

The Canon of Scripture

How the New Testament was defined with 27 God-inspired books

We need to begin this study in faith and pursue it in the same way.

Ps 12:6-7 “The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. You shall keep them, O LORD, You shall preserve them from this generation forever.” NKJV

Matt 24:35 “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”

As we read through the efforts of men to define the God-breathed inspired Scripture from the “Christian apocrypha”, we must remember these words of Scripture. The Holy Spirit was in control of God’s Word that He wrote through men. This beginning in faith separates our study of the Canon of Scripture from those studies taught by men who do not believe that the books of the New Testament are divinely inspired.

During the times of the Apostles, the Apostles recognized that certain of their writings were divinely inspired:

2 Peter 3:15-16 “and consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures.”

The word “Kanon” means measuring rod” which is to be used to measure all of our thoughts, words and actions. A new literary genre (artistic expression of a particular form or content). The epistle was a letter that was used to communicate in the Graeco-Roman world. It seldom exceeded 100 words. Paul used this epistle – format as a teaching and exhortation tool.

- **3 John – 322 words,**
- **Philemon – 481 words,**
- **Romans 10,114 words**

- **1 Corinthians – 10,130 words**

For centuries the terms “Scripture” and “canon” meant the same thing. Today some writing can be classified as “scripture” but not necessarily “canonical”. This is simply one of many bitter legacies left to us by those called “Liberal theologians”. The 27 books of our New Testament are the Scriptures, the Canon, the Word of God preserved for us by the Holy Spirit.

During the Apostolic Church only a little effort was made to collect the gospels and epistles written by the Apostles or those writing under the Apostles (e.g. Luke under Paul, Mark under Peter). Early Christian writers, when quoting from Scripture regarded as authoritative, used the word “graphe” for Scripture or the term “it is written” – “gegraptai”. This allows later Christians, like us, an opportunity to study what the early church regarded as inspired.

There was no serious attempt to identify the entire canon of Scripture until Marcion, regarded as a heretical Christian corrupted by Gnosticism, came out with a list of books he regarded as scripture. Since he did not believe in the humanity of Jesus but rather in His deity only, Marcion received the Gospel of John and the Pauline Epistles as the only inspired books. This list provoked a united Christian response that would continue in definition until formally published in 397 AD at the Council of Carthage.

The Four-fold Gospel

Papias, student of the Apostle John identified the Gospels of Matthew and Mark as authoritative. Justin Martyr also included the Gospel of Luke from among several apocryphal gospel writings such as the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of the Hebrews and the Apocryphon of James.

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, 180 AD moved to accept four Gospels rather than to argue for just one (Mark or Matthew). Some were reluctant to include the Gospel of John because of its popularity with the Gnostics. However, Irenaeus taught that the Gospel was a “four-fold picture” that needs all four Gospels for revelation. Irenaeus included the Gospel of John in his defense of a four-fold Gospel. (Irenaeus, Haer. 3:11.7). (Irenaeus was greatly influenced by Polycarp, student of the Apostle John.)

Tatian was a convert to Christianity before 165 AD. An educated Syrian, Tatian wrote a harmony of the Gospels called the Diatessaron which excluded the genealogies of Jesus and attempted to put all four Gospels into one Gospel. This attempt helped others see the harmony in these Gospels and the need for all four, however the Diatessaron failed to achieve a single Gospel which accurately embraced the life, death teachings and words of Jesus. (Tatian was led to Jesus by Justin Martyr. He later moved into an anti-Jewish ascetic gnosticism until his death in 175 AD.)

There are sufficient Scriptures in the Four Gospels for one in disbelief to see “Bible contradictions” or for a believer to see “Bible reconciliations” e.g. John 3:16 and 1John 2:15. We are not authorized by God to be critics of His Word. The Apostles understood this – Acts 6:4 “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

The Pauline Epistles

The letters of Paul are the earliest extant writings of the New Testament Scriptures. Ignatius (110AD) and Polycarp had a collection of Paul's Epistles. Marcion in 140 AD published what he regarded as inspired: Galatians, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Romans, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, Laodiceans (believed to be the Epistle to the Ephesians – Colossians 4:16), Colossians, Philippians and Philemon (Ten out of the actual 13-14 Epistles).

The General or catholic Epistles

Eusebius acknowledged the Seven General Epistles:

1&2 Peter, Jude, James and 1,2,&3 John

as well-known within the church by the early 4th century. All but 1 Peter and 1 John were described as “disputed”. (Hist. Ecc. 2.23.25). Irenaeus quotes from 1&2 John. 2Peter & Jude were quoted or referred to by Clement of Alexandria, Origen and Tertullian (200 AD – 254 AD).

Irenaeus mentions Acts of the Apostles and acknowledges its authority as Dr. Luke writing with Paul the Apostle. Revelation was mentioned and received by Justin Martyr and Tertullian (160 AD – 225 AD). Hebrews was disputed until the 4th century due to its misunderstood sections against repentance after baptism (Hebrews 6:4-8, 10:26-31, 12:14-17). Hebrews was eventually included among the Pauline Epistles in spite of its anonymous author. (The Gospel of John is not signed either). In those days this was an act of humility, not an attempt to escape responsibility.

There were other writings used in the early Church such as:

- The Shepherd of Hermes
- The Didache or The Teachings of the Twelve Apostles.
- Letter of Polycarp to the Philippians
- Letters of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch
- 1 and 2 Clement
- Epistle of Barnabus
- The Fragments of Papias

The early church had a considerable number of writings that had to be determined as canonical (God-inspired) or simply good teaching materials.

