**INSPIRATION AND TRANSLATION**

By Dr. Bruce Lackey

**Premise**: It is correct to call a translation of the Bible “the inspired Word of God” if it is a correct translation from uncorrupted manuscripts.

**First**: In **II Timothy 3:15-17**, Paul refers to the Scriptures that Timothy had and calls them inspired.

**II Timothy 3:15-17** – “(15) 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. (16) **All scripture is given by inspiration of God**, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

**Second**: Timothy did not have the originals; he had only a copy. It is possible that he had the Old Testament in Hebrew, but more likely that he had the Greek translation of the Old Testament, since his father was a Greek and he lived in Derbe and/or Lystra, which were definitely Greek-speaking.

Every reference in the New Testament to the **scripture** refers to copies of the autographs (original manuscripts) in Hebrew or to **translations** in Greek. No one had the autographs at that time.

**Third**: The scriptures which Timothy had were called “holy” that is different or set apart. They were “set apart” in the sense that they were inspired and preserved, as God had promised in **Psalm 12:6-7**, **Psalm 100:5** and other places. No other ancient writings could make such a claim; hence, no other writings could be called “holy.”

**Psalm 12:6-7** – “(6) The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. (7) Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever.”

**Psalm 100:5** – “For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”

**Fourth**: **Hebrews 1:8 and 10:5** quote from the Greek translation of the Old Testament scriptures authoritatively.

**Fifth**: **Hebrews 3:7** states, “… the Holy Ghost saith ...” and it was in Greek, not in Hebrew.

It does not matter whether one believes that the author of Hebrews was quoting from the Septuagint or making his own translation; the fact is that he was writing in Greek and boldly asserted, “… the Holy Ghost saith…”

Why did he not insert Hebrew words at that point? Obviously, because a translation may be correctly called what the Holy Ghost said!

The same is true of **Hebrews 9:8** and **10:15**.

**Hebrews 3:7** – “Wherefore (**as the Holy Ghost saith** …”

**Hebrews 9:8** – “**The Holy Ghost this signifying** …”

**Hebrews 10:15** – “Whereof **the Holy Ghost** … had **said** before”

**Sixth**: If only the autographs are inspired, no one has the inspired scripture.

Thus, no one could obey **Matthew 4:4** -- “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Did God intend for only those who had the autographs to obey this? Or did He intend for only those who could read Hebrew and Greek to obey this? The answer must be obvious to any thinking Christian. When God made this statement, and when Christ repeated it, did He not know that the scripture would be copied and translated many times?

Again, if only the autographs are inspired, we cannot obey **II Timothy 4:2** -- “Preach the word …”

Nor can we obey **Revelation 22:18-19** – “(18) …If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: (19) … if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life …”

Neither could we have the benefit of **II Timothy 3:16-17** – “… being throughly furnished unto all good works.”

**Seventh**: Without the uncorrupted Word of God, we have no salvation.

**I Peter 1:23-25** teaches that we are “(23) … born again … by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever … (25) … And this is the word which by the gospel if preached unto you.”

**Note**: **“… this is the word** ...” that which they had heard. They had not heard the autographs, but, perhaps copies, and more likely, translations. Yet he stated that they were born again by the incorruptible word of God.

**Eighth**: Any correctly translated scripture, in any version, would be correctly called the inspired Word of God, if it is from uncorrupted texts.

Many verses in the Vaticanus (et al) are exactly the same as in the Textus Receptus. They are truly God's Word. It is those places where scripture has been changed which are to be rejected.

Likewise, **John 1:1** reads exactly the same in the King James and The New American Standard Version. We cannot condemn a verse merely on the basis of the book or manuscript in which it is found. The issue is whether the verse is correct.

**John 1:1** – “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”

**ANSWERS TO OBJECTIONS**

**Objection 1**: Are the italicized words inspired?

**Answer**: The King James Version is not the only one to use italicized words; several others do also. When translating from one language to another, it is impossible to give a word-for-word rendering.

Inserted words (usually italicized) are necessary.

The Greek language omits the verb sometimes and is perfectly correct, according to rules of Greek grammar. However, in English, this would make an awkward sentence to say the least, and in some cases, would greatly hinder one's understanding of it.

**An example**: In **II Timothy 3:16** “is” is in italics. Yet, it is obviously necessary!

If we translated **John 3:16** in a word- for-word literal rendering, it would read: “So for loved the God the world that the Son of him the only-begotten he gave, that all the ones believing into him not may perish, but may have life eternal.”

No version is consistent in italicizing words.

For instance, in **II Timothy 3:16**, the King James Version italicizes “is”, since there is no Greek equivalent for it; but there is no Greek equivalent for “given by”, either!

The New American Standard Version italicizes “doom” in **I Peter 2:8**, but not “because”.

There is nothing wrong with the insertion of words, if they be correct. They are necessary for our understanding.

Also, Christ quoted from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, as recorded in **Matthew 4:4**. He was quoting **Deuteronomy 8:3**.

The King James Version, which was translated from Hebrew, shows the word “word” in italics, indicating that it was added by the translators. They were perfectly correct in doing so, since the English would not be clear without it.

