

Bible Translations

Intro: I am neither a textual critic (some people spend their entire life in this one area of study), nor an expert in the original languages of the Bible. I have studied these fields and recognize their importance. Can we rely on the Bibles we possess? Do we know we have the Word of God from which our Bibles were translated? The answer is YES! I only intend to give a quick overview of this study in this lesson.

I. MANUSCRIPTS

A. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible.

1. 2 Pet. 1:21 “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost.”
2. The Spirit did not do the actual writing, but used the apostles and holy prophets.
 - a. What they spoke and wrote was not them, but the Spirit speaking through them.
 - b. Mark 13:11 “But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.”
 - c. 1 The. 2:13 “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”
 - d. Eph. 3:3-5 “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, ⁴Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) ⁵Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;”
 - e. Rom. 16:25-26 “Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:”
3. Sometimes the human author would use an amanuensis (or secretary).
4. The finished product was Scripture and inspired by God; 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: ¹⁷That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
5. Inspiration is affirmed both of the total product but also of the very words of the writings themselves.
 - a. 1 Cor. 2:9-13 “But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. ¹⁰But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. ¹¹For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. ¹²Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. ¹³Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
 - b. John 10:35 “If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;”
 - c. Gal. 3:16 “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.”

B. Manuscripts.

1. Normally the original documents are called manuscripts.

2. In biblical criticism the terminology is changed.
 - a. God providentially destroyed all the originals (also termed autographs).
 - b. God know that because of man's worshiping nature he would worship the actual paper on which His Word was recorded.
3. Manuscripts, in biblical terminology, refers to the copies.

C. Copies and collections.

1. As letters were sent, they would immediately be copied and collected into books.
2. Examples:
 - a. Col. 4:6 "And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea."
 - b. 1 The. 5:27 "I charge you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren."
 - c. 2 Pet. 3:1-2, 15-16 "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: ²That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:...¹⁵And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."
 - d. Paul would write a letter to a congregation, they would make copies, send it to other congregations and ask for any letters sent to them.
 - e. By this method they would collect all the holy writings.
3. The same principle is observed in the Old Testament.
 - a. Deu. 31:9, 24-26 "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and unto all the elders of Israel....²⁴And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, ²⁵That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, ²⁶Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."
 - b. Isa. 34:16 "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them."
 - c. Generally agreed that after the captivity, Ezra collected all the books into one book expecting Nehemiah and Malachi which were written after his time.
 - d. By New Testament time the Old was viewed as a unity; 2 Cor. 3:14 "But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *vail* is done away in Christ."

D. Continual copying.

1. As copies became worn, they would make more copies from the copies.
2. They would take the old copies and reverently destroy them.
 - a. Putting them in a large wooden box called a Genuzim or Gheniza, which when filled they would bury or burn.
 - b. Most of the copies were now possess were those which had been worn to the point of no longer using.
 - c. These copies are now called manuscripts.
3. Presently we possess over 5000 Greek manuscripts.
 - a. Few of these contain the entire New Testament; some are only small fragments.

- b. The different categories.
 - (1) Uncials (written in all capital letters).
 - (2) Minuscules (written in cursive and small letters).
 - (3) Lectionaries (lessons developed from the gospels and epistles which contain portions of the Bible text).
 - (4) Ostraca (broken pieces of pottery which contain bible verses).
 - (5) Talismans (good luck charms).

E. Variations.

- 1. In copying any long document, errors are going to creep into the copy. These are variations.
- 2. Two categories.
 - a. Unintentional.
 - (1) Most scribes worked for long hours at a desk with poor lighting, copying a long manuscript, which was handwritten.
 - (a) Early manuscripts were written without spaces, punctuation, and all letters were capitalized.
 - (b) Consider these examples:
 - i) HEISNOWHERE.
 - a) He is no where.
 - b) He is now here.
 - ii) BUTGODBETHANKEDTHATYEWERE
THESERVANTSOFSINBUTYEHAVE
OBEYEDFROMTHEHEARTTHAT
FORMOFDOCTRINEWHICHWAS
DELIVEREDYOUBEINGTHENMADE
FREEFROMSINYEBCAME THE
SERVANTSOFRIGHTEOUSNESS
 - iii) The above; Rom. 6:17-18 “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. ¹⁸Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”
 - (2) Sometimes one would dictate to others—think of all the times you thought a person said one word when they actually said another.
 - b. Intentional.
 - (1) A scribe or corrector trying to correct what he perceives to be a mistake by a previous scribe.
 - (2) Trying to harmonize a passage with:
 - (a) Other readings
 - (b) A common practice.
 - (c) A false doctrine.

