

The Remnant

*“Even so then at this
present time also there
is a remnant according to
the election of grace.”
Romans 11.5*

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WHY HEBREW AND GREEK?

by C. C. Morris

And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek? (Acts 21.37)

With minor exceptions, the Old Testament of the Bible was written in ancient Hebrew and the New Testament was written in Greek. All new translations of the Bible are supposedly efforts to put the original Hebrew and Greek languages of the Bible into words all humanity can understand. All that would be unnecessary if it were not for two problems readers face:

(1) what God in His wisdom did to the rebellious sinners at Babel—He thoroughly confounded their languages; and

(2) English, like many languages, is a “living” language, and like anything living, it keeps growing and changing.

Whenever any nation’s culture must be explained to foreigners, translating and defining words from one language to the other is usually necessary.

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Because of the confusion of “tongues” or languages at Babel and the spread of the scriptures to foreign nations with foreign languages, the writers of Bible, or the Scriptures, and the speakers therein, had to translate words from one language to another, and they said so, as we shall shortly see. Since Babel, this has been a necessary fact of living in this world.

Complaints about the King James Version

The complaint we all too often hear, “The language in the King James Version (KJV) is out-of-date,” is always lurking in the background, never too far away. It may have been the King’s English in its day, but that

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Elder C. C. Morris
Editor and Publisher
P O Box 1004
Hawkins, Texas 75765
Phone 1-903-769-4822

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Address all correspondence to:

THE REMNANT PUBLICATIONS
P O BOX 1004
HAWKINS, TX 75765-1004
Phone 1-903-769-4822

E-mail: remnantlink@gmail.com

Web sites: www.the-remnant.com
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was in the year of our Lord 1611. Now we have a nation, if not a world of peasants who have little use for kings, multitudes who can scarcely understand the King's words of over four hundred years ago.

They want an easy-to-read Bible written in the serf's *slanguage*.

For instance, take Mark 5.41: "And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, **Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise** (Mark 5.41)." Why "Talitha cumi"? Because that is what the Lord Jesus said. He did not literally say, "Damsel, arise," which of course is English; He said, "Talitha cumi." That is good reporting. "Damsel, arise" is a good translation, so we may know what **talitha cumi** means, as Mark explains to us that is what the Lord actually said.

In the 21st century the youngsters may need additional help (thanks to the wonders of the modern educational system), since they have learned neither what a *damsel* is, nor do they understand the word *arise*. Nowadays, for many if not most high-schoolers to understand the modern version Bibles, they would no doubt need to say something more like "Get up, Girl!"

What is not so apparent is that the gospel writer Mark was translating for those **Romans** who read and spoke **Koine Greek** (which was the common man's every-day spoken Greek of that day, in contrast to *Classical* or formal Greek).

Truly the Bible in its original languages was written in common, everyday language. **BUT** the **Greek** words Mark wrote had to be translated into **English** for us, so the nations speaking and reading English could understand what Christ said to the **Jewish** damsel in **Aramaic** (which most of

the **Hebrew/Jews** would have understood, which is why the Lord spoke those words in that particular language).

The same kind of labor, word-for-word translating, must also be done for every other language in the world into which the Bible is translated.

God Killed Some Languages

There is a distinct advantage of having the Bible in **dead** languages such as Koine Greek and biblical Hebrew rather than having it in a living, ever-changing Language such as English.

Over time, with a living language like our English, people change the meanings of words. That is why such languages are called “living.”

These changes are not always for the better. What would today’s teen-agers think after reading James 2.2-3—“*For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; (3) 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*”?

Would our young people think James meant this visitor was a homosexual? Would they think James was talking about showing favoritism to a transvestite? How would our twenty-first century children and grandchildren interpret the line from the hymn “How Tedious and Tasteless the Hours” the line that says, “*The fields strive in vain to look gay*”?

You can see how a changing, living language such as our own, by making good, decent words like *gay* into slang, changing the traditional and correct use of words, while inventing non-words (like “bling” for flashy

jewelry, for example) because they do not have enough of a vocabulary to express themselves in plain grade school English—you can see how all this causes problems for people who, not having a decent education, do not know the older, or original, correct meanings of words.

