

CAN WE TRUST THE BIBLE?

by Dr Bruce Woolard



In recent years the authority of the Bible has been under attack. This is not surprising. A new philosophy permeating society seeks to promote humanistic ideas about the origin of mankind and the existence of God. Books like the DaVinci Code, The Judas Gospel, The Lost Tomb of Jesus including The God Delusion are designed to undermine the historical fact that the Bible is authentic and of Divine inspiration. Sadly many so called avid readers who should be more circumspect and wiser than the average casual reader, are now regurgitating what they have read in these spurious writings gleaned from the era of the Gnostics mystics.

DE-GENERATION OF SOCIETY

More and more people are discarding of the Bible as if it were merely a book of fables and myths. This no doubt will impact on how modern man views his value and worth in a changing world. After all if there is no God why should we be accountable in living a morally upright life. If we are an evolved specie that came from slime why should we have a conscience about what is right or wrong? When you remove the reality of God's existence you replace it with a mindset that causes a de-generation in society.

TWISTING THE TRUTH AND SOWING THE SEED OF ERROR

From the first mention of Lucifer, in the opening chapters of the book of Geneses, he is described as a deceiver who subtly undermines the Truth of God and sows the seed of doubt in God's Word – Geneses 3. In this historical setting in the Garden of Eden Satan slithers into the history books of mankind, spewing out venom and words laced with evil motives. He begins to twist the Word of God – *“Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?”* Genesis 3:1 *“You will not surely die”* Genesis 3:4, *“God knows that you will become wise knowing the difference between good and evil”* Genesis 3:5. Satan uses half truths to undermine the Truth. He mingles truth with error and breaks down the resolve of mankind. This strategy, used by evil spirits, has not changed. We are reminded

in Ephesians 6 that the battle of the Christian faith is a struggle against the devil's schemes and against powers of darkness. We are encouraged to put on the whole armour of God – Ephesians 6:10-17. We should therefore not be surprised that the Christian faith is under siege in these modern times.

THE PLOT THICKENS.

The record of Scripture reveals that Jesus had enemies who had agendas both religious and political. The Jewish authorities and religious leaders were threatened by His knowledge. The Roman authorities were challenged by His influence on the masses. Many writings in the first century AD were circulated. These writings sought to undermine the Truth and the identity of Jesus Christ. The Gnostic writings of the 1st and 2nd century were rejected by the early Christian church to be inconsistent with the revealed Truth of the New Testament. The Old Testament had been accepted as authentic through the centuries of Jewish history. Jesus himself accredited the Old Testament to being authoritative – Matthew 22:29. After the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ many versions of who Christ was were circulated among the people. These unreliable witnesses were rejected by the followers of Christ. Emerging from the infant church came the writings of the Apostles which formed the foundation of Truth upon which we now build. Paul says *“All Scripture is inspired or God breathed”* 2 Timothy 3:16. The Apostles wrote many letters that were not considered to be God breathed as they dealt with general matters of concern, however, the 27 books of the New Testament were accepted by the early church as the measuring rod or canon. Remember that John wrote that *“If all the works of Jesus were to be recorded the whole world would not have room for all the books.”* John 21:25. This simply means that not everything written about Jesus was intended to form the fundamentals of the faith.

We do not speculate on what is not written in Holy Scripture, but rather what is written.

ANTIOCH MANUSCRIPTS

In the opening centuries AD many copies of the originals of the Greek New Testament were available. There was no printing press and copies were written by hand. These copies taken from the originals were distributed among believers. They became known as the Antioch Manuscripts. Later on they were called the Textus Receptus, which means the received text. Many Jewish people who spoke the native languages of the countries in which they resided received these copies in languages that they could understand – Acts 2:5-11 indicates that on the day of Pentecost there were many people who were either born Jews or were Proselytes. Tertullian who lived in the 2nd century spoke of the Apostles autographs as being in existence in his day (this is important because we have a historical record that

the New Testament writings were already in circulation and accepted as authentic more than 200 years before Constantine. He also made reference to the authentic writings of the Apostles that were pre-eminent among the leaders of his day.

