

**FOUNDATION OF FAITH!**  
**THE BIBLE**  
**WHICH VERSION?**

This morning, in our series Foundation of Faith we are continuing to look at the Bible and we have spent several weeks in this section. We have seen that the Bible is the Word of God and we can trust it from Genesis through Revelation. We have looked at many different aspects showing that the Bible is authoritative to us as we live out our Christian faith. And if after all that you still have doubts, then just accept what Jesus said in John 17:17 as He prayed, **“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”**

Notice that it is not part of the Bible is true, it is not that most of the Bible is true, but God’s Word is truth! Now if you don’t believe Jesus you have even bigger problems!

This morning we are going to look at which Bible version is the best or which is good to use. You see, there are many out there and some even claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit in their transmission. And there is a hot debate over this issue and each group makes their point but to me, what version or versions can we use that are close to what the Hebrew and Greek are saying? That truly is the issue. And I will give you some things you can do to decide if a version is good or not, we will look at some good versions and we will look at some versions that are dangerous, that should be tossed out and not used.

Now you may be wondering why this is so dangerous and the answer is really very simple. You see, there are those who read their Bible and trust what the Bible has to say, like you and me. And we are not going to turn away from it or not trust it. Thus, what the enemy does is corrupt the text of the Scripture to move us away from the truths of God found in the Word of God. That truly is the problem.

There are also those that will not read the Bible and they are easy to deceive. But for those that do read the Bible it is a little harder and if you start to distort the Scriptures, change what they are saying, as subtle as that may be, down the road with future generations, they will not know the truth. They will have in their hands a Bible that is not translated from the Hebrew and Greek but words have been added, words have been left out and the meanings have been changed to fit the philosophy, the lifestyle of the day. And if you doubt that I know you will change your mind when I show you the bad translations.

Listen to what Peter tells us or warns us in II Peter 2:1-3, **“But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber.”**

Yes, there are holy men of God who bring forth the truths of God and then there are messengers of Satan who speak forth lies, they bring in destructive doctrines that are nothing more than doctrines of demons. Paul, in II Corinthians 11:13-15 warns us, **“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.”** It is as Darby said, “The Devil is never more satanic than when he carries a Bible.”

These false prophets and false teachers are wolves dressed in sheep’s clothing and they are deceptive. They may say a lot of truth but they mix it with just enough lies to damn a person to Hell!

When these heresies are brought into the church there is no red flag that is attached to them, these teachers do not say, “This is a heresy I am teaching you!” They secretly bring them into the church, they use big words, their platform is self-gratification but if you listen to what they are saying you will see that they are denying the deity of Jesus, that He is the only way of salvation, that He died for our sins, that He rose from the dead and-so-on!

Paul warned us in I Timothy 4:1, **“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons.”** Also, in II Timothy 4:3-4 Paul warns us, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”**

The only way to expose these lies of these false teachers is to know the truth, to know God's Word. Now make no mistake about it, false teachers have always been around, that really is not the issue. The real issue is that so many will follow their destructive ways! In fact, "**destructive ways**" is the Greek word ASELGEIAIS, which speaks of habitual sexual immorality and unrestrained, depraved conduct. They rejected the truth of God and are given over to fleshly passions, they are out of control. And look at the sexual sins we see false teaches involved in! And as they speak these destructive doctrines, as their lifestyles are ungodly, God's name is dishonored, it is disgraced because they are suppose to be men and women of God, but of course they are not. But the unsaved don't know that.

And in II Peter 2:3 that phrase, "**deceptive words**" means "counterfeit words" or "manufactured, fabricated words." It is the Greek word PLASTOS from which we get our English word "plastic" from. Thus, Peter is telling us that these false teachers take what the Bible is saying and they manufacture new meanings to them. But they are just plastic or fake. There is no spiritual nourishment to them. And it is amazing the number of people that bite into a plastic steak and think it is great instead of the meat of God's Word! And it is not only the teaching now, it is the Bible's that they are printing today have these "**deceptive words**" or "counterfeit words" that are there to promote their agenda, their ideas instead of what God has for us.

That is why I believe it is so important for us to make sure that the translation we have, the Bible we are using is accurate because if it is not, then what you are reading you will believe, even if it is a lie! Do you see how dangerous and deceptive that is! And yet, when you look at churches, when you look at pastors, when you look at leaders that are using and promoting these deceptive and distorted Bibles, people listen because they like to have their ears tickled with the doctrines of men instead of their hearts pierce with the Word of God!