The sovereign God of the universe killed off the biblical Hebrew; modern Hebrew is not entirely the same as the Hebrew of the Old Testament Bible, which is considered a dead language. Today we can get dictionary definitions of all the Hebrew and Greek words in the Bible from Strong’s Concordance, which has Hebrew and Greek dictionaries in the back pages. A reader does not have to know one word, not even one letter, of Greek or Hebrew. Dr. Strong assigned a number to every word used in the entire Bible in the original languages, and he put those numbers beside each word in the main concordance. To find its original meaning, all one needs to do is find that number in the Hebrew or Greek dictionary at the back of the concordance.

Moses and the prophets did not have words for refrigerators, cell phones, pizza, atomic bombs, or alarm clocks. Modern Hebrew does; Hebrew is once again a living, growing language. The Lord’s wisdom of killing off the old Bible Hebrew is that when the words died, their meanings were fixed and forever unchangeable. We can find exactly how most, if not all Hebrew words were used and precisely what they meant thousands of years ago. Being unchanging, these words mean the exact same thing they meant to Moses and to Isaiah in their days, and in any subsequent day including our own.

Everything said about biblical Hebrew above can be said for the Koine Greek of the New Testament. It is dead, unchanging, with

fixed, exact meanings for each word. There is little doubt (there should be *no* doubt) about exactly what Christ, Paul, or anyone else in the Bible meant when they used one word and not another. God did not leave it up to the biblical writers to choose synonyms, swapping one word for another. Each word in the original is exactly inspired. Holy men of God spake moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1.21).

For all practical purposes, doubts about what a biblical word means are almost always caused by revisionists who intend to change the original meanings of the inspired words to support their own personal doctrinal views.

Perhaps the most famous example of this is those who would change “virgin” in Isaiah 7.14 to “young woman.” Surely anyone with a modicum of understanding would know that a **young woman**’s conceiving and bearing a son is not much of a sign. Tens of thousands of “young women” are doing that every day of the year, and they always have. But for a VIRGIN to conceive and bear a son is the most wonderful and powerful sign God Almighty ever gave to those who are blessed to see and understand the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

“The Greeks had a word for it.” When Matthew 1.22-23 quotes from Isaiah 7.14, the Greek word used in verse 23 for “virgin” is PARTHENOS. Those who remember learning about the buildings in ancient Athens, Greece, will remember **the Parthenon**, prominent among them. And what was the Parthenon? A temple honoring Athena, “the *virgin* goddess,” the patron goddess of Athens. And what does Parthenon actually mean? “The temple of the **virgin**,” or “the temple of the **virgins**.” There is no doubt about what Isaiah or Matthew said or meant. The Greeks had a word for it; Mary the mother

of Jesus was a virgin, as Isaiah and Matthew said.

Problems With King James’ English

We have the additional problem of KJV English, some words of which are still in modern use but have different meanings from what they meant four hundred years ago.

Some words used in King James’ day have the opposite meaning today. Let (“letteth”), in 2 Thessalonians 2.7, meant *hinder*, *prevent*, or *restrain* in King James’ lifetime, and now **let** means *not* to hinder, prevent, or restrain—at least in the minds of most people. “Let” now still means *to hinder or delay*, as the FIRST definition in Webster, although most people nowadays seem to think it means *not* to hinder! (as in, “Let me go!”)

Other words, because of what they imply, have taken on the implied meaning. **Prevent** in 1 Thess. 4.15 comes from a word that means **to precede, to go before, or to go off and leave someone or something behind**. One might ask, “What’s the connection between **prevent** and **precede**?” The answer is plain enough in any grocery store. If someone cuts in front of you at the checkout stand to *precede* you on the way out, does this not *prevent* you by just that much from getting to the cashier? By her **going before** you, doesn’t she go on her way and **leave you behind**?

In Romans 1.28, **convenient**, which we think means “handy,” really means suitable or proper, as the word **meet** often does. When the Lord God said in Genesis 2.18, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help **meet** for him,” the text means Eve was a fitting and proper companion for Adam.