The Shaping of the Canon

The earliest recorded list of authoritative books appears in Eusebius' Church History (Hist. Ecc. 3.25.1-7). In that list he shows the acknowledged books (homologoumena): the four Gospels, Acts, the letters of Paul (including Hebrews), 1 John, 1 Peter and Revelation. This time frame is around 325 AD.

The forces that determined the Canon

- a. orthodox doctrine or heterodoxy. Marcion and his Gnostic teachings almost forced an authoritative list of canonical books from the church when he published his own list in 140 AD.

- b. By 364 AD Bishop Athanasius of Alexandria, the staunch defender of the faith against the Arian heresy, of which Eusebius was a part, identified the 27 books of our New Testament as divinely inspired.
- c. Epiphanius (315-403 AD) wrote against heresies and listed as canon all of the New Testament books except 2 Peter and 2 & 3 John.
- d. The Muratorian Canon appeared around the same time frame as Epiphanius' writings.

The Eastern wing of the church disagreed with the West over several doctrinal matters around the 4th century. The Eastern wing was slow to accept Revelation as inspired. The Western Churches tended to discard the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Gregory of Nazianzus (329 – 389 AD) lists the Four Gospels, Acts, 14 letters of Paul (attributing Hebrews to him), and seven general epistles. He excludes only Revelation as was customary in the Eastern Churches.

The Church Council of Laodicea 363 AD lists 26 books, excluding Revelation.

By the Council of Carthage in 397 AD this Church Council simply confirmed the list of Athanasius and showed all 27 Books including the Book of Revelation.

The writings and judgments of early Christian writers that are mentioned above did greatly influence the final decision on the Canon of Scripture.

The Criteria used in determining the Canon

1. **Traditional Use** over the course of 300 years the Gospels and Pauline Epistles were used by the church consistently. However stronger influence than simply tradition was employed so that the Shepherd of Hermes and the Didache were excluded.
2. **Apostolic** – The Apostolic authority in the early Church was a very decisive factor in determining the Canon. The book did not have to be authored by an Apostle, however, it should have been written under the authority of the Apostles. Therefore the Gospel of Luke was not only written under Paul but with input from several Apostles and eye-witnesses including probably Mary, mother of Jesus. While Paul was under arrest in Caesarea Philippi, Luke had the time and the exposure to the Apostles in Jerusalem. The Gospel of Mark was written under the auspices of Peter. Jude and James had their letters reviewed by living Apostles such as John. John's instruction of Polycarp who taught Irenaeus provides early Apostolic testimony to the Church. This requirement excluded the Shepherd of Hermes, Epistles of Clement and the Didache, written much later than the last Apostle.
3. **Catholicity or Universality** - Although some of Paul's letters were written to a specific church, such as Romans, it has a universal application as the most doctrine – based Epistle in the early church. Letters to Timothy & Titus were used

throughout the Christian Church as the apostolic models of church government or Ecclesiology.

4. **Orthodoxy** – there was established within the Church a rule of faith (Regula Fidei). We might understand this as a detailed faith statement. The early Church established Creeds which were summary statements of Christian orthodoxy that could be memorized by lay people.
- The Apostles' Creed – defined basic Christian beliefs
 - The Nicene Creed – added a detailed belief in the Trinity
 - The Athanasian Creed – added a definitive statement about the two natures of Jesus, both divine and human (1John 4:2, 1John 4:15).

As a comparison to secular writings and their preservation:

- The 142 books of Roman History by Livy (59BC-17AD) – only 35 remain.
- Of the 14 books of Tacitus, Roman historian around 100 AD, only 4.5 are still extant.
- The History of Thucydides (460-400 BC) is known to us by only 8 manuscripts referring to this work dated around 900 AD.
- The History of Herdotus (488 – 428 BC) – There are only several fragments of this work that are extant from the 2nd Century AD.

There is no Graeco-Roman scholar who would doubt the legitimacy of the histories of Thucydides or Herdotus even though the original manuscripts no longer exist.

“The variant readings about which any doubt remains among textual critics of the New Testament affect no material question of historic fact or of Christian faith and practice.” F.F. Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism & Exegesis in the University of Manchester.

While textual criticism deals with critically selecting the best modern word for the Greek text, Higher Criticism attacks the legitimacy of the Bible as God-inspired. F.F. Bruce was an outstanding Professor of Hermeneutics and textual Criticism. Dr. Bruce was the leading conservative Bible scholar in this field. There are no outstanding Higher Critics. The promoters of this movement and the principle figures in the Protestant Apostasy are included in www.acts1711.com/jesus2.htm

Form Criticism is simply a brand of higher criticism. "Form criticism", which also originated in Germany, is an attempt to analyze the Gospel on the basis of literary forms.

The form critics assume that the Gospels are composed of small independent units or episodes which were circulated orally. During the 30 years between Jesus' ascension and the writing of the first Gospel, the critics believe that these small units which they named "pericopes", gradually changed and took on the forms of folk literature, such as legends, tales, myths and parables.

The formation of these units and their preservation was not under the control of God, but was determined by the needs of the Christian community. In other words, when the community had a problem, they either used one of the circulating sayings of Jesus, or

they created a new saying. That is, they lied about what Jesus said in order to answer that particular problem.

Those who proposed this method (one could rightfully call it a theory because of the large number of basic assumptions) did not believe anything which seemed to be supernatural or miraculous. They did not believe that God spoke to the prophets by means of angels or the Holy Spirit. They did not believe that Jesus brought a special revelation in the Gospel.

Rudolph Bultmann, one of the three most well-known proponents of "form criticism" wrote,

"a historical fact which involves a resurrection from the dead is utterly inconceivable."