Let me say this regarding the Bible and then I will tell you why we need to understand the Scriptures and not depend solely on a man or a church or a denomination to tell you what God is saying. First of all, ever since the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ the Bible has been the most blood stained book in all of history. Men have fought for it, they have died for it, they have been tortured for it, they have been imprisoned for it and the reason is simple. The Bible tells us that the truth will set us free, free from the lies and misinformation that is out there. You can't know if what you believe is right or wrong if you can't check it out for yourself!

Today many have forgotten what early Christians went through to get the Bible into the hands of the common people. In fact the Church, the Roman Catholic Church would not allow the reading of the Bible and even possessing a Bible in your home! Make no mistake about it, these were the Dark Ages and during this period of time Rome burned Bibles along with their owners! Of this we are told,

“The Roman Catholic Church has traditionally suppressed, opposed, and forbidden the open use of the Bible. It was first officially forbidden to the people and placed on the index of Forbidden Books List by the Council of Valencia in 1229 A. D. The Council of Trent (1545-63 A. D.) also prohibited its use and pronounced a curse upon anyone who would dare oppose this decree. Many popes have issued decrees forbidding Bible reading in the common language of the people, condemning Bible societies and banning its possession and translation under penalty of mortal sin and death. The Roman Catholic Church has openly burned Bibles and those who translated it or promoted its study, reading, and use. (John Hus, 1415 A. D.; William Tyndale, 1536 A. D.)”

- Christian Equippers International, 2941  
Lake Tahoe Blvd, South Lake Tahoe 96150

Also, we are told,

“Tyndale wrote that the Church authorities banned translation into the mother tongue ‘to keep the world still in darkness, to the intent they might sit through vain superstition and false doctrine, to satisfy their filthy lusts, their proud ambition, and insatiable covetousness, and to exalt their own honour. . . . above God himself.’”

- William Tyndale’s New Testament, Worms  
(Germany), 1526, British Library C.188.a.17

And the Roman Catholic Church was brutal in its attack to keep the Bible out of the hands of the common people. Regarding this we are told,

“For 600 years the Roman Catholic Church attempted to keep translations of the Bible out of the hands of the people. Bible-believing people were mercilessly persecuted and their Scriptures were destroyed. Those who possessed Bibles without a license were commanded to deliver them up to the Catholic authorities under threat of inquisition terrors. Booksellers were forbidden to sell any Bibles except to people who possessed a license from the Catholic Church. Huge quantities of Scriptures in English, German, Italian, French, Spanish, and in other languages, were confiscated and destroyed throughout the 13th to the 19th centuries. Bible translators and distributors were imprisoned and burned. Even after the Catholic inquisition was outlawed in many lands in the 18th and 19th centuries, the popes continued to condemn the free distribution of Scripture.”

- David W. Cloud, *Rome and the Bible: Tracing the History of the Roman Catholic Church and its Persecution of the Bible and of Believers*

That is what got the Roman Catholic Church so upset as people like John Wycliffe tried to get the Bible into the hands of the common people, (about 1320 to December 31, 1384). John Wycliffe began preaching and teaching and writing against the unbiblical doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. He exposed the falsehood of transubstantiation, sacramentalism, purgatory, indulgences, tradition being in authority with the Scriptures, the papacy, infant baptism, praying to the saints and he was called the “Morning Star” of the Reformation because he taught these things some 100 years before the Reformers came about! Listen to these words about this man. We are told,

“Wycliffe became convinced that everyone had the right and duty to read the Scriptures in their own language – and that only the Word of God could break the bondage of Romanism which enslaved the people.” (Zion’s Fire Magazine; March/April, 1991 – Special Edition; p.8).

Here are some of the things Wycliffe said about the Bible –

- “The sacred Scripture [is] to be the property of the people, and one which no party should be allowed to wrest from them.”
- “The priests declare it to be heresy to speak of the Holy Scriptures in English, such a charge is a condemnation of the Holy Ghost, who first gave the Scriptures in tongues to the Apostles of Christ, to speak the word in all languages that were ordained of God under heaven.”
- “Those Heretics who pretend that the laity need not know God’s law but that the knowledge which priests have had imparted to them by word of mouth is sufficient, do not deserve to be listened to. For Holy Scriptures is the faith of the Church, and the more widely its true meaning becomes known the better it will be. Therefore since the laity should know the faith, it should be taught in whatever language is most easily comprehended. . . . Christ and His apostles taught the people in the language best known to them.”