F. Translations.

- 1. They would immediately translate the books into foreign languages.
- 2. These greatly help in determining the text of the Bible.
- 3. The writings of the “Church Fathers” as they quoted from the Bible also helps in determining the Bible text.

II. TEXT TYPES

A. There are features common among groups of manuscripts.

1. If one manuscript has a variation in it and it is used to make others, then they will have the same variation.
2. These groups have been narrowed to four groups called text types.

B. Alexandrian

1. Sometimes called the Neutral Text.
2. Represents about 10% of the total manuscripts.
3. Some of the earliest dated manuscripts fall into this classification (4th century uncials).
 - a. Vaticanus
 - b. Alexandrinus
 - c. Sinaiticus
4. In latter part of the 1800s Westcott and Hort popularized the view that the oldest manuscripts were the most reliable text.
5. The English Revised Version (1881) and the American Standard Version (1901) are based on this text type.

C. Byzantine

1. Also called the Majority or Text or the Textus Receptus (meaning the received text).
2. It represents 90 to 95% of the manuscripts and some claim up to 99%.
3. These generally are of a latter date than those in the Alexandrian.
4. These fall into the minuscule (small running hand type print) classification.
5. The King James and New King James are based on this text type (more specifically the Textus Receptus).

D. Caesarean and Western

1. Some have debated whether or not these are text types.
2. Some include the Caesarean in the Alexandrian.
3. Caesarean sprang from Egypt and contains a mixture of the Western and Alexandrian.
4. The Western is the least reliable and some contend that it is not uniform enough to be a text type.

E. Which is most reliable?

1. Westcott and Hort stated the oldest (those closest to the originals) must be the most reliable.
 - a. There would have been less time for mistakes to creep into the text.
 - b. Earlier manuscripts were copied by professional scribes who produced a better quality copy; later ones done by less capable scribes who produced poorer quality but had a wider distribution.
2. Others (those supporting the Textus Receptus) claim that we should simply count the number.
 - a. Whichever variation has the most number of supporting manuscripts is what we should use.
 - b. They also claim that God providentially preserved the Byzantine text in that no other text type was known for over 1000 years of history (all other text types are of recent archeological discoveries).

3. The eclectic approach.
 - a. Looking at all the manuscripts and drawing the best conclusion possible.
 - b. One might use a reading from the Alexandrian and the next time from the Byzantine.
 - c. This recognizes that all types have their strong and weak points.
 - (1) This tries to weigh the evidence and determine which is best from all sources.
 - (2) This also brings into consideration the early translations and writings of the “church fathers.”

F. Variations.

1. There are over 200,000 variations (some say errors in the Bible, but these are scare tactics).
2. These 200,000 variations occur in 10,000.
3. What makes a variation?
 - a. If a single word is misspelled in 3,000 different manuscripts then that is 3,000 variations.
 - b. Transposition of words.
 - (1) For example: one might have Jesus Christ while another has Christ Jesus..
 - (2) Even if all the words are represented it is still a variation.
 - (3) Word order might affect English, it rarely affect Greek.
 - c. Difference in spelling.
 - (1) Often names are spelled differently in different manuscripts.
 - (2) The pool in John 5:2 is spelled: *Bethzatha*, *Bezatha*, *Belzetha*, *Bethsaida*, *Bedsaida*, *Bessaida*, and *Bethesda*.
 - d. Different forms of the same word (not affecting the meaning).
 - e. Word substitution (synonymous words).
 - f. Insertion or deletion of words.
 - (1) This can be short.
 - (2) It can be an entire passage (Mark 16:9-20).
4. By far the great majority of variations have not bearing on the text of the Bible.
5. Consider what Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix wrote (*A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1968), pp. 365-366.)