W. J. Sparrow-Simpson speaking of another form critic, David Strauss, says,

"Nothing can be more genuine than Strauss' acknowledgement that he was controlled by a priori considerations, to which the fact of a resurrection was inadmissible."

In summary, according to the form critics the four accounts of the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah are not historic witnesses to the life and words of Jesus, but what the church believed and eventually put together from older sources.

Above form criticism definitions from Dr. William Campbell [The Qur'an and the Bible in the Light of History & Science](#) Second Edition, 356pp., Middle East Resources, 2002 ISBN 1-881085-03-01

Redaction Criticism (redaction means "editor") seeks to reduce the Scriptures to the base meanings and shorten the Word of God. When this is done the translation becomes an "interpretation" whereby the redactor gives us not the word-for-word translation but the "thought-for-thought" interpretation. This latter attempt goes beyond acceptable translation methods and incorporates the theology and personal ideas of the translator. Redaction Criticism has no place in an Evangelical Church.

"Redaction Criticism of the Bible is the theory that different copyists and commentators of the early biblical writings embellished and altered the biblical texts throughout early Jewish and Christian history to make them appear more miraculous, inspirational, and legitimate. An example of redaction theory would be the claim that Old Testament prophecies were modified by redactors after the fact to make them appear as miraculous prophecies. Redaction criticism reduces the quality of the biblical record, casts strong doubt on its inspiration, and implies that the Bible is not trustworthy as a historical document." Taken from CARM (Christian Apologetics Research Ministry)

Roman Catholicism and their Apocryphal Books

In Roman Catholicism , additional books were added in 1546. These books are known as the apocryphal books: Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (Sirach), and Baruch. Roman

Catholicism maintains that the apocrypha was always inspired along with the Eastern Orthodox, Coptic and Armenian churches. The Protestant movement has not accepted the apocrypha.

The Greek Septuagint (LXX)– 200 BC The Old Testament in Greek

The Masoretic Text – The official Old Testament in Hebrew 90 AD, Jewish Council of Jamnia

The Canon of Scripture identified as the present 27 books – 367 AD

Jerome's Latin Vulgate – 410 AD

Jerome used the Septuagint after it was translated by Origen, a “Christian” intellectual from Alexandria (heretic who was believed in universal salvation and denied that Jesus suffered as a man). Origen basically wrote much of what was published by Eusebius as the 50 Bibles ordered by Emperor Constantine. These New Testament Alexandrian texts are full of errors, yet they are used today by “Christian” scholars and called the oldest and best manuscripts. They are the oldest – that is a fact. They are not the best – that is an opinion. They consist of three basic collections of writings:

- a. Codex Vaticanus – found in a Vatican Library and dating to the 4th century. Written on expensive vellum and papyrus, this book was rarely used and is in “mint condition”.
- b. Codex Alexandrinus
- c. Codex Siniaticus – discovered at St. Catherine's monastery at Mount Sinai in the 19th Century. Both this and Alexandrinus date back to the 4th Century. Even though these three collections disagree with one another and are not complete New Testament texts, scholars value their age and the quantity of the verses in each.

1229 AD Council of Florence puts the Bible on the Index of Forbidden Books

1382 AD John Wycliffe translates the first English Bible circulation limited by Church authorities. His Bible was banned and burned.

1455 Printing press invented by Gutenberg – first printing was the Bible

Erasmus – Catholic priest who had the intellect to be regarded as the greatest Greek scholar of his day. Erasmus translates the 5000 Byzantine texts from Greek to Latin. In 1516 AD. He refused to use Codices Vaticanus and Alexandrinus because he regarded them as unreliable. The Catholic Church wanted control over Erasmus' work and offered him the position of Cardinal. Erasmus refused. Luther welcomed Erasmus into the Protestant Reformation. Erasmus refused to join the Reformers. His Greek text is the source used by William Tyndale 1524 for the English Bible that would be included in the Coverdale Bible (1535), the Great Bible (1537), the Geneva Bible (1560) and the King James Version (1611)

William Tyndale publishes the first widely used English Bible. He was condemned as a heretic and burned at the stake. 1536

Martin Luther translated the New Testament into German. 1522.

Douay Rheims Bible (1582 – 1609) English translation by Catholic priests in France to resist the influence of the Protestant Reformation and the Geneva Bible. It is simply an English translation of Jerome's Latin Vulgate.

King James Version (AV Authorized Version) 1611. This Bible underwent 11 revisions up to 1769. This Bible became the Protestant standard for the Scriptures from the 17th Century to the present.

Revised Standard Version of 1881. This English Bible was derived from the Westcott – Hort Greek New Testament. This Bible version failed to satisfy Christians and was generally rejected. It was redone and issued in 1901. Although it claimed to update the language of the King James Version only, comparisons revealed deficiencies in doctrinal support. It was derived from Codices Vaticanus and Siniaticus, not the 5000 Byzantine Scriptures of the Textus Receptus (The AV).

Greek New Testament Sources

In recent years there has been much confusion concerning modern translations and editions of the Greek New Testament.

Some people make claims regarding the Greek New Testament without having information and facts to support their claims. Many people claim that their translations are accurate because those translations are based upon the best available Greek texts. Some claim that their translations are better than the Authorized Version because the Authorized Version and its underlying Greek Textus Receptus add variants and extra readings to the text. Others, however, claim that the Greek text of the New Testament is not important because their favorite translation is better than any Greek text. Still others say that the Greek text is not important because most people could not read the Greek of the New Testament era. However, the Greek text upon which a translation is based will have an impact upon both a Christian's reading of Scripture devotionally and the proclaiming of the Word of God in bearing witness to the saving grace of Jesus Christ. It is necessary that today's Christian understands the importance of the traditional Greek text in his Christian life.