John Wycliffe was at odds with the Roman Catholic Church nearly all of his life, but in spite of that he was never excommunicated nor did he leave the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, he suffered his fatal stroke while conducting Mass at Lutterworth. He was carried out the door and taken to his parsonage and died at home in bed on New Year’s Eve 1384 A. D. He was buried in the Lutterworth church yard soon after. But that was not the end for John Wycliffe. The English Catholic Church wanted to stamp out the influence Wycliffe had even after his death. You can see the animosity by reading what Archbishop Arundel wrote to the Pope in 1411:

“This pestilent and wretched John Wyclif, of cursed memory, that son of the old serpent . . . endeavored by doctrine of Holy Church, devising – to fill up the measure of his malice – the expedient of a new translation of the Scriptures into the mother tongue”. (The Wycliffite Versions – The Cambridge History of the Bible; by Henry Hargreaves; Cambridge University Press – 1969). . . .

Thirty years after Wycliffe’s death the Roman Church finally took official action at the Council of Constance in 1415. They burned Wycliffe’s disciple, John Hus, at the stake and condemned John Wycliffe on 260 different counts. They ordered that his bones be exhumed from the consecrated ground and burned. Thirteen years after the council, 44 years after Wycliffe’s death his bones were exhumed and burned along with all the Bibles and books they could find authored by him. His ashes were thrown into the river Swift.

The Church of Rome thought this would stamp out his influence and stand as a warning to any future would-be “heretics”. But, as noted historian Thomas Fuller put it – “They burnt his bones to ashes and cast them into the Swift. This brook (Swift) has conveyed his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow seas, they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which now is dispersed all the world over.” (Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Present Time; by J. M. Cramp; Elliot Stock – London; 1871; p.98).

- Logos Resource Pages, The History of Our English Bible On This 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the King James Bible

And we can look at the men that have been martyred for their faith as they tried to get the Scriptures into the hands of the common people and not have it just for the leaders in the church. Men like Tyndale, Hus, John Rogers and others were willing to give their lives to get God's Word into our hands and guess what? They succeeded and now we are letting people alter God's Word, make it say what they want it to say. We are not willing to lay our lives down for what God has entrusted to us anymore. May we wake up and take a stand, may we ready! Or, are we that selfish that we don't care for future generations and what we are giving to them? I hope not!

The bottom line is this. If you have to rely on someone else to tell you what is in the Scriptures you can be deceived and that is why the Catholic Church was so against the common person getting their hands on the Scripture because the truth would set them free from the bondage and the lies that the Catholic Church had perpetrated upon people. And you can read in the book of Acts of the Bereans who searched the Scriptures to see what Paul was teaching, if they lined up to what God's Word had to say and we should be no different today!

Now, what was written were translations! We see the Wycliffe manuscript of the New Testament in 1380 and the Old and New Testament in 1382. John Purvy revised Wycliffe's Bible in 1388. Then in 1525 we see the First Edition of the New Testament translated by Tyndale and a revised version of the New Testament in 1534. And there were others but the one that sticks out for us is The King James Bible also known as the Authorized Version from 1611. Again, these are translations and again, this is a process of transferring the meaning of a word, a phrase, or an idea from one language to another so a person can understand the Bible in their own language!

Now before we look at specific Bibles and how to know which one to use, let me explain the different types of Bibles that are out there. This is not going to be an in-depth look because I don't think that is needed. Now there are two basic Bible versions you might say and they are the "translation" and "paraphrase" Bibles.

The basic idea with a translation is that it is the rendering of the text of the Bible into another language different from what it was originally written. Keep in mind that the Bible was written originally in Hebrew and Greek with a small portion of it written in Aramaic. Now for the most part, not many if any of us could read Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic and thus, the text needs to be translated into a language that we can read and understand otherwise we would have to depend on others to tell us what it says!

The other version you might say is a paraphrase and is not a literal rendering like the translation version is. A paraphrase is more of a commentary you might say of what was written. It is not a word-for-word meaning of the original. A paraphrase can be good because it can help you to understand what the writer is trying to say, it can amplify the message for you. But a paraphrase should not be used alone; it should be used in conjunction with a translation version.

Let me show you the difference between the two versions. First let's look at the New King James Version of John 3:16 and then we will look at how this verse is written in The Amplified Bible, which is a paraphrase version. The NKJV is one we are all familiar with, "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**"

And The Amplified puts it like this, **“For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten ( unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.”**

As you can see it is the same meaning but The Amplified Bible expounds on what is being said, it is not a word-for-word translation. In fact, even the NKJV is not an exact word-for-word translation, the New American Standard Bible is the closest in word-for-word translation but it can be hard to read at times because of that.

