediate and the larger context clearly define how tongues, prophecy and knowledge should be understood.



Let's look at the immediate context just before verse 8:

1 Corinthians 13:1-2: (NASB) ¹*If I speak with the **tongues** of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. ²If I have the **gift of prophecy**, and know all mysteries and all **knowledge**; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.*

These two verses clearly speak about the gifts of the spirit. It is not a coincidence that Paul talks about the spiritual gifts of tongues, knowledge, and prophecy six verses later. He is building his reasoning on what he said just 30 seconds before. We cannot remove a verse from its context just to supply a meaning with which we are comfortable.

The larger context:

1 Corinthians 12:8-10: (NASB) ⁸*For to one is given the word of wisdom through the spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same spirit; ⁹to another faith by the same spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one spirit, ¹⁰and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues.*



Notice how everyone does not have every gift. This is why the *if* in verse 8 exists - *if* you are one of the few who speak in tongues. This context helps us gain textual clarity.



The Apostle Paul was addressing a problem of thinking in the Corinthian church. They were putting far too much emphasis on these spiritual gifts. Not all of them had gifts, nor did they all have the same ones. This created a debate over their value. Paul was trying to help them understand that while the gifts had value for the early church, their value was negligent and ephemeral compared to the value of the everlasting concept of love.

Some look at verse 10 differently:

1 Corinthians 13:10: (KJV) *But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.*

They interpret this as referring to Jesus' second coming. He is perfect and when he comes the gifts will go away, but in the meantime, they will continue throughout the Gospel Age. There are several problems with this. Obviously, when Jesus comes the gifts will cease - this is not some new understanding. Why state it? Also, it does not make sense that we cannot know God's will until after Jesus comes and that we are somewhat deficient.

Please see the **Bonus Material** for more thoughts on 1 Corinthians 13:10.

Paul then says that three things remain:

1 Corinthians 13:13: (RVIC) *But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love.*

When Jesus and the church are gathered, we will not have faith and hope anymore. *Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for in the future.* If we have what we have hoped for, we no longer need faith and hope - it is reality.

That which is perfect refers to the perfection of knowledge that comes with the creation of the Scriptures, the Bible. When the apostles and disciples passed off the scene, the New Testament was complete and in the hands of the church. It was perfect - just what the church would need for the next 19 or 20 centuries. That is the perfection which has come. It explains everything if we look at it that way.



We covered several different areas in this podcast. We covered spurious Scriptures, those that do not belong in the biblical canon. Then we covered some areas where Scriptures are mistranslated. We tried to understand what the translation should be. The key element that was emphasized several times is that our faith is based on exegetical exploration - it has to be based on critical readings and evidence of the best manuscripts.

Sometimes we found that the meaning became very plain; sometimes it is not so obvious. Our understanding might require more investigation comparing Scripture to Scripture to find harmony. Lastly, we might agree on the translation but not on the interpretation of some of our Christian friends. In this case, we need to look at the context and other writings of the same apostle to understand the most likely meaning.

This is such an important study. Part III is coming next week. We want to believe in the word of God as God intended His word to be. Not as we may have manufactured it to be, or as we would like it to be, but as the ancient

*So, has the Bible been mistranslated and misunderstood?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*



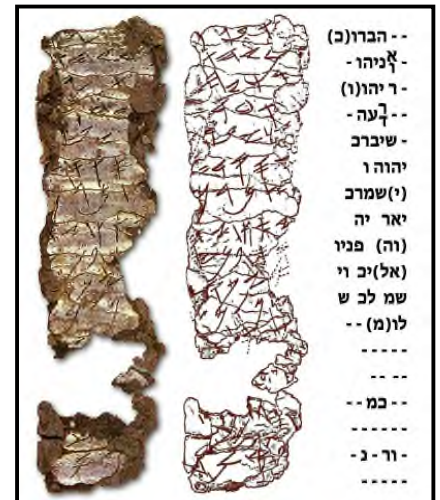
Ep. 1153: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood? (Part III)

Some people think that the truth can be hidden with a little cover-up and decoration. But as time goes by, what is true is revealed, and what is fake fades away. — Ismail Haniyeh

FOLLOW UP

What would you say is the oldest archeological find of a Scripture text?