Conversation means citizenship in Philippians 3.20, but it means behavior, character or deportment in Ephesians 4.22 and Hebrews 13.5; but in 2 Corinthians it means busy-ness. There are four different Greek words and meanings in these texts, but they are all translated into English by “conversation,” and not a one means to talk with someone, to have a talk with him, as we now think of “having a conversation.”

In the 1600s, *Conversation* meant more than people talking to each other, as we think of having a conversation; back then it meant one’s complete behavior—not just what someone said, but it included what he did as his way of life; yet, for all that, this does not explain why in Philippians 3.20 “conversation” would be better translated as **citizenship**; but it would. The word comes from the Greek word **politeuma**, from which we get such words as **polite**, **police**, **policy**, and “**politics**.”

The **Police** enforce the **Policy** of the State or government, which is *established* by the ruling class known as **Politicians** who, as subtly as possible, try hard to pass themselves off as *the establishment*. Their hardest job is letting the rest of us believe that “We the People” rule, and that **the Politicians** and **Police** are somehow our “public servants.” The rest of us are expected to be very **Polite** to all **Police** and to all **Politicians**, but neither the **Police** nor **Politicians** need to be **Polite** to us; in fact, they rarely are **Polite** at all, even to each other, except when they can perceive a distinct advantage to themselves in their doing so.

If you find these multiple uses of everyday words like prevent, precede, convenient, meet, conversation to be confusing, you are not alone. But fighting your way through word changes in

a living language is worth it to understand what the Lord Jesus Christ and His prophets and apostles said and really meant. All of this, by the way, comes to us by the courtesy of our depraved ancestors at Babel, by way of Babylon, and by the Greek and Latin root words for our hit-and-miss English words. Enough said?

On the other hand, going back to Philippians 3.20: The children of God have a dual **citizenship (politeuma)**: they are citizens of their native country in this world, of which they are “natural-born citizens”; and, by reason of their being born from above (John 3.3-5), they are also “*supernatural-born citizens*” of Heaven.

Many Bible **expositors**, who are expected to **expose** a text’s meaning to their hearers or readers, fail to take into account that no one can understand the Bible spiritually until they are born again by the Bible’s Author, the Holy Spirit. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2.14).” (*them* is crossed out in the text because it is a word supplied by the KJV translators that adds nothing to the sense of the text. Rather, it detracts from its meaning. It implies that although the natural man cannot know the things of the Spirit of God, he can know other things. But Paul said in 1 Corinthians 8.2, “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.”)

When, Where, and Who?

Ever since God confounded the world’s language at the tower of Babel there has been a need for translations. The Bible abounds with

examples because its peoples lived in a multi-cultural world. No matter what one's nationality may have been, he was often dealing with foreigners:

1. "And in the days of Artaxerxes wrote Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel, and the rest of their companions, unto Artaxerxes king of **Persia**; and the writing of the letter was written in **the Syrian tongue**, and interpreted in **the Syrian tongue** (Ezra 4.7)."

Don't let those names like Artaxerxes, Bishlam, and others throw you. They are not nearly as hard to read and say as many of the names that are in the news every day. Yet we adjust to these problems of pronunciation, don't we?

2. Nebuchadnezzar, king of the world and ruling over countless little countries, all with their own different languages and dialects, needed translators. Among his Judean captives were four young men named Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. You probably know the latter three by their Babylonian assigned names, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel's Babylonian name was Belteshazzar, not to be confused with Belshazzar). Their job specs were as follows: "Children in whom was no blemish, but well favoured, and skilful in all wisdom, and cunning in knowledge, and understanding science, and such as had ability in them to stand in the king's palace, and **whom they might teach the learning and the tongue [language] of the Chaldeans** (Daniel 1.4)."

Nebuchadnezzar himself wrote a chapter in the book of Daniel, not in Hebrew, but in Chaldean.

3. "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet [Isaiah 7.14], saying, Behold, a virgin

shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and **they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us** (Matthew 1.22-23)."

4. "But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is **Corban, that is to say, a gift**, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me...(Mark 7.11)."

5. "And when they were come unto a place called **Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull** (Matthew 27.33)"; "And they bring him unto the place **Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull** (Mark 15.22)."