I think some of the things to look at in regards to which Bible to use is what does it say about Jesus. There are some that will deny His deity, His virgin birth and-so-on and those you need to avoid. In regards to prophecy, does it downplay or alter it? Does it alter the Scriptures to justify different sins? It is not the most popular Bible version that is necessarily the best, just keep that in mind! You see, you do need to do your homework and there is not a perfect Bible but there are very good translations that we can use and that truly is the key. So let's begin looking at what some good translations and some bad translations are and this is not an exhaustive list but hopefully it will give you an idea of what to look for.

## GOOD/BAD TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

### 1. KING JAMES VERSION

The King James Version was completed in 1611 and has gone through several updates, the last being in the 1700's, (1769). It is a very good translation the only problem for some is that it uses the English that was used some 300 years ago and many of the words meanings have changed over the years. Let me give you an example. In James 2:3 we are told, "**And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool.**"

Not many of us talk like that and "**gay clothing**" today has a completely different meaning as you can imagine! Listen to how the NKJV puts this same verse, "**and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, 'You sit here in a good place,' and say to the poor man, 'You stand there,' or, 'Sit here at my footstool.**" You see, just a little easier to read but if you can read the KJV, it is a good word-for-word translation. I feel this is a good translation.

### 2. NEW KING JAMES VERSION

The New King James Version (1982) follows the King James but it uses modern English terms and thus, it makes it easier to understand. And think about that, if you don't understand what you are reading, there is no point in reading it! I have used this version in my teaching for that very reason, it is easy to read and I believe it is accurate and it is a very good word-for-word translation. Again, I feel this is a good translation.

### 3. NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

The New American Standard Bible (1971) is even a more word-for-word version than the KJV or the NKJV and that is a problem for some. There has been an updated version in 1995 that uses more modern English and yet it still tries to preserve the literal nature of the translation. This is another good translation.

### 4. NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

The New International Version or the NIV is not really that good and it is not as literal of a translation as the KJV because it is translated thought-for-thought instead of word-for-word. John 3:16 is translated like this, “**For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.**” Now some have a problem because they change “**His only begotten Son**” to “**his one and only Son.**” I see the same thought here but some don’t. And again, the NIV tries to capture the whole thought behind each verse, so it is a little different at times from the KJV and the NKJV. This is not a version I recommend, but that is my opinion.

The thing you need to be careful about in regards to the NIV is that, as Dave Hunt warns us, “In 1988, Zondervan and its NIV Bible were purchased by Harper & Row Publishers (now HarperCollins Publishers), who put out pro-homosexual books such as *Making Out, The Book of Lesbian Sex and Sexuality* (“Beautifully illustrated with full-color photography . . .”) and others! Harper Collins is a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch’s The News Corporation which owns Twentieth Century Fox and Fox Broadcasting. The latter produces some of the most immoral, anti-family shows on television. Murdoch - to whom Pat Robertson sold the Family Channel (paid for by CBN donors) for \$1.9 billion - was knighted by the Pope after donating \$10 million for a new Catholic cathedral in Los Angeles. And Rick Warren claims to be Murdoch’s pastor.” It is something to keep in mind! I don’t think this is a good translation.

##### **5. REVISED STANDARD VERSION**

This version, the Revised Standard Version (1952) is intended to be the United Kingdom’s version of the American Standard Bible but some of the scholars doubted the inspiration of the Bible and it influenced their translation of the Scriptures. The most striking one for me is found in Isaiah 7:14 where we are told, “**Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Imman’u-el.**” Did you see what they did here? They denied the virgin birth by saying “**a young woman**” instead of a “**virgin**” shall conceive and bear a son! That is huge to me and thus, this is a poor translation. I would not recommend it! Sorry!

## **6. THE AMPLIFIED BIBLE**

I like this paraphrase of the Bible, The Amplified Bible (1965) because it amplifies what the writer is trying to say. I would not use this as a study Bible but it can be used alongside a Bible that is not a paraphrase. You just need to be careful and that is true of any paraphrase Bibles!

A good study Bible is very helpful in your study of God's Word. The reason being is because of the footnotes that are in there but again, keep in mind that the footnotes are not inspired. They are what the author of those footnotes believes the text is saying. It is like a very small commentary on the whole Bible and that is why I believe it is helpful to have a study Bible! I hope that is helpful to you because I want to take the next few minutes looking at what I believe are very bad and very dangerous Bibles.

## **VERY BAD BIBLES**

### **1. TODAY'S NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (TNIV)**

The Today's New International Version (2001) has recently been released. Its publisher is Zondervan, which is owned by Harper Collins, a secular company. And by the way, they also publish Anton La Vey's "The Satanic Bible." So think about that the next time you buy something at Zondervan's, what you are supporting, who you are supporting!