The Traditional Text

This is not intended to be an argument for "King James Only". During the time of the printing of the first King James Bible, most people preferred to keep their Geneva Bibles – the Bible of the Protestant Reformation including William Tyndale's New Testament.

First of all it is necessary to understand what is meant by the term 'traditional text'. During the 1st century following the resurrection of Christ, God moved men to pen His Word (2 Peter 1.21 "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."). The result was a group of letters and books, written in Koine Greek (called the 'original autographs'). Koine Greek

was the language of the common people as opposed to classical Greek. These letters and books were copied and recopied throughout the centuries and distributed throughout the world. These copies comprise the manuscripts of the New Testament. Over 5,000 of these Greek manuscripts have survived to this day. The great number of these Greek manuscripts supports what is called the Byzantine textual tradition, Byzantine because it came from all over the Greek-speaking world at that time. These Byzantine manuscripts make up what is called the Traditional Text of the New Testament. The best printed representation of this Byzantine text-type is the Textus Receptus (or Received Text). In addition to the manuscripts, we also have available many works in which numerous Church Fathers quoted from the manuscripts..

The Textus Receptus was compiled from a number of Byzantine manuscripts by numerous editors from the early 1500s. There were editions from textual editors such as Erasmus and Beza. These editions differ slightly from one another but still are regarded as the same basic text. Certain editions were popular in different countries and provided the basis for New Testament translations. The Textus Receptus (as it later became known) was the text used by William Tyndale and in turn by the translators of the English Authorized (King James) Version of 1611 and other Reformation era translations.

The Critical Text

During the 19th and 20th centuries, however, another form of Greek New Testament has come into the forefront and is used for most modern New Testament translations. This Critical Text, as it is called, differs widely from the Traditional Text in that it omits many words, verses and passages which are found in the Received Text and translations based upon it.

Many modern versions are based mainly upon a Greek New Testament which was derived from a small handful of Greek manuscripts from the 4th century onwards. Two of these manuscripts, which many modern scholars claim to be superior to the Byzantine, are the Sinai manuscript and the Vatican manuscript. These are derived from a text type known as the Alexandrian text (because of its origin in Egypt); this text type was referred to by the textual critics Westcott and Hort as the 'Neutral text'. These two manuscripts form the basis of the Greek New Testament, referred to as the Critical Text, which has been in widespread use since the late 19th century. In recent years there has been an attempt to improve this text by calling it an 'eclectic' text (meaning that many other manuscripts were consulted in its editing and evolution), but it is still a text which has as its central foundation these two manuscripts.

Problems in the Critical Text

There are many problems of omission which characterize this Greek New Testament. Verses and passages which are found in the writings of Church Fathers from around 200 to 300 A.D. are missing in the Alexandrian Text manuscripts which date from around 300 to 400 A.D. In addition, these early readings are found in manuscripts in existence from 500 A.D. onwards. An example of this is Mark 16.9-20: this passage is found in the writings of Irenaeus and Hippolytus in the 2nd century, and is in almost every manuscript

of Mark's Gospel from 500 A.D. onwards. It is missing in two Alexandrian manuscripts, the Sinai and the Vatican.

This is but one of many examples of this problem. There are many words, verses and passages which are omitted from the modern versions but which are found in the Traditional or Byzantine Text of the New Testament, and thus in the Textus Receptus. The Critical Text differs from the Textus Receptus text 5,337 times, according to one calculation. The Vatican manuscript omits 2,877 words in the Gospels; the Sinai manuscript 3,455 words in the Gospels. These problems between the Textus Receptus and the Critical Text are very important to the correct translation and interpretation of the New Testament. Contrary to the contention of supporters of the Critical Text, these omissions do affect doctrine and faith in the Christian life.

Several examples of doctrinal problems caused by the omissions from the Critical Text follow. This is by no means an exhaustive list. The Critical Text

- omits reference to the Virgin Birth in Luke 2.33
- omits reference to the deity of Christ in 1 Timothy 3.16
- omits reference to the deity of Christ in Romans 14.10 and 12
- omits reference to the blood of Christ in Colossians 1.14

In addition, an error is created in the Bible in Mark 1.2; in this passage in the Critical Text, Isaiah is made the author of the book of Malachi 3:1, Mark 1:3 quotes from Isaiah 40:3). In numerous places in the New Testament the name of Jesus is omitted from the Critical Text; seventy times 'Jesus' is omitted and twenty-nine times 'Christ' is omitted.(1)

Another problem with the modern Critical Text is that the two main manuscripts upon which this text is constructed, the Sinai and the Vatican, disagree between themselves over 3,000 times in the Gospels alone. Thus, the Alexandrian text presents itself as a text type which is characterized in many places by readings which are not common to the manuscripts of their own tradition. The Critical Text is characterized by wording which, in the original language is difficult, abrupt or even impossible. It appears that no matter how peculiar or aberrant the variant reading is, it must have been in the original autographs because (as is sometimes claimed) a scribe would never make a change which disagrees with other manuscripts; he would, instead, make a change which would make a passage read more smoothly.

Much is said about the Alexandrian manuscripts being very old. This is true, but the emphasis in the study of textual criticism should not be upon how old the manuscript is but upon how many copies removed from the original it is. A manuscript which is dated as having been copied during the 10th century could have been the fifth in a line of copies originating with the original autograph, whilst a manuscript dated as having been copied during the 4th century could have been the one hundredth in the line of copies. Since it is difficult to tell the genealogy, the family of any given manuscript, it is important to note that age is relative in the sense that you could have a corrupt 4th century manuscript or a faithful 10th century manuscript.