“How significant are their variants? It is easy to leave the wrong impression by speaking of 200,000 ‘errors’ which have crept into the text by the scribal mistakes and intended corrections. It was already mentioned that there are only 10,000 places where these 200,000 variants occur. The next question is: ‘How significant are these 10,000 places?’ Textual critics have attempted to answer this question by offering the following percentages and comparisons. a. Westcott and Hort estimated that only about one-eighth of all the variants had any weight, as most of them are merely mechanical matters such as spelling or style. Of the whole, then, only about one-sixtieth rise above ‘trivialities,’ or can in any sense be called ‘substantial variations.’ Mathematically this would compute to a text that is 98.33 percent pure. b. Ezra Abbot gave similar figures, saying that about 19/20 (95 percent) of the readings are ‘various’ rather than ‘rival readings’ and 19/20 (95 percent) of the remainder are of so little importance that their adoption or rejection makes no appreciable difference in the sense of the passage. c. Philip Schaff surmised that all the 150,000 variations known in his day, only 400 affected the sense; and of these only 50 were of real significance; and of this total not one affected ‘an article of faith or a precept of duty which is not abundantly sustained by other and undoubted passages, or by the whole tenor of Scripture teaching.’ d. A. T. Robertson suggested that the real concern of textual criticism is of a ‘thousandth part of the entire text.’ This would make the reconstructed text of the New Testament 99.9 percent free from substantial or consequential error.

Hence, as Warfield observed, ‘the great mass of the New Testament, in other words, has been transmitted to us with no, or next to no variations.’ At first, the great multitude of variants would seem to be a liability to the integrity of the Bible text, But, just the contrary is true, for the larger number of variants supplies at the same time the means of checking on those variants. As strange as it may appear, the corruption of the text provides the means for its own correction.”

G. We have God’s Word, no matter which text-type one wishes to follow.

1. While there will be some variations, they will not make a significant difference in translation.
2. Not a single principle of faith nor divine command is involved with any of the variations.
3. We can have complete confidence in the text of the Bible.
4. The problem is with translation.

III. PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO TRANSLATION

A. Translation is authorized.

1. Jesus and the apostles used the Septuagint (called the 70 or LXX).
2. The Septuagint was the Bible of the Jews during the first century.
3. Rom. 3:2 “Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.

B. Important words concerning this subject.

1. Translation: the rendering of the original text faithfully into another language.
2. Interpretation:
 - a. Explaining what has been said or written.
 - b. Translation is the first step in interpretation (when needed).
 - c. Luke 24:25-27 “Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ²⁶Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? ²⁷And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded [interpreted, ASV] unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”
3. Word for Word translation:
 - a. Must be determined as to how the author is using it.
 - b. One word for one word and keeping the same order as the original.
 - (1) This is not possible.
 - (2) Often it takes more than one word to translate a word and in some languages the order of words is not as important as others.
 - c. An accurate translation.

C. Think of two ends of a line. One end is highly literal (one word for one word) and the other is paraphrasing (which is not really translation).

1. All translation can be placed somewhere on this line.
2. Nearer the one word for one word with same order is the approach: Form Equivalence or Modified Literal.
 - a. This tries to stay as close to the original as possible.
 - b. Here the emphasis is on the source of the translation.
 - c. It tries to catch the mood, essence, and flavor of the original and yet be readable and understandable.
3. Nearer to the paraphrase side we have the approach: Dynamic Equivalence or Functional Equivalence.
 - a. Here the emphasis is on the receptor of the translation.
 - b. This is more concerned with the readability and communication and not what the text says.

- c. The NIV preface says, “fidelity to the **thought** of the Biblical writers.”
- d. The process here:
 - (1) Interpret what the words of the Bible mean.
 - (2) What the words meant to the people of the first century.
 - (3) Rewrite the words to try to convey that **meaning** to the modern reader.
- e. Some questions:
 - (1) What happens when the translator’s interpretation is incorrect?
 - (2) What happens when the misinterpretation is written into the text.
- f. This approach eliminates all possible interpretations other than the translator’s one view.
- g. This approach is interpretation, not translation—it is a running commentary parading itself as God’s Word.
- h. The majority of latter day translations are based on this.

IV. TRANSLATIONS

A. As one moves away from Form Equivalence to Dynamic Equivalence the more interpretation there is.

- 1. It becomes more a commentary than God’s Word.
- 2. Let us consider some illustrations using the two most popular versions sales wise today—the King James and the New International.