The TNIV “tweaked” the NIV in a number of areas, but the most significant and controversial changes were to make the TNIV more “gender accurate or neutral.” For example, “man” might be replaced with “person” or “mankind” with “humankind.” The singular “he” could be changed to “they” or “people” if the context indicated a universal application. Likewise, “brothers” could be translated as “brothers and sisters.” The word “man” or “husband” is changed to “other.” The word “father” is changed to “parents” which does away with the God ordained gender role of the man in marriage and the family. We already have a problem with that in our society and now it is in the church! And even the masculine pronouns used for Jesus and God are changed to “the one.” Why did they do this? To be politically correct and to appease the feminists!

Now is this really such a big deal? I mean, won’t more people read the Bible if those things that upset some people are removed? Think about that for a minute. You are going to edit the Bible to make it say what you want, to fit your ideas, your agenda, to make you comfortable and what you are really saying then is that God’s Word really isn’t His Word! We can pick and choose what we like and don’t like. A have it your own way Christianity! God won’t accept that, He loves us too much to let us go down that path.

Of this new translation, Jerry Falwell said, “This new publication is nothing more than acquiescence [submission] to feminists who are more concerned with the so-called language of equality than they are with the message of the gospel of Christ.” He is right!

Also, Al Mohler, who is the President of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary said, “Those who champion a feminist agenda will cheer the announcement of the TNIV, ‘but’ the moment we begin to translate the Bible so that it will be less offensive to one group or another, we insult the very character of the Bible as the eternal, inerrant and authoritative word of God.” How true that is!

In Isaiah 55:7 we are told, “**Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.**” You see folk’s, there is no softening of the Gospel, no making it “seeker friendly.” The Gospel message is not easy to swallow, as Paul says, “**For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.**” I Corinthians 1:17-18.

May we not forget that, the Gospel message is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe and the rest, it is foolishness no matter how you water it down! The TNIV is not worth the paper it is printed on, it is a very bad and dangerous translation!

## 2. THE MESSAGE

The Message, by NavPress, is a paraphrase of the Bible by Eugene Peterson. The New Testament was published in 1993 and the complete Bible was released in 2002. “Peterson’s purpose in this is to present something new and provocative at every turn, something vivid and unusual, in order to stir up the dull minds of people who have become bored with their familiar Bibles.” Many have praised it as being a wonderful, easy to understand version of the Word of God, but make no mistake about The Message, it isn’t the Word of God but it is the words of Eugene Peterson! Listen to what David Cloud says regarding The Message:

The Message is widely recommended by well-known Christian leaders. In keeping with his love for every new translation and paraphrase to appear since the Revised Standard Version, Billy Graham printed his own edition of “The Message: New Testament.” Warren Wiersbe says, “The Message is the boldest and most provocative rendering of the New Testament I’ve ever read.” Jack Hayford says, “The message is certainly destined to become a devotional classic – not to mention a powerful pastoral tool.” Rick Warren loves The Message and quotes it frequently, five times in the first chapter of *The Purpose-Driven Life*.

J. I Packer says, “In this crowded world of Bible versions, Eugene Peterson’s blend of accurate scholarship and vivid idiom make this rendering both distinctive and distinguished. The Message catches the logical flow, personal energy, and imaginative overtones of the original very well indeed.” CCM artist Michael Card says, “Peterson’s translation transforms the eye into an ear, opening the door of the New Testament wider than perhaps it has ever been opened.”

Leighton Ford says, “The Message will help many to transfer God’s eternal truths to their contemporary lives.” Joni Earckson Tada says, “WOW! What a treasure The Message is. I am going to carry it with me. This is a treasure that I will want to use wherever I am.” The Message is also recommended by Amy Grant, Benny Hinn, Bill Hybels, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Chuck Swindoll, Toby of DC Talk, Gary Smalley, Gordon Fee, Gordon MacDonald, Jerry Jenkins, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Kenneth Copeland, Max Lucado, Michael W. Smith, Newsboys, Phil Driscoll, Rebecca St. James, Rod Parsley, Stuart and Jill Briscoe, Tony Campolo, Bono of U2, Vernon Grounds, to name a few. (This information was gathered from the NAVPress web site.)

- David Cloud

Folks, I don’t know if they didn’t read The Message, but as you are going to see, this is not a good paraphrase and it is downright dangerous. We should not be quoting from it to support a practice in the church, but we should burn this book! You see, the errors in this paraphrase (it is not a translation) are numerous and they are serious. I don’t care who supports it, who says it is great, it is not! The Message cannot be relied upon to tell the truth, and as I have said, it is dangerous and it is misleading. In fact, it promotes New Age and Eastern Mysticism right into the church with what is written in it! Listen to just a few examples and you will see for yourself the danger of this paraphrase.