A good illustration would be to suppose that, in the year 3000, a copy of the English Bible was found which dated from the 1970s. Suppose this Bible happened to be the oldest existing Bible available, and this Bible happened to differ in hundreds of places from the Bible that was in use by Christians in the year 3000. One could well imagine the scientific critics, with their methodology, extolling the virtues of the ancient age of this Bible, the page design showing quality, careful care in the layout and the paper of this particular volume, the binding and so on. But their arguments would tend to fall apart when, after beginning to translate Bibles into modern languages on the basis of this ancient book, Christians discovered that this version of the Scriptures was the New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Responsibility of Believers Today

From Christian History Magazine, Issue 43, p.40 Quoting from Bruce Metzger, former Professor Emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary (not a conservative Bible scholar): “By the end of the year 600 AD the Gospels had only been translated into 8 languages. Since the last 200 years, the Bible has been translated into 85% of the languages spoken by people in the world.” Bibles were generally not available to lay people (up to the invention of the Printing Press by Gutenberg 1455 AD and the Protestant Reformation.)

“Today we live in a culture of relatively high literacy, but we have many newspapers, magazines and books to read. In addition, radio, television and the movies are a major distraction from reading. In some ways, then, people who can read probably are not as familiar with the Bible as those who could read in past eras.”

Christians have more translations and Bible study tools such as lexicons and commentaries than any group of Christians in the entire history of the Church. God will not honor laziness. The Word of God exhorts us to:

2 Tim 2:15 “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

The Holy Spirit will guide us in His Word showing us the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error. The Apostles were not Scriptural critics, but rather servants of the Word: Acts 6:4 “But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”

Although the NKJV derives from the Textus Receptus, Evangelical scholars have made revisions in the original to bring more “accuracy to this translation.” (which need to be checked eg. Col 1:24, The NKJV demotes the Lord Jesus Christ. In John 1:3, the KJV says that all things were made "by" Jesus Christ, but in the NKJV, all things were just made "through" Him. The word "Servant" replaces "Son" in Acts 3:13 and 3:26. "Servant" replaces "child" in Acts 4:27 and 4:30. The word "Jesus" is omitted from Mark 2:15, Hebrews 4:8, and Acts 7:45)

KJV Matt 20:20 ‘Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

NKJV Matt 20:20 “Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.” (proskuneo, pros-koo-neh'-o meaning to kiss, like a dog licking his master's hand); to fawn or crouch to, i.e. (literally or figuratively) prostrate oneself in homage (do reverence to, adore):--worship.)

The NIV has also undergone constructive revisions until TNIV, the “gender-neutral” Bible that strips God of His Fatherhood and will not refer to Jesus as the Son of God.

I am providing to you without comment a listing of Bible translations from Zondervan which gives you their explanation of each translation. Remember that Zondervan, publisher of the NIV and TNIV, is a for profit company owned by the Rupert Murdoch conglomerate.

You are also being provided a Table Comparison of many Scriptures from each version organized under basic Christian beliefs such as Jesus’ virgin birth, His deity, His Resurrection, His Name and His precious Blood. Study this by going to the translations themselves to be sure of accuracy. www.acts1711.com/scripturescomp.htm

- Study prayerfully asking the Holy Spirit to guide you.
- Do not join the bitter and angry arguments between Christians over Bible versions. The anger of man will not bring about the righteousness of God.

[A Bibliography In Support of The Traditional Text of the New Testament from the Trinitarian Bible Society Articles www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org](http://www.trinitarianbiblesociety.org)

Leading Figures in the Modern Bible Revisions

JOHANN JAKOB GRIESBACH (1745-1812) was one of the earliest fathers of modern textual criticism. Marvin R. Vincent says, "With Griesbach, really critical texts may be said to have begun" (A History of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 1899, p. 100). As noted earlier, Griesbach was a convinced student of one of the fathers of Modernism, JOHANN SALOMO SEMLER (1725-91). Griesbach was influenced from his undergraduate days by the rising tide of Rationalism sweeping over Germany and "was a foe of orthodox Christianity" (D.A. Thompson, The Controversy Concerning the Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to Mark, p. 40). Both Semler and Griesbach rejected the deity of Jesus Christ and the supernatural infallibility of Holy Scripture.

KARL LACHMANN (1793-1851), Professor of Classical and German Philology at Berlin.

- belongs the distinction of entirely casting aside the Textus Receptus. He produced editions of the N.T. in Berlin in 1842 and 1850, which carried Griesbach's ideas still further from the Received Text.
- Lachmann did not believe it was possible to reproduce the original text of the New Testament
- His goal was merely to "secure the text in widest use in Jerome's time, leaving it to emendation and conjecture to get behind that" (Alexander Souter, The Text and Canon of the New Testament, 1912, p. 101)
- Like some of the other fathers of textual criticism, Lachmann was not a heologist, but a philologist.

- Lachmann was not studying the New Testament as the supernaturally-inspired and divinely preserved Word of God but as a mere book.
- He now began with these same presuppositions and rules that he had used on Greek & Roman classical literature to correct the N.T. which he also presupposed was hopelessly corrupted.

B.F. WESTCOTT (1825-1901) and F.J.A. HORT (1828-1892), Anglican professors at Cambridge University, were responsible for taking the principles of Griesbach, Lachmann, and other fathers of modern textual criticism and fashioning them into a package of theories for the overthrow of the Received Text, which they labeled "vile." They produced such a Greek Testament and secretly introduced it to the committee that was charged with revising the English Bible in Britain in the late 1800s. The resulting English Revised New Testament of 1881 followed (not in every detail, but in large part) the Westcott-Hort Greek New Testament. (The committee had not been charged with revising the Greek text but only with updating the English, and when their work was published, they came under widespread condemnation for exceeding the authority of their appointment.)