ALEXANDRIAN MANUSCRIPTS

In the 3rd century AD a man by the name of Origen who was the leader of a group of teachers at the school of Philo located in Alexandria, Egypt, embraced the Gnostic versions and false records. He mixed the Scriptures with mysticism (Babylonian pagan concepts of the spirit world). After Constantine became Emperor of Rome he endeavoured to form a union between Christianity and paganism. Constantine commissioned Eusebius who was a great admirer of Origen to prepare 50 Bibles based upon Origen's Alexandrian manuscripts. These were to be used in the Roman church. The council in Nicea (385AD) endorsed the 66 books of the Bible namely the Old Testament and the New Testament. Eusebius declared that Constantine and Christ would reign together throughout eternity. It is important to note that the Nicean Council did not compile the Bible but endorsed the Bible. Jerome in the 4th century compiled a new translation of the Bible into Latin from the Alexandrian texts. He named it the Latin Vulgate. This became the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church by the decree made at the Council of Trent in 1546 and included the Apocrypha (additional books that were not accepted as authentic by Judaism).

DARK AGES

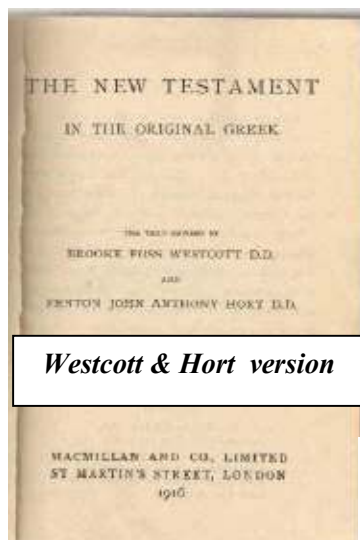
The Roman church became the official state driven Ecclesiastical Body. This plunged humanity into what became known as the dark ages followed by the Inquisition. Some called this period the Millennial reign of Satan (an excellent book to read based on this period is Fox's Book of Martyrs written by John Fox). In the 15th century the reformation began as God's Word began to be translated into the language of the people. The Bible as we know it today was a forbidden book. To possess a Bible was punishable by death. Then came the printing press and the authorised version (KJV) King James Version authorised by King James, the King of England and Scotland. He was the son of Mary Queen of Scots. The next 300 years the KJV Bible became the official version embraced and cherished by English speaking nations of the west. This period in human history gave birth to the great mission endeavours to reach the pagans on every continent of the world. The devil was incensed, and his old strategy of undermining the Word of God began to resurface. So what did the devil do? He came up with a plan. Brooke Westcott and Fenton Hort in 1850 served on a committee that formulated a new series of Bible versions that were based on the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts. At that time a man by the name of Charles Darwin published his book "The origin of the species." The world was being offered "a new science"

and through the influence of Westcott and Hort a new Bible. 1 Timothy 6:20-21 warns believers of the profane babblings of men their philosophy of false science that leads people astray. It is most interesting that the proliferation of cults and sects like the Christian Science Movement, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists and Mormonism sprang up during this same era. In the new versions of Westcott and Hort the version of the Textus Receptus was sidelined and the Alexandrian line of manuscripts, which were the corrupted ones, were used for modern translations. An example of the subtle motive of these new versions, were to dilute or water down the Truth that is contained in the KJV Bible. I use one example only, and believe me, there are many. In 1 John 5:7 it states *"for there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one."* This verse is found in the KJV and Textus Receptus version but is mysteriously excluded from modern versions that are taken from the false Alexandrian manuscripts.

So when you hold a new Bible version in your hand and you have to make a decision to purchase it, look up 1 John 5:7. If it excludes the words *"for there are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Ghost and these three are one."* it is an unreliable version taken from the spurious manuscripts of Alexandria. The New Kings James Version (NKJV) is a modern translation and has remained true to the Textus Receptus or Antioch manuscripts of the 1st and 2nd century. For those of you who have difficulty with the KJV "thees and thous" then the NKJV is recommended, because it uses modern English and yet remains faithful and consistent with the Antioch texts.

CONCLUSION

The answer to the question, "Can we trust our Bible?" We most assuredly can. The Word of God has been preserved for our generation and we are grateful to God for faithful men and women who gave their lives, as martyrs, so that we could have a Bible that is reliable and authentic. Psalm 12:7 *"You shall keep them (Scriptures), O Lord, You shall preserve them from this generation for ever."*

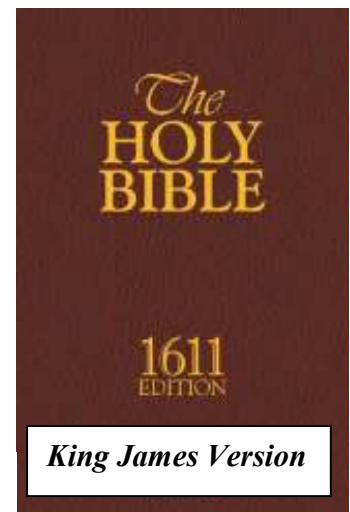


Westcott & Hort version



ANTIOCH MANUSCRIPT

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King James Version