Those who translated the Hebrew into Greek also added the word “word” (logos, in Greek). They were also correct, as proven by Christ's quotation of it! And He emphasized that we should live by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Clearly, then, a translation can be called the Word of God ... every word of it. Christ did so!

Objections about italicized words are groundless.

**Objection 2**: The translators were not consistent; they were wrong to translate one Greek word by several English words.

**Answer**: We must distinguish between a translator's choice and a translator's error.

For example, in **Romans 7:7-8** the Greek Noun **epithumia** and its corresponding verb **epithumeo** are translated by three English words: **lust**, **covet**, and **concupiscence**.

We cannot charge them with error here. In their day, the three words meant essentially the same.

The same is true of the translation of the definite article from Greek to English. Not all translators agree when it should or should not be done. Neither the King James nor the New American Standard always translates the article …

We may disagree with a translator's choice of words, but cannot necessarily call that an error. The English words **story**, **fast**, **tie**, **post**, and **watch** all have at least two different meanings; sometimes three. This situation exists in any language.

Synonyms may mean the same in one situation, and have different shades of meaning in another. For instance, **car** and **automobile** may be referring to the same thing, or differentiating between a railroad car and an auto mobile. The context must determine.

**Objection 3**: If the translation is inspired, it would be wrong to have a marginal reading or to suggest another possible word.

**Answer**: When suggesting another translation of a word or phrase, there is no thought of correcting the translators or the scripture.

Such suggestions are given because of the changes in the English language in the past 300 plus years. Also, various false doctrines which are popular today, but were unknown in 1611, have confused the understanding of many people. Hence, it is often necessary to resort to Greek and Hebrew to clear up such misunderstandings.

New Testament writers sometimes paraphrase Old Testament scripture. Examples:

**Matthew 12:17-21** (from **Isaiah 42:1-3**)

**Romans 3:10** (from **Psalm 14:1-3**; **Psalm 5:9**; **Psalm 140:3**; **Psalm 10:7**; **Psalm 59:7-8**; **Psalm 36:1**).

Therefore, different words may be used when teaching the same truth.

Hence, a translation in English from uncorrupted texts would be equally inspired as a translation in Spanish from the same texts. Also, two English translations that say the same thing, though using different words, would be equally inspired **in the scriptures which agree**. It is in the places where there is a different teaching, or an omission, that we must choose.

In the introduction to the original King James Version, we find words of wisdom about marginal readings:

“Some perhaps would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority to the Scriptures for deciding controversies, by that show of uncertainty should somewhat be shaken. But we do not hold their judgment to be so sound in this point. ... there are many words in the Scriptures, which are never found there but once ... so that we cannot be helped by comparing parallel passages. Again, there are many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc., concerning which the Hebrews themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said, as St. Jerome somewhere said of the Septuagint. Now in such a case, does not a margin do well to admonish the reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that without investigation?”

**CONCLUSIONS**

**First**: **The Textus Receptus, from which the King James Version was translated, is God's preserved word**, because of the promises in **Psalm 12:6-7**; **100:5** and **I Peter 1:23-25**.

If Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, p46, p66, p75, etc., are the uncorrupted scripture, people did not have God's pure Word for the many centuries when they were lost.

**Second**: The only way anyone knows anything about manuscripts and versions is by faith.

We must believe that the Textus Receptus is the Textus Receptus, that Nestle's footnotes are correct, that the current King James Version is the same as the original one, simply by faith. There is no way to prove or disprove these things to everyone.

**Third**: Faith must be consistent with the Word of God **Romans 10:17**.

Hence, believing that something is God's Word must be in keeping with God's promise of preservation, rather than being based on the reliability of a scholar or group of scholars.

**Fourth**: I believe that the King James Version is a correct translation of uncorrupted manuscripts in both Hebrew and Greek and is worthy of being called the inspired Word of God.

The fact that I cannot answer all the problems which have been raised does not affect my faith in the copy of God's Word which I possess. My faith in the clear doctrine of providential preservation would override any unanswered questions about textual criticism. The same situation exists between the doctrine of creation and the discoveries of scientists which seem to contradict creation.

**Faith which is based on a clear promise is stronger than objections which are raised by our lack of information.**

Since God has promised to preserve His Word for all generations, and since the Hebrew and Greek which is represented by the King James Version is the Bible that all generations have had, and since God has so signally used the truth preached from this Bible, I must follow it and reject others where they differ.

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**Editor**: I edited this article in a few places adding only a word now and then since this was essentially a bible study and not an article written for publication. Nothing I added changed the intent on the author.

I also separated paragraphs into shorter statements. This was done so that the reader may take time to consider what he or she has just read. It is my way of calling upon you to Selah – to pause and consider the matter.

I also put Scripture references and quotes, an occasional statement from the author, and headings in bold. This is only for emphasis so that your eye might be drawn more clearly to that which was made bold.

Finally, Dr. Lackey quoted the scripture address but did not add the text. I put the text in where he put the address. This was done so that the reader need not look up each address while reading the article.