- Westcott and Hort were clearly unwilling to commit themselves to the inerrancy of the original Scriptures" (Hodges, "Rationalism and Contemporary New Testament Textual Criticism," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, January 1971).
- Both men were involved in occult – The Psychical Research Society of London
- Used a Unitarian on their translating Committee
- Were Anglicans who held evangelicals in disdain
- Denied the need for the substitutionary Blood Atonement of Jesus for sin
- Their Critical Greek New Testament was taken over by Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland who recognized the controversy surrounding Hort & Westcott. They claim that their New Testament is derived from "eclectic sources". These efforts produced the Revised Standard Version of 1901 which was rejected by Evangelicals shortly after its publication in England.
- KURT ALAND denied the verbal inspiration of the Bible and wanted to see all denominations united into one "body" by the acceptance of a new ecumenical canon of Scripture which would take into account the Catholic apocryphal books (The Problem of the New Testament Canon, pp. 6,7,30-33).

EUGENE NIDA is the father of the dynamic equivalency theory of Bible translation. He believed God's revelation in the Bible "involved limitations" and "is not absolute" and that the words of the Bible "are in a sense nothing in and of themselves" (Nida, Message and Mission, 1960, pp. 222-228).

- He does not believe the Bible is written "in a Holy Ghost language."
- He believes the record of Jacob wrestling with the Angel was not a literal event.
- Dynamic equivalency does not translate the Bible word for word (formal equivalency) but interprets the thoughts expressed by the words. This in spite of

Jesus' statement in Matt 24:25 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

- He denies the substitutionary blood atonement of Christ (Nida, Theory and Practice, 1969, p. 53).
- He denies that Christ died to satisfy God's justice. He believes the blood of the cross was merely symbolic of Christ's death and is never used in the Bible "in the sense of propitiation."

BRUCE METZGER (1914-2002) He is Professor of New Testament Language and Literature, Princeton Theological Seminary, and serves on the board of the American Bible Society (St. Petersburg Times. Oct. 2, 1982, p. 5). Metzger served on the committee which produced the Revised Standard Version in the USA.

- Served on the RSV translation committee of the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A.
- Metzger co-edited the New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV (1973), with Herbert May. It first appeared in 1962 as the Oxford Annotated Bible and was the first Protestant annotated edition of the Bible to be approved by a Roman authority. It was given an imprimatur in 1966 by Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston, Massachusetts
- Authored the Reader's Digest Condensed Version
- Authored the New Revised Standard Version NRSV

He believed Moses did not write the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy was not written until 700 years before Christ, the Old Testament is a mixture of "myth, legend, and history," the record of the worldwide flood of Noah's day is exaggerated, the book of Job is a folktale, the miracle accounts about Elijah and Elisha contain "legendary elements," Isaiah was written by Isaiah plus two or three unknown men who wrote centuries later, the record of Jonah is a "legend," Daniel does not contain supernatural prophecy, Paul did not write the Pastoral Epistles, Peter did not write 2 Peter.

NASB – one of the chief translators, Frank Logsdon, wrote a letter to Dewey Lockman, who had funded the New American Standard, and expressed his sorrow and repentance that he had contributed to the undermining of God's Word and the confidence that Dewey Lockman had placed in him.

NIV – was translated from Sinaiticus and Vaticanus by a committee of 110 scholars headed by Dr. Erwin Palmer. Although the NIV was supposed to be an Evangelical alternative to the NASB, the committee had two avowed homosexuals employed as translator, Dr. Woudras, and consultant, Dr. Virginia Mollenkott, a lesbian activist in the feminist movement. That is why the words "sodomite" and "sodomy" do not appear in the NIV. The new TNIV is the gender-inclusive translation that takes away the Fatherhood of God and the Sonship of Jesus. Dr. Palmer plays down the significance of these two by saying their contributions were minimal. When asked why he did not use the

discipline of using the capitalized "LORD" in the Old Testament to signify Jehovah's Name, Palmer said; "...if I did that we wouldn't sell any Bibles." (referring to the similarity with the KJV).

The NIV now has 44% market share compared to 42% market share for the KJV. The other translations account for the remaining 14% of all Bibles sold in the US.

Eugene Peterson – author of the new paraphrase that he calls the Bible under the name *The Message*. Peterson has advanced degrees in Semitic languages and served as a Presbyterian pastor for most of his career. When he found that his Sunday School class was bored with his teachings from the Bible, he decided to re-write the Bible in post-modern language using dynamic equivalency. This paraphrase is the latest rage in Bible study groups especially among young people.

Some Samples for Comparison on The Message by Eugene Peterson

Dumbing down the Scriptures, Peterson's work is written without Scripture verses and is directed at the 4th grade level of reading.

John 14:28

KJV "28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.

TM (p. 261) "You've heard me tell you, 'I'm going away, and I'm coming back.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I'm on my way to the Father because the Father is the goal and purpose of my life."

Comment: What does Peterson's rendering of the Greek in "...the Father is the goal and purpose of my life" have to do with showing Jesus as the 2nd person in the Trinity?

1 Corinthians 6:17-18

KJV "17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. 18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

TM (p. 411) "Since we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever - the kind of sex that can never "become one." There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for "becoming one" with another."

Comment: Firstly, this departure from the original message of Scripture regarding sexual immorality would lead the immature Christian to conclude that "commitment and intimacy," not marriage, set boundaries for acceptable sex in the eyes of the Lord.