The Ketef Hinnom Amulets, of course! The amulets were found outside of Jerusalem in 1979. They represent the oldest example of Scripture we know of today. Amulet 2 has inscribed on it the priestly benediction of Numbers 6:24-26. This dates to BEFORE the destruction of Jerusalem and matches beautifully the Biblical text we have today. That is more than 2,600 years ago! Jehovah preserves His word.



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=238025>



WHY IS THE BIBLE SO HARD TO READ?

christianquestions.com/youtube

1 Corinthians 13:10: (KJV) *but when that which is **perfect** is come, that which is in part shall be done away.*

Some understand that the “perfect” in verse 10 is a reference to the return of Jesus. This explanation does make sense. Obviously, Jesus is perfect, and



many Christians are waiting for his return. The idea is that miraculous spiritual gifts will continue until Jesus returns.

Problems with this perspective:

1. What is the point of saying that the miraculous spiritual gifts will end at the second coming of Christ? Of course those gifts would end! At Jesus' return and manifestation to the world, the whole evil world will be overthrown (1 Corinthians 15:24).
2. What is the point of saying that we cannot know all of God's will but when Christ returns, we will know fully? This doesn't seem very helpful to these first century Christians who are debating the value of spiritual gifts.
3. Paul says that three things will remain: faith, hope and love. But faith and hope cannot remain after the establishment of Christ's Kingdom in this world! Paul says that hope that is seen is not hope (Romans 8:24). No one hopes for what he sees. Hope and faith are necessary until every one of the little flock is united with Christ in the spirit. The writer of Hebrews teaches that faith is the evidence of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). There is no need for faith in Christ when we are gathered home with him. We have to conclude that Paul is describing a time after the ending of spiritual gifts when faith, hope, and love will remain.
4. Finally, some appeal to verse 12 and state that we have not seen God face-to-face. Consequently, Paul is referring to the second coming when we will see God face to face. But a careful reading shows that Paul does not say this. The text does not say we will see God face-to-face. Rather, the Apostle Paul simply says that we will see clearly like being face-to-face, rather than dimly. Paul does not say here we will see God. That is not his time frame.

The fact of the matter is that Paul and his Corinthian Christians in the first century at the start of the Christian Church were living in a time of limited knowledge and understanding. All the church had was the relatively few apostles and disciples of Jesus to feed them. The miraculous gifts of the spirit made up for that lack. But what was perfect and mature was coming so that these things would be set aside and no longer necessary. These special gifts would end when God's revelation was written down as New Testament Scripture for all to read and know. All of the books of the New Testament were completed before the end of the first century. The Scriptures were completed, the apostles passed off the scene, and the miraculous gifts ceased all around the end of the first century.

Note regarding the purpose of tongues:

1 Corinthians 14:22: (RVIC) *Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving: but prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving, but to them that believe.*

Study QUESTIONS

Ep. 1152: Has the Bible Been Mistranslated and Misunderstood? (Part II)

<https://christianquestions.com/doctrine/1152-mistranslations/>

See:  **CQ Rewind**
SHOW NOTES

1. What are the Strong's Concordance and Greek and Hebrew Interlinear Bibles?
How can they help us understand what is written in the Bible? (See Galatians 5:1,13)
2. Why should we be wary when reading biblical commentaries? How can they be used to benefit our Bible study?
3. What makes a verse spurious? Why is it important to identify spurious passages?
(See Mark 16:18, 1 John 5:7-8, Revelation 20:5)
4. What evidence is there that Mark 16:9-20 is spurious? What makes this passage different than Mark 16:18 that is widely agreed to be spurious?
5. How did the early Christians stay faithful before the Bible was widely printed?
What can we learn about our responsibilities from their example?
6. How can we learn the true meaning behind the Philippians 2:6 despite the poor King James Version translation? (See 1 Corinthians 4:4, Philippians 2:3-9, Colossians 1:15)
7. How can we resolve the difference between the King James Version and New American Standard Bible translations of John 1:18? Which is more correct and how do we know? (See Psalm 90:2, Revelation 3:14)
8. What are some issues with the way some translations phrase 1 Corinthians 13:8?
What is the overall message of the Scripture? (See 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 13:1-2,8-13)
9. How should we approach Scriptures with situations similar to the two mentioned above?
10. Are you willing to take the truest and most authentic rendering of Scripture you can find and build your faith upon it? Why or why not?