6. "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?** (Matthew 27.46)" "And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, **Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me** (Mark 15.34)?"

7. Pilate, an international governor, solved a major linguistic problem this way: "And a superscription also was written over him [the Lord Jesus Christ] in **letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS** (Luke 23.38)."

8. "Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, **Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,)** where dwellest thou (John 1.38)?"

9. "He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, **We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ** (John 1.41)."

10. "...when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: **thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone** (John 1.42)."

11. “Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called **in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda**, having five porches (John 5.2).” It helps John’s Gentile readers to know what Bethesda means and what and where it is, if a friend says “Meet me at Bethesda at noon tomorrow.” Bethesda was a pool of water in Jerusalem, near the sheep market.

12. **Bethesda** (Beth-EZ-dah) is not to be confused with **Bethsaida** (Beth-SAY-dah), a town on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee, around a hundred miles north of Jerusalem. If you read both words alike, as some of our acquaintances do, you might end up a hundred miles from your appointment.

13. “When he [Jesus] had thus spoken, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, And said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of **Siloam**, (which is by interpretation, **Sent**.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing (John 9.6f).” What could be more appropriate than the double intent of Christ’s words here: the blind man was **sent** to a pool named “Sent.” We would miss the significance of what Christ said if we were only told he was sent to a pool named Siloam, without knowing what Siloam means.

14. “When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in **a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha** (John 19.13).” This pavement was not like our asphalt or concrete streets we call pavement. It was a public area where official governmental business was conducted, **paved artistically with mosaic tiles**.

The Hebrew word **Gabbatha** does not imply anything so artistic. **Gabbatha** means a knoll or hill, and that is what the Jews

called the place in Jerusalem where the Roman tribunal met to conduct business.

15. “And he bearing his cross went forth into **a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha** (John 19.17).” Again, **Golgotha** is not to be confused with **Gabbatha**. Luke (23.33) says the place was called **Calvary**, the only time Calvary is mentioned in the Bible. Calvary is a form of the Greek word *kranion*, from which we get the word **cranium**, which means the skull, specifically the part that encases the brain.

How many of us realize that when we say somebody “cracked his cranium,” we are speaking Greek?

Golgotha, from the Aramaic (*Gulgoltha*) and Hebrew (*Gulgoleth*), is skull, and is so rendered in Judges 9.53 (“And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech’s head, and all to brake his **skull**”) and 2 Kings 9.35 (“And they went to bury her: but they found no more of her than the **skull**, and the feet, and the palms of her hands”).

The human skull, or a “skull and cross-bones,” or the pirates’ flag called “the Jolly Roger,” are all recognized symbols of poison and death. All in all, calling this place Golgotha, “the Skull” or “the place of the skull,” is a grisly but appropriate name for a place used for torturing men to death on Roman crosses.

16. “And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, **JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS**. This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and **it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin** (John 19.19f).” Pilate, internationalist politician that he was, wrote the accusation in the local Hebrew language, the popular Greek, and the official Latin of the

Roman Empire. Between the three, he fairly well covered most people who witnessed Christ's crucifixion and could read. His intention was to let all know: This is what will happen to any would-be kings who would dare set themselves up in rivalry against the rulers of the Roman Empire. In writing as he did, Pilate, even as the Bible writers and the King James Translators, had to take into account the various languages of his day.

17. "Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, **Rabboni; which is to say, Master** (John 20.16)." Again, we have accuracy in John's reporting what she said, Rabboni, and accuracy in translating what Rabboni means.

18. "And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as **that field is called in their proper tongue, Acedama, that is to say, The field of blood** (Acts 1.19)."

19. "And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed **Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,**) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus...(Acts 4.36)." The prefix **Bar-** in any Hebrew name means "Son of." Simon Barjona in Matthew 16.17 means "Simon, son of Jonah." Authorities differ about what "nabas" signifies. One says Barnabas may mean son of Nebo (a Babylonian deity; or the mountain in Moab, possibly named after the Babylonian god); another thinks it is a form of the Hebrew *Bar Nebi*, "son of a prophet." Whatever it originally meant, Luke gives us the common understanding of the name, which is the biblical, inspired meaning: The son of consolation.