Secondly, The term 'the Master' is used in place of 'the Lord.' The use of this title for God and Jesus makes this version of the Bible politically correct and non-offensive to New Age devotees and followers of other religious persuasions. 'The Master' is a New Age term! The offense that Jesus is the only way to salvation is subtly diminished. If that sounds like I am being a bit alarmed over nothing, consider the endorsement of 'The Message' by New Age author Madeleine L'Engle. "'The Message' is so good it leaves me breathless" she proclaimed. This on its own should make us suspicious enough to critically examine what 'The Message' is really saying. When a version of the Bible is considered acceptable by New Age followers we should know immediately something is wrong. My Bible tells me that the world and all that it stands for will hate the Christian and the Word that we proclaim (See Matt. 10:22, Mark 13:13, Luke 6:22-26 and John 15:18-21). Only if the "...offense of the cross has been abolished..." as Paul warned of in Galatians 5:11, will the world accept a 'Christian' message of salvation.

Romans 1:22-27

KJV "22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. 26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet."

TM (p. 361-362) "What happened was this: People knew God perfectly well, but when they didn't treat him like God, refusing to worship him, they trivialized themselves into silliness and confusion so that there was neither sense nor direction left in their lives. They pretended to know it all, but were illiterate regarding life. They traded the glory of God who holds the whole world in his hands for cheap figurines you can buy at any roadside stand. So God said, in effect, "If that's what you want, that's what you get." It wasn't long before they were living in a pigpen, smeared with filth, filthy inside and out. And all this because they traded the true God for a fake god, and worshipped the god they made instead of the God who made them - the God we bless, the God who blesses us. Oh, yes! Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either-women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men. Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men-all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it-emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches."

Comment: Lust becomes the sin rather than homosexuality, the choice of same gender sex partners. A loophole is provided for "committed" homosexuals who "love" each other.

The strength of 'The Message' against homosexual behaviour is lost giving the impression that, provided two people of the same gender "love" each other and are "committed" to their relationship, it is acceptable.

Romans 8:35-36

KJV "35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

TM (p.379) "Do you think anyone is going to drive a wedge between us and Christ's love for us? There is no way! Not trouble, not hard times, not hatred, not hunger, not homelessness, not bullying threats, not backstabbing, not even the worst sins listed in Scripture."

Comment: 'The Message' wrongly implies that sin will not separate us from God. However, in the first book in the Bible, Genesis, we discover that sin is the very thing that separated Adam and Eve from the presence of God and it is the very thing that will continue to separate mankind from the presence of God today.

In Micah 3:4, for example, we read,

"Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings."

Isaiah 59:1-2 reads, "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Colossians 2:10

KJV "10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

NIV "10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority."

TM (p.501) "You don't need a telescope, a microscope or a horoscope to realise the fullness of Christ, and the emptiness of the universe without him."

Comments: Nothing in the original manuscripts warrants such an outlandish rendering. This is adding to God's word and distorting the intention of the passage as inspired by the Lord. The headship and authority of Christ over every principality and power is removed.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

KJV "9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

TM (p.410) "Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in 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."

Comment: This interpretation panders to the Green and New Age movements by adding environmental sin. It also seeks to be non-offensive to homosexuals. So, once again we see that 'The Message' has no strength in addressing homosexual behaviour. This politically correct approach is consistent throughout the entire book. 'The Message' will have no trouble being acceptable to the authors of the false One World Church system that is currently being implemented by the United Nations and the World Council Of

Churches and ratified by the apostate denominations who are supporters of the Ecumenical Movement.

2 Corinthians 5:20

KJV "20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

TM (p.446) "We're Christ's representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God's work of making things right between them. We're speaking for Christ now: Become friends with God: he's already a friend with you."

Comment: Reconciliation is the key word here. Eugene Peterson is promoting unity - the type of unity that reconciles peoples of different nations, ethnic groups and religions at the expense of the "...faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The original context of this passage of Scripture is regarding the reconciliation of man to God, and not man to man as it has been twisted to accommodate here. This is again pandering to the Ecumenical Movement and the soon coming apostate 'World Church.' Is it any wonder that the New Age promoters are joyous about this 'bible'?

Romans 10:9-13

KJV "9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

TM (p. 3 83) "It's the word of faith that welcomes God to go to work and set things right for us. This is the core of our preaching. Say the welcoming word to God - "Jesus is my Master" - embracing, body and soul, God's work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That's it. You're not "doing" anything; you're simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That's salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud.- "God has set everything right between him and me!" Scripture reassures us, "No one who trusts God like this - heart and soul - will ever regret it." It's exactly the same no matter what a person's background may be: the same God for all of us, acting the same incredibly generous way to everyone who calls out for help. "Everyone who calls, 'Help, God!' gets help."

Comment: The Greek word kurios is usually rendered "Lord" in English versions; it reflects both the proper name of God, Yahweh (LORD) and the positional title, Adonay (Lord) from the Old Testament. Some biblical scholars avoid "Lord" as a male-oriented, sexist term. 'The Message' rarely uses "Lord," preferring to call Jesus "the Master" (John 20:20) and to translate OT references to Yahweh as "God" (Matt. 3:3, p. 13.). (But note the inconsistencies in Matt. 4:7, 10, (p.18) where Peterson retains the traditional interpretations).

This practice limits the interpretation of passages that might refer to Jesus as both Yahweh and Adonay - as God and as sovereign.

Philippians 2:9-11

KJV "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

TM (p. 491) "Because of that obedience, God lifted him high and honored him far beyond anyone or anything, ever, so that all created beings in heaven and on earth - even those long ago dead and buried-will bow in worship before this Jesus Christ, and call out in praise that he is the Master of all, to the glorious honor of God the Father."