In John 1:1 the NKJV tells us, “**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**” The Message renders it this way, “The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one.” I have no clue what he means here but what is lost is that Jesus, the Word is God!

In John 3:5 the NKJV tells us, “**... ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’**” The Message renders it this way, “Unless a person submits to this original creation - the ‘wind hovering over the water’ creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life – it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom.”

In John 1:14, “**The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**” becomes “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” Now many may make the mistake and think that this cavalier treatment of the text is reliable, but if you do you are setting yourself up to be misled in many points. I will give you this powerful example from this religious homosexual website called, Spirit & Flesh and their review of The Message. They said, “What about the passages against homosexuals, you might ask? Well, although we found his translation of Romans 1:26-27 a bit off, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and 1 Timothy 1:9-10 have been liberated from their homosexual bias and are translated in ways that are much more inclusive and truer to their original intent. – We at Spirit & Flesh say, nicely done!”

What do these verses say that Eugene Peterson felt he needed to change, change so that others would not be offended? Listen carefully first of all to I Corinthians 6:9-10 from the NKJV, **“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.”**

And The Message renders these verses like this, “Don’t you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don’t care about God will not be joining his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use and abuse the earth and everything in it, don’t qualify as citizens in God’s kingdom.” Not exactly how God said it, but here he doesn’t offend the homosexual, in fact, it is so watered down it is hard to figure out who is left out of the kingdom and maybe it is you and me!

And in I Timothy 1:9-10 in the NKJV we are told, **“knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine.”**

The Message renders it like this, “It’s obvious, isn’t it, that the law code isn’t primarily for people who live responsibly, but for the irresponsible, who defy all authority, riding roughshod over God, life, sex, truth, whatever!” Again, notice what he leaves out, all the sins that Paul listed and he made this very difficult to understand; who is guilty before God? “Whatever!”

Now, if Eugene Peterson's purpose was to get people to read the Word of God more, as he has said, then why does he make the following remarks? Listen carefully to what he is saying here:

The importance of poetry and novels is that the Christian life involves the use of the imagination, after all, we are dealing with the invisible. And, imagination is our training in dealing with the invisible, making connections . . . I don't want to do away with or denigrate theology or exegesis, but our primary allies in this business are the artists . . . Why do people spend so much time studying the Bible? How much do you need to know? We invest all this time in understanding the text which has a separate life of its own and we think we're being more pious and spiritual when we're doing it . . . [Christians] should be studying it less, not more. You just need enough to pay attention to God . . . I'm just not at all pleased with all the emphasis on the Bible study as if it's some kind of special thing that Christians do, and the more they do the better."

- A Conversation with Eugene Peterson, Mars Hill Review, Fall 1995, Issue No. 3, pp. 73-90

Why in the world would you trust a man to interpret the Scriptures when he doesn't feel they are that important, experience is the way to go! This man tells us that God's Word is not important, that we are studying it more than we should and yet the Bible tells us, "**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" II Timothy 3:16-17. Who are you going to believe? The Message is not something I would snuggle up with and read, but it would keep me warm because I would burn it! It is not healthy to have and read.

### **3. THE RENOVARE' SPIRITUAL FORMATION STUDY BIBLE**

By far the most demonic, the most dangerous Bible that has come out recently is The Renovare' Spiritual Formation Study Bible (2005) also published by Zondervan and Harper Collins. It uses the NRSV, which is the most ecumenical translation available today. One of the people who praises The Message is Richard Foster, who is the founder of the Renovare' Movement and General Editor of the Renovare' Spiritual Formation Bible. Foster loves The Message because it supports that movement. And Peterson is the Consulting Editor of the New Testament of the Renovare' Bible. He reduces much of Paul's vital treatment of the Gospel in Romans to metaphor, which he says is the "opposite [of] precise use of language" (p. 2045).

Let me give you a few examples to show you how dangerous this “study Bible” really is. Dave Hunt tells us:

A number of commendable “Spiritual Disciplines” are mentioned, but some that are not commendable: “Solitude, Confession . . . meditation and silence . . . secrecy, sacrifice, celebration.” These innocent words have a special meaning for Foster. Explaining his view of “Celebration,” he writes: “We of the New Age can risk going against the tide. Let us abandon . . . see visions and dream dreams . . . The imagination can release a flood of creative ideas [and] be lots of fun.” (Celebration of Discipline, Harper & Row, 1978, p. 170).