20. "**Tabitha** (a woman's name, not to be confused with *talitha*, above), **by interpretation Dorcas** (Acts 9.36)." Tabitha is the Hebrew word for a female gazelle. **Dorcas** is Greek for the same. This was a necessary

explanation, then, for those who understood one or the other, Greek or Hebrew, but not both.

21. "And as **Paul** was to be led into the castle, he said **unto the chief captain**, May I speak unto thee? **Who** [the captain] **said, Canst thou speak Greek** (Acts 21.37)?" The Roman captain, probably unfamiliar with Hebrew, and thinking Paul could possibly only speak in Hebrew, inquired about a common language.

22. "...Paul stood on the stairs...And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them **in the Hebrew tongue**... (And when they heard that **he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them**, they kept the more silence(Acts 21.40 through 22.2)." The mob whom Paul here addressed thought he was a Gentile-loving traitor who had desecrated the temple and blasphemed the law of Moses. When he spoke to them in Hebrew, these Jews were impressed, curious. They hushed and listened to him. Maybe this fellow isn't so bad after all? The language one uses sometimes makes a critical difference.

23. "... I heard a voice speaking unto me, and **saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?**...(Acts 26.14)." Is it not significant that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to Saul of Tarsus in Hebrew? You will notice the Lord did not say, "Why persecutest thou my people?" or "Why are you persecuting my church?" He said—in Hebrew—"Why persecutest thou ME?" because when one strikes against one of the Lord's people, it is a direct attack on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! He spoke in God's language, Hebrew, which demanded Saul's attention and respect. The evidence points to the fact God and Adam spoke in Hebrew in Eden.

24. "And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name

in the Hebrew tongue is **Abaddon**, but in the Greek tongue hath his name **Apollyon** (Revelation 9.11).” John gives this angel’s name in both languages. Both names mean **Destruction**. The Greek Old Testament (LXX) agrees; the Hebrew word for destruction (*abaddon*) is so rendered (*apoleia*) in Job 26.6, Psalm 88.11, and Proverbs 15.11.

25. “And he gathered them together **into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon** (Revelation 16.16).” Armageddon comes from the Hebrew words **Har Meggidon**. Har means mountain, and Megiddon refers to the city of Megiddo, which perches on the hillside looking over the Plain of Esdraelon, the prophesied site of the war of Armageddon.

Megiddo and/or Megiddon means place of rendezvous; In plain English, Armageddon means the place of rendezvous, or the place of the appointed meeting, the place God Himself has appointed to meet and destroy the armies of the antichrist at the end of this present evil age.

Peter and Two Misunderstood Texts

26. “But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak (Mark 14.71; Matthew 26.74).” I have heard Arminian preachers accuse Peter of using all sorts of blasphemous, foul, nasty, dirty, vulgar words here to prove he was not a follower of Christ. That is not at all what these texts say he did. The Greek word translated **curse** is **anathema**, which was brought directly into the English. See any good dictionary. It has to do with being cursed or banned in a religious sense, and Peter was saying, “May I be cursed if I know Him; may I be cursed if I am not telling you the truth.”

When it says “to swear,” the word means the same as when a court of law swears a

person in to testify, putting them on their oath to tell “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” which is what Peter was doing. He was swearing on oath to the truth that he did not know Jesus, and may I be cursed if that is not the truth.

27. “So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs (John 21.15).” Here, Christ and Peter used two entirely different Greek words, both rendered “love,” but by using the English word love for both words the distinction is lost in the KJV.

Christ used the word *agapas*, which means *divine self-sacrificial love*. Peter replied with the much weaker word *phileo*, which is *neighborly affection*, and from which we get the name of the city, **Philadelphia**, “the city of brotherly love.” The essence of their conversation is:

Jesus: Do you **love**/agapao me?

Peter: Yes, I **like**/phileo you.

Jesus: Do you **love**/agapao me?

Peter: Yes, I **like**/phileo you.

Jesus: Do you really **like**/phileo me?

It was the Lord’s using Peter’s own word this third time that broke the apostle’s heart.

Summary

No one around here claims to be an expert on biblical languages. To know what a Hebrew or Greek word in the Bible means, go to the experts. Strong’s *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* is a great tool to have. Along with Berry’s *Interlinear Greek New Testament*, Strong is my number one “go to” source when I try to study. My sincere and prayerful recommendation: Go thou and do likewise.

Bible Study

C. C. Morris

There is a definite difference between our reading the Bible and studying it. And some professing Christians do not even read the Bible regularly, let alone study it.

Objections

There are some people who are plainly not interested in reading their Bibles.

Many if not most “professing Christians” are not interested in reading or studying their Bibles. Some of their objections are to the antiquated King James language, which we addressed briefly in the article, *Why Hebrew and Greek?*

1. They see no use to it. To them the Bible is old stuff, too old to have any relevance in modern-day living. “Who cares about somebody fighting Philistines and Amorites with slings, spears, and swords?” they ask. “Who cares nowadays about sheep-herders 2000 BC or traveling through the Mediterranean world on a donkeymobile? How does a list of the idol-worshipping kings of Israel relate to satisfying my boss at work, or making my next sale, or finishing a complex monthly report? What’s on TV tonight? A special on the History channel about sheep-herders in the Mediterranean world 2000 BC? Now there’s a good way to spend an evening.”

Such people have no claim to Christianity. They think they have been “saved,” or had an “experience,” but they are woefully deceived. They are living proof of the text, “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Corinthians 2.14).”

If there was ever anything “of the Spirit of God,” it is the Bible, which the Holy Spirit inspired: For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake, moved by the Holy Spirit.

“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 perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3.16f).”

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious (1 Peter 2.2f).” Newborn babies want milk and cry for it. Peter raises the question: have you tasted that the Lord is gracious? If you have not, that fact will show itself in your lack of desire for the milk of the word. Could it be that your lack of desire for spiritual baby-food is an indication you are not a newborn baby in the biblically spiritual sense—that you are not born again, born from above?

2. Then there are the ones who have tried Bible reading and have failed. “I tried to read my Bible through a few times, but it has never worked. Genesis and Exodus were okay, but I got bogged down in Leviticus—you know, all those sacrifices and everything—and I sort of gave up. Once I did read the Bible all the way through, but I didn’t remember much of it. I don’t see much relation to my everyday living in what I remember reading.”

Or, “I have a terrible temper. I read and read my Bible but don’t find anything about how to control it. I am no better about it now than I was 20 or 30 years ago.”

Or, “Where does the Bible say anything about when your marriage is falling apart? My wife (or My husband) has another “love interest” outside our marriage.” Or, “My re-

bellious teenagers are getting into liquor, drugs, sex, and even worse trouble. Where does the Bible tell me how to handle those kinds of problems?”

First, may we say negatively, the Bible is not a Dale Carnegie *How to Win Friends and Influence People* book or a daily Ann Landers or Dear Abby newspaper column to consult every day (although the books of Psalms and Proverbs are wonderfully inspired manuals on human relations).

Second, positively, the Bible is the magnificent, God-inspired record our Creator God has given to us of Himself, exactly what He intends for us to know about Himself—His holy and righteous character; His absolute sovereignty and power over all creation, His eternal purpose, telling His people exactly why He created the universe, including angels and demons, saints and reprobates, what is the purpose for all things that exist, what our past, present, and future is, and a host of countless other details you didn't know you want to know.

The Bible is a bottomless well, an infinite fountain, overflowing with the wisdom of and instruction from our Creator God. And depraved, rebellious sinners with dead hearts and deader heads get bored and sleepy reading a couple verses of it. Others think they have really accomplished something if they have read a chapter a day for a while.

Before Moses began writing his five Old Testament books, which we call “the Pentateuch” and the Israelites call the Torah, around 1500 BC, there was no need for the Scriptures. If there had been, God would have provided them. Back then, true religion was propagated through the family. The father/husband was to be, in effect, the prophet, priest, and king of his individual little family unit. As prophet, he was to instruct his wife

and children in the proper worship of God. As priest, he offered sacrifices and prayers to the Lord in behalf of his wife and children, as Job did (see Job 1.5). As king of his family he was to righteously rule his wife and children in the fear of God.

Later, the Lord God Almighty provided the Scriptures as a cohesive document that He Himself has verbally inspired, word for word, letter by letter, through which and by which He would teach His people about Himself, about themselves, their relationship to Him, and “...all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1.3).” The Lord has never diminished the role of the father/husband as to his family. Rather, the man now has a written record of the mind of his Sovereign Creator that he is to transmit to the next and succeeding generation(s) as the Lord enables him.

I Have No Responsibility.

It's Accountability I Worry About

I avoid saying it is the man's *responsibility* to teach his family (or to do anything else) for two reasons:

(1) the word *responsibility* implies that **man has the ability to respond**, which no sinful, fallen man has. He has no **ability** whatsoever to respond to God, or to do, or to be, or even to desire to be, think, or desire to do anything other than what the Lord gives and enables him to do. Other than that, if our Sovereign God sees fit to leave us to our own natural inclinations, we will be found only “in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind (Ephesians 2.3).”

The Lord Jesus Christ said about Himself, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, **The Son can do nothing of himself**, but what he seeth the Father do (John 5.19),” and, “The words

that I speak unto you **I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, HE doeth the works** (John 14.10).” Since Christ was and is the eternal God manifest in the flesh, and He emphatically denied any **ability** to do any thing apart from God the Father working IN Him, what foolishness it is then for any depraved, sin-laden, puny offspring of Adam to think he has the “ability to respond” to any of the spiritual, holy commands and precepts of the Lord?

(2) None of the words *responsibility*, *respond*, or *response* occur in the Bible. If we are responsible to God, wouldn't He have said so somewhere in His word?

The Bible does not use these words, *responsible* or *responsibility* because the God who dictated the Bible to holy men of old did not use those words. Nor did the Lord use the word account-able or account-ability; but He did use the word account: “But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (Matthew 12.36).” “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God (Romans 14.12).” Peter speaks of “you who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead (1 Peter 4.4f).”

The Sincere But Wrong Method of Interpretation

(Sometimes Right for the Wrong Reason)

With you it may start with reading an unfamiliar word in the KJV: John 3.8, “The wind bloweth where it listeth.” What's “listeth”? A friend regularly misread this as “the wind bloweth **where it's listed**”—his “interpretation” of this was: God predestinated wherever the wind blows, and He has a list of everywhere the wind blows or will blow (he did not elaborate further on this

point). I am sure this much is true: The Lord controls all winds and exactly when, where, how, and why they blow or do not blow, or whether they blow or do not blow at all. **This is all true according to the Bible** (see Exodus 10.13-19, 14.21, 15.10; Numbers 11.31; Psalm 18.10, 107.24-29, 135.7, 148.8; Amos 4.13; Nahum 1.3; Matthew 8.24-27), **but that is NOT what this text is saying.**

Anyone can plainly see the Bible does not say “the wind bloweth **where it is listed**”; it says the wind bloweth **where it listeth**,” or where it **lists**; not wherever God **listed** for it to blow (like Arizona, Chicago, or in Wind Cave, South Dakota). So you look up “list” in Webster's Dictionary and find there are at least NINE English definitions for **list**. The very first definition is the one we seek: Old (KJV) English “list” is, believe it or not, a form of the word “lust,” in the sense of to please, to suit, to wish, or to choose. All Christ was saying here about the wind is that the wind blows wherever it pleases. The wind blows wherever it suits it to blow. The wind blows wherever it wishes. The wind blows where it chooses to blow.

(Anyone having a problem with the wind wishing or choosing wherever it suits it to blow, please take it up with the One who is speaking in John 3.8.)

The Not So-Smart Method of Interpretation

Some do not know the difference between “spiritualizing” a text and “making it figurative.” Some think it is the same thing. It is so easy to “spiritualize” a text one knows nothing about, especially when he does not know what “spiritualizing” or “making a spiritual application” means.

This method takes at least two forms:

A. One man I knew used his *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* as the only Bible commentary he ever needed. One day he read Hebrews 7.