Comment: As above for Romans 10:9-13.

Ephesians 5:22-24

KJV "22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body. 24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

NIV "22 Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything."

TM (p. 484) "Wives, understand and support your husbands in ways that show your support for Christ. The husband provides leadership to his wife the way Christ does to his church, not by domineering but by cherishing. So just as the church submits to Christ as he exercises such leadership, wives should likewise submit to their husbands."

Comment: 'The Message' fails to consistently handle role relations between men and women. Some passages that address husband-wife role relations, using the word "submit" as in the example above and the one following, are rendered "understand and support." The rendering of this passage also qualifies the submission to mean that only as the husband exercises leadership should the wife submit to him.

Colossians 3:18

KJV "18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

TM (p. 504) "Wives, understand and support your husbands by submitting to them in ways that honour the Master."

Comment: This passage changes the emphasis from the submission to the type of submission. Submitting to the husband is not conditional in the KJV or the NIV. In the TM it is conditional upon certain 'ways.'

Other texts have been rendered in such a way that the traditional, hierarchical interpretation is no longer possible, especially as shown in the example below.

1 Peter 3:1-7

KJV "1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 2 While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. 3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: 6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. 7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

TM (p. 579) "The same goes for you wives: Be good wives to your husbands, responsive to their needs. There are husbands who, indifferent as they are to any words about God, will be captivated by your life of holy beauty. What matters is not your outer appearance - the styling of your hair, the jewellery you wear, the cut of your clothes - but your inner disposition. Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in. The holy women of old were beautiful before God that way, and were good, loyal wives to their husbands. Sarah, for instance, taking care of Abraham, would address him as , "my dear husband." You'll be true daughters of Sarah if you do the same, unanxious and unintimidated. The same goes for you husbands: Be good husbands to your wives. Honor them, delight in them. As women they lack some of your advantages. But in the new life of God's grace, you're equals. Treat your wives, then, as equals so your prayers don't run aground."

Comment: Here we find that women are simply admonished to "be good wives." The paragraph on page 421 of 'The Message' begins, "Don't, by the way, read too much into the differences here between men and women," a statement which has no clear textual base.

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

KJV "11 Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. 12 For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God."

TM (p. 421) "Don't, by the way, read too much into the differences here between men and women. Neither man nor woman can go it alone or claim priority. Man was created first, as a beautiful shining reflection of God - that is true. But the head on a woman's body clearly outshines in beauty the head of her "head," her husband. The first woman came from man, true - but ever since then, every man comes from a woman! And since virtually everything comes from God anyway, let's quit going through these "who's first" routines."

Summary:

1. 'The Message' is an expansive paraphrase that is not so labeled, as is The Living Bible.

In the introduction, Eugene Peterson compares his pastoral ministry to his work as a translator: "I stood at the border between two languages, biblical Greek and everyday English, acting as a translator, providing the right phrases, getting the right words so that the men and women to whom I was pastor could find their way around and get along in this world" (p. 10). Much of 'The Message' reads like a sermon: text plus interpretation and application. Unlike a sermon, however, the reader does not know where the text ends and the sermon begins.

2. Because of its interpretive and idiosyncratic nature, 'The Message' should not be used for study. Acts 17:11 commends the Bereans for evaluating Paul's teaching with the Old Testament Scriptures. In the same spirit, 'The Message' needs to be evaluated against more consistent and traditional translations, especially when its renderings evoke a response such as, "I didn't know the Bible said that!" or, "Now I understand what it means."
3. Because of the erroneous theology contained within the pages of 'The Message', it is potentially able to do untold damage within the Body of Christ. As stated above, 'The Message' is not an accurate translation of the Word of God, but a personal interpretation. The introduction explains that "the goal is not to render a word-for-word conversion of Greek into English, but rather to convert the tone, rhythms, the ideas, into the way we actually think and speak".

But should we rewrite and dumb-down the Bible to fit our own shallow and worldly communications skills? Should we reinterpret the holy Word to sound more like a TV advert or film script?

4. Today's culture needs to be challenged by scripture. 'The Message' gets it the other way round. It conforms to secular standards in an attempt to be attractive to everyone. Peterson actually states in the introduction that he was "...always looking for an English way to make the biblical text relevant to the conditions of the people" to whom he ministered. This is interpreting the Word of God by our experiences and what we observe around us rather than interpreting what we observe and experience by the Word of God. That is why we need the Scriptures in their original sense - so that we can test all things to see whether they be of God or not. Following Peterson's fanciful translation will only lead us up the path to some fairy tale Mad Hatter's garden party. Myself, I would prefer to arrive at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.
5. Although endorsed by Christian leaders such as J.I.Packer, Warren Wiersbe, Billy Graham and Jack Hayford, 'The Message' is disgracefully inaccurate. It cannot be used for serious Bible study because it has no verse references; it alters the meaning of the text; and it deletes key words and concepts.
6. Instead of encouraging the church to partake of 'The Message', shepherds should be warning their congregations of the dangerous theology within its pages and encouraging them to read a bible that is closer to the original intention of God's message to mankind. They should be encouraging their congregations to discern

the difference between truth and error. 'The Message' is not a message for the born-again Christian living in these last and perilous days. It is another gospel and should be loudly and clearly proclaimed as such.

DEUT 4:2 "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

REVELATION 22:18-19 "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Psalm 12:6-7 "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever."

ISAIAH 40:8 -- "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."

MATTHEW 4:4 -- "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

MATTHEW 24:35 "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."