In the West, meditation means to think deeply about something, but in the East it means to empty the mind in order to open it to the spirit world, leading to mystical experiences of “God.” Purporting to reject Eastern mysticism, Foster says, “Christian meditation is an attempt to empty the mind in order to fill it.” He seductively suggests: “John was ‘in the Spirit on the Lord’s day’ when he received his apocalyptic vision (Rv 1:10). Could it be that John was trained in a way of listening and seeing that we have forgotten? . . . Let us have courage to . . . once again learn the ancient . . . art of mediation” (Celebration, pp. 14, 15) The idea that John had a special technique for hearing from God is heresy of the worse sort, but foundational to Renovare’s promotion of “spiritual disciplines” and “spiritual formation”!

Sadly, the Renovare explanatory notes deny the Divine authorship of much of Scripture – even that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. Yet it hypocritically declares “We read the Bible literally, from cover to cover . . . [and] in context.” Renovare claims that Genesis 1-11 is neither historic nor scientific, and that the entire book of Genesis is merely a collection of myths:

Genesis began as an oral tradition of narrative stories passed down from generation to generation. . . . These stores [gradually] took on theological meaning. . . . Over time [they] were written down and collected together (Gen 12-50), and a prologue (Gen 1-11) was added. . . . Borrowing from other creation account. . . . stories with parallels to ancient Near Eastern religious narrative and mythology were reshaped with monotheistic intent. . . . These strands of varied materials were gathered and edited into the written text. . . .

What wickedness for Christian “scholars’ to unite with skeptics to declare that Genesis, which is foundational to the Bible, is just an edited compilation of mythology and folk tales! If Genesis is not literally inspired of God, then how can we have confidence in any other part of the Bible? What about Paul’s statement that “all Scriptures is given by inspiration of God” . . .

Of Daniel, the Renovare Bible declares, “We do not know who wrote it or exactly when it was written . . . it was most likely partially written during Antiochus Epiphanies’ persecution of the Jews in Babylon, which began with the desecration of the Temple in 167 B. C.” So it is the work of an imposter pretending to be Daniel 400 years after the fact! [That is interesting to me because Jesus said in Matthew 24:15 that Daniel whom He calls a prophet wrote Daniel, and I think I will believe Jesus over these men!].

To escape admitting that Daniel prophesied centuries in advance the breakup of Alexander's empire under four generals, the rise of Antiochus Epiphanies, and the pollution of the temple, skeptics had to invent a later date for these prophecies. Renovare echoes this lie, robbing Christians of an essential proof of the validity of the Bible and depriving the unsaved of life-giving truth! . . .

The Renovare "scholars" continually downplay the powerful Old Testament prophecies of Christ (pp. 22, 32, 1375, 1377-8, 1384 etc.). The key prophecy in Isaiah 9:6-7 of the coming Messiah, who is "the mighty God, the everlasting Father," is said to speak of "human agents" (p. 997).

The notes reduce Isaiah's prophecies to "tradition" (pp. 982, 983), would have us believe that much of that book was not written by Isaiah (there are "three authors" – pp. 982-1068), and even deny that chapter 53 prophesies Christ's sacrifice for our sins (p. 984)! Renovare describes the book of Isaiah as "poetic imagination . . . Isaiah imagines," etc. the Renovare "scholars" declare, "The prophets of Israel are not to be thought of primarily as . . . predictors of the future . . . they were poets" (p. 1079). Through poetry, Jeremiah attempts "to make sense of the events of his day . . ." (p. 1080). Blasphemy!

Renovare rejects the powerful prophecies of Daniel, including the proof of 9:24-26 that Jesus is the Christ. All of the major prophecies so crucial in proving the Bible to be the Word of God and Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah are either not commented upon, or are spiritualized away as pertaining to the “faith community” and its “spiritual formation.” There is no recognition of the great prophecies in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc., of Israel being brought back into her own land in the last days, and that she must endure forever (Ezk 35-37, etc.). For example, the powerful prophetic promise from God to bring back the Jews scattered around the world (Jer 31:8-14) is interpreted as a promise to all homeless people (nothing about Israel), and God’s promise that Israel can never be destroyed (31:35-37) is ignored!

This “Study Bible” is one more step on the slippery downward path into deepening apostasy. The Bible is being mocked in the church. Let us stand firmly, vocally, and actively in defense of God’s holy, infallible, inerrant, and sufficient Word!

