

readers that their new translation should be updated often. For example, in John 3:16, the 1611 King James Version (KJV) translates the Greek word *Pisteuo*, “beleueeth.” The 1769 revision of the KJV translates it “believeth”, and the NASB translates it “believes.” In 1 Thessalonians 4:15 the KJV 1769 revision translates the Greek word *Phthano*, “prevent.” The NASB translates it “precede.” There are many such minor differences between translations in the same language. There are a few more significant differences between the KJV and the NASB, but if you were to add up all the words or phrases of a Greek N.T. that people have any real question concerning the original wording, it would only fill up about one-half of a page! **Not one** of those differences changes any doctrine of the Scripture.

The KJV, widely used today, is itself an update of 6 previous translations: the Tyndale Bible (1526) of which about 90% of it is included in the KJV, the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Great Bible (1539), The Geneva Bible (1560), The Bishop’s Bible (1568), and the Rheims-Douay Bible (1582). You can see that there were many updates and new versions on a regular basis. Even the original 1611 KJV translation was updated 8 times (1611, 1613, 1616, 1629, 1638, 1701, 1762, 1769). There were also a total of about 1,000 editions during the time of 1611 to the 18th century.

You can see that the historical position with regard to Bible translation has been to update translations on a regular basis. The KJV translators said in their original preface, “no cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current.” This

is not to say that all new or old translations are as equal in accuracy. The KJV translators also said “we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very poorest translation of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession, containeth the Word of God, nay, is the Word of God.” When Jesus quoted the Old Testament, He quoted from the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. This Greek translation was and still is considered to be overall a poor translation. Even when it differed with the Hebrew, Jesus still quoted it as the Word of God. For example, compare Isaiah 61:1-2a to Luke 4:18-19. There is some variation, but Christ quoted it as the Word of God. The Apostle Paul even quoted from the Septuagint even though it did not agree with the Hebrew wording (compare Rom. 9:27-28 to Isa. 10:22-23 and Gal. 4:27 to Isa. 54:1).

Do not fear to use an updated Bible translation. Look for a translation that uses as its primary rule, a word for word translation whenever it is possible and which also emphasizes accuracy and clarity. The two modern translations, available today that fulfill this best are the New American Standard Bible (NASB), and the New King James Version (NKJV). God bless you as you read and study His Word.

WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?



Keith Ekberg



2 Buckskin Road
Greenville, SC 29607-5107
www.biblespeaks.org
e-mail: thebiblespeaks@charter.net

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REVELATION

The God of all creation has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind. The word “revelation” means to reveal or uncover something unknown.

Revelation is God making known to mankind something about Himself, that man would not have known any other way. General revelation is when God reveals Himself in His creation (Rom. 1:20), and in the human conscience (Rom. 2:14-15). God’s special revelation includes miracles, visions, signs, the incarnation of the LORD Jesus Christ (the Living Word of God), and the written Word of God (the Holy Bible).

General revelation tells us there is a God. Special revelation tells us who God is and how we can have a right relationship with Him. In His Word, God reveals to us His holiness and our sinfulness; His provision for our salvation and our need to accept it. Can I know the mind of God? Yes, if He chooses to reveal His mind. Has He revealed His mind? Yes, in the Holy Scriptures. How do we know that what the Bible says is the Word of God? Because it is inspired.

INSPIRATION

God has chosen to reveal Himself to mankind by the means of inspiration. The word inspiration means God-breathed. The inspiration of the Scriptures is not some emotional, inspiring feeling, but the very Word of God breathed out by God. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for*

reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Tim. 3:16). Inspiration is the process by which God controlled and directed the writing of the very words He intended to be written. The inspiration of the Scriptures is reserved to the original writings of the Apostles and Prophets. Inspiration cannot be claimed in the work of translation.

PRESERVATION

God has promised in the Scriptures to preserve His Word. *“Forever O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven”* (Psalms 119:89). Also in Matthew 5:18 it says, *“For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”* God has also promised to prosper His Word. Isaiah 55:11 reads, *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void (empty), but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing where to I sent it.”* God has promised to preserve His Word to accomplish His will, but He did not say how He would preserve His written Word.

MANUSCRIPTS

How has God preserved His Word? God has preserved His Word through manuscripts. Manuscripts, when referring to the Bible, are ancient, hand written copies of the Scriptures in the original Biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. There exists over 5,000 portions of Greek New Testament manuscripts as well as other ancient documents that total over 20,000. When you compare this to other ancient literature, they do not even have one-tenth of the manuscripts today that the Bible has. For example, there are only 8 existing manuscripts today that Thucydides wrote around 400 B.C.. Tacitus, a Roman historian,

has only 2 manuscripts existing today which he wrote around A.D. 100.

When a manuscript is translated into another language from the original languages, it is called a version. God has primarily preserved His Word through the thousands of manuscripts as well through hundreds of Bible translations. God has truly preserved His Word.

TRANSLATION

A translation is when a manuscript in one language is translated into another language. A translation can be called “the inspired Word of God” as long as it accurately reflects the original writings. This is not to say that God does not help those involved in Bible translation work. He helps them just as much as He can help preachers preach a sermon, or teachers teach a lesson. Translation is a human work; inspiration is a Divine work. Therefore, translation is an imperfect work; inspiration is a perfect work. Inspiration was a one-time work. It was finished when the book of Revelation was completed. Translation is an on going work. There are about 6,000 languages that still do not have a complete Bible translated in their language. Languages that already have a translation of the Bible need to be periodically updated because languages constantly change—especially the English language.

UPDATING TRANSLATIONS

There is some concern that when someone updates a particular translation, that they are changing the Word of God. The updating of a translation does not change God’s Word, it only clarifies the meaning for languages that continually change. Even the King James translators said in their original preface to the