B. Rom. 1:17

- 1. “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.” (KJV) “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”” (NIV)
- 2. The KJV is a very literal rendering of the Greek.
- 3. The NIV has several problems.
 - a. *Gospel* is not in the original but in the NIV.
 - b. *A righteousness that is by* has no textual basis.
 - c. *By faith from first to last.*
 - (1) Very literal rendering (not difficult to translate) would be, “out of faith into faith” or “from faith to faith.”
 - (2) The NIV does not have one word correct.
 - (3) There are several different interpretations.
 - (a) The NIV translators believe in salvation by faith only.
 - (b) They translated the passage according to their interpretation, not what the original says.
 - (c) It makes no difference if their interpretation is right or wrong; they have violated translation principles and opted for interpretation for the reader.
 - (d) They wrote their false doctrine into God’s Word.

C. 1 Cor. 13:9-10

- 1. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” (KJV) “For we know in part and we prophesy in part, ¹⁰but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.” (NIV)

2. There is a contrast between *part* and *perfect* in verse 10.
 - a. Literally it would be: “when the perfect thing comes the out of part thing will be done away with.”
 - b. The KJV does a good job and shows the contrast between *perfect* and *part*.
3. The NIV.
 - a. One would never know that the *imperfect* of verse 10 is the exact same prepositional phrase *in part* in verse 9.
 - b. *Disappears* leaves room for some mysterious self-removal of the imperfect.
 - (1) The original makes it clear that which is in part will be done away and the source is external to itself (it does not disappear by itself, nor causes itself to go away).
 - (2) They have left room for the continuation of miraculous activity until the coming of Christ.
 - (3) They had Pentecostals on the translating committee.

D. 1 Cor. 1:6; 2:1

1. “Even as the testimony **of Christ** was confirmed in you...^{2:1} And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the **testimony of God.**” (KJV) “because **our testimony** about Christ was confirmed in you...^{2:1} When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the **testimony about God.**” (NIV)
2. The KJV accurately renders the genitive case which shows possession.
 - a. It is the testimony which belongs to Christ
 - b. It is the testimony which belongs to God.
3. The NIV opens the door for testimonials about what they think of God and Christ instead of giving the testimony which originated with God and Christ.
4. The NASV lends itself to this view in 1:6 “even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you,” but then correctly translate the same Greek construction in 2:1 “And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God.”

E. Eph. 4:13

1. “Till we all come in **the unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (KJV) “until we **all reach unity in the faith** and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” (NIV)
2. The NIV makes it that everyone must believe the same thing.
 - a. The context is miraculous gifts.
 - b. The gives the meaning that miracles will continue till everyone has identical beliefs.
3. *In* is not in the Greek but the NIV inserted it.
4. This verse is correctly rendered by the KJV.

F. The translation of *sarx* (*sarx*) as “sinful nature” in the NIV.

1. The NIV repeatedly does this (Rom. 7: 5, 18, 25; 8:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13; 13:14; Gal. 5:13, 16, 17, 19, 24; 6:8).
 - a. There is no reason to translate it in this manner.
 - b. However, the translators hold the view of man’s total depravity (man is born with a “sinful nature”) and is totally evil with no ability to do anything good or pleasing to God.
 - c. This false doctrine is not in the Bible, so they wrote it into the Bible.

2. The KJV and ASV correctly translate it as *flesh* in every instance above.

G. The interpretive nature of the NIV.

1. Psa. 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (KJV)
"Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (NIV)
 - a. Choices must be made in translating passages.
 - (1) Passages can be translated in more than one way and both be a correct translation.
 - (2) There are often more than one interpretation of a passage.
 - b. If a translation chooses to translate a passage in such a way that eliminates certain possible interpretations and forces another, they do an injustice to the reader.
 - c. The NIV has taken a view of total depravity of man and forced this interpretation upon the reader in this passage.
 - (1) The reader should be given the privilege of studying for himself all possible interpretations and determining the meaning for himself.
 - (2) The NIV's forced interpretation of Total Depravity is false.
2. Mat. 19:28 "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (KJV) "Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (NIV)
 - a. There is no textual basis for "the renewal of all things."
 - b. The change to *renewal* instead of *regeneration* (as is in the KJV and ASV) is to accommodate Premillennialism which the translators believe.
 - (1) The only other time this word is found in the Bible (Tit. 3:5), the NIV translated it *rebirth* (which is a correct translation).
3. Acts 3:21 "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." (KJV) "He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets." (NIV)
 - a. Here the NIV changes the plural *times* (which is in KJV and the Greek) to the singular *time*.
 - b. This makes the times of restitution begin where the Greek has them ending.
 - (1) The times of restitution are to end at the decent of Christ from heaven.
 - (2) The only reason to change as the NIV does it the theological bias of the translators.

H. These examples should serve to demonstrate as one gets away from a literal translation, he moves to interpreting God's Word for the reader.

1. Whether or not the interpretation is correct does not matter.
2. It is the work of translators to translate, not interpret; let the reader do his own interpretation.
3. There will be variations between translations.
 - a. All translations will have some mistakes (no matter how much they strive to remain faithful to the text).

- b. The more we move from a modified literal to a Dynamic Equivalent the less of God's Word we possess and more of a running commentary.
 - (1) While there is nothing inherently wrong with a commentary, it is dangerous when a commentary passes itself off as God's Word.
 - (2) This is what we have with most modern translations.

V. QUESTIONS

A. Should we use translations based on the Dynamic Equivalent Philosophy?

1. Why would we want to use them?
 - a. Might be helpful under certain situations.
 - b. We must have the proper understanding—they are a running commentary on God's Word.
2. What we must be concerned with is a translation writing false doctrine into the text.
 - a. Some might say we can learn the truth from them, which may be true.
 - b. What about those false doctrines in them which, if believed, will cause one to be lost.
 - c. We are not saying that everyone who uses one will be lost.
 - d. But if someone reads, believes, and actions upon the damnable doctrines in this, then they would be lost.

B. Will sound preachers use unsound translations?

1. Why would they want to? Why use one that is a running commentary, and one which inserts damnable doctrines into God's Word?
 - a. A sound preacher wishes to teach the truth and nothing else.
 - b. Since unsound translations teach false doctrine, he would not use them.
 - c. He might refer to them for study sake, as he would a commentary, but not as his main Bible.
2. Some would argue that Jesus and His apostles used the Septuagint which is a faulty translation.
 - a. It is true that the Septuagint was a very defective translation.
 - (1) It was the Bible of the first century.
 - (2) It is stated that they had God's Word; Rom. 3:2 "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God."
 - (3) Thus, we can use faulty translations today.
 - b. Realize that the Septuagint was the **only** translation of the day.
 - (1) It was use the Septuagint or the original language.
 - (2) They did not have a choice as we do today.
 - c. If Jesus and the apostles had many translations as we do today, would they have used the best or one which perverted the text?

C. Do elders have the right to specify what translation to use in the public teaching?

1. Elders have authority within the congregation
 - a. 1 The. 5:12-13 "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves."
 - b. Heb. 13:7, 17 "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation....¹⁷Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you."

- c. This authority is in the area of expediency.
- 2. They have the obligation of seeing that the truth is taught (the sheep are properly fed).
 - a. Acts 20:28 “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
 - b. 1 Pet. 5:2 “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;”
- 3. Contaminated food must be kept from the flock.
 - a. They must stop the mouths of false teachers; Tit. 1:9-11 “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. ¹⁰For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: ¹¹Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”
 - b. If the false teacher comes in the form of a Bible, they have the obligation to put a stop to it.
 - c. A false teacher in the form of a Bible is more dangerous than one in person.
 - d. It would be absurd to say the elders cannot protect the flock from such (perversions of God’s Word in the form of a Bible).

Conclusion: The use of a translation is a matter of expediency, yet there are some common sense guidelines. While we cannot mark a person or congregation based upon the translation they use, we should be engaged in teaching them the dangers of translations which pervert God’s Word.

Satan is trying to destroy Christians. If he can pass off false doctrine in the form of God’s Word, the battle is lost. No doubt Satan has used this tactic in fighting against God. With the proliferation of versions comes confusion of God’s Word (whether accurately translated or not). This leads to the false view that no one can understand the Bible. When all the interpretive paraphrases are included (NIV, The Living Bible, the Cotton Patch Version, Readers Digest Version, etc.), God’s Word becomes more convoluted in people’s minds. Let us always be careful to fight against all the wiles of Satan, including his use of perverting the Bible.