- Dave Hunt, *The Berean Call*, August 2005, pp. 3-4

In regards to the book of Revelation, it is reduced to a “pastoral letter meant to sustain the suffering and hearten the weary faithful” (p. 2267). The Antichrist and False Prophet spoken of in Revelation chapter 13 are de-personalized as “dark forces of evil” (p. 2281). The marriage of the Lamb and His bride spoken of in Revelation chapter 19 is not a real event in heaven but “symbolic of the many different celebrations that bring joy and jubilation” into our lives (p. 2287).

And the thousand-year reign of Christ spoken of in Revelation chapter 20 is not a real event, and the armies of the world coming against Christ and the saints in Jerusalem after Satan is released merely symbolize “the armies of darkness [which] surround us” (p. 2288). This “Study Bible” is one more step on the slippery downward path into deepening apostasy and the coming together of the one-world religion that that Bible speaks of!

Listen to this article, the last one that I just received but I think it is that important and you need to hear it. It is regarding what they are doing with the Scriptures to make them more acceptable to Muslims! We are told,

A controversy is brewing over three reputable Christian organizations, which are based in North America, whose efforts have ousted the words “Father” and “Son” from new Bibles. Wycliffe Bible Translators, Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) and Frontiers are under fire for “producing Bibles that remove “Father,” “Son” and “Son of God” because these terms are offensive to Muslims.” . . .

The main issues of this controversy surround new Arabic and Turkish translations. Here are three examples native speakers give:

First, Wycliffe and SIL have produced *Stories of the Prophets*, an Arabic Bible that uses an Arabic equivalent of “Lord” instead of “Father” and “Messiah” instead of “Son.”

Second, Frontiers and SIL have produced Meaning of the Gospel of Christ, an Arabic translation which removes “Father” in reference to God and replaces it with “Allah,” and removes or redefines “Son.” For example, the verse which Christians use to justify going all over the world to make disciples, thus fulfilling the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) reads, “Cleanse them by water in the name of Allah, his Messiah and his Holy Spirit” instead of “baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” Rev. Bassam Maday, an Arab American who runs Middle East Resources, terms these organization’s efforts as “a western imperialistic attempt that’s inspired by cultural anthropology, and not by biblical theology.”

Third, Frontiers and SIL have produced a new Turkish translation of the Gospel of Matthew that uses Turkish equivalents of “guardian” for “Father” and “representative” or “proxy” for “Son.” To Turkish church leader Rev. Fikret Böcek, “This translation is ‘an all-American idea’ with absolutely no respect for the ‘sacredness’ of Scripture, or even of the growing Turkish church.”

- ‘Father’ and ‘Son’ Ousted from the Trinity in New Bible Translations, By Hussein Hajji Wario, Yahoo! Contributor Network – Fri, Jan 27, 2012

Really, Allah is the same as the God of the Bible? Muslims are worshiping the God of the Bible? No way and the problem that is right before us is very serious. We are willing to compromise what the Bible has to say so that we don’t offend anyone, that is foolish and they will have to answer before God why they altered His Word. May we be bold, may we be strong in the days we are living in because they are evil and the compromise of God’s Word is increasing!

I know, not a very uplifting message and you probably thought, “How can he make this a downer” but I guess I did. But let’s face it, this is a warning to earnestly contend for the faith that has been entrusted to you and me and we need to hear that. God’s Word is truth and we must not fall prey to these perverted translations and paraphrases of the Bible even if they say they are a “Study Bible!” Be careful and use the discernment that God has given to you, stay away from this garbage that is not of God, but in reality, is nothing more than doctrines of demons!

You see, the Word of God is an absolutely vital part of the Believer’s arsenal – without the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God, we cannot be victorious against the enemy - and he knows it! In the Christian classic, Pilgrims Progress, there is a scene in which a terrible allegorical battle is portrayed between Apollyon (Satan) and Christian:

“Then Apollyon seeing his opportunity began to close in on Christian and wrestling with him, gave him a dreadful fall and Christian’s sword flew out of his hand.

Then said Apollyon, ‘I am sure of you now.’ And with that he had almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But as God would have it, while Apollyon was preparing to take his last blow, thereby making an end of this good man, Christian nimbly reached out his hand and caught his sword saying,

‘Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, when I fall I shall arise,’ and with that gave him a deadly thrust, which made him back away like someone who had received a mortal wound.

When Christian saw this, he went at him again saying, ‘Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.’

And with that Apollyon spread his dragon wings and sped away, so that Christian saw him no more for a time.”

You see, John Bunyan knew that Spiritual warfare is waged and won by how effectively a Christian holds onto and wields the Sword of the Spirit. If Satan can somehow tamper with the Believer’s sword he can render it ineffective and defeat the people of God in this battle. ***DON’T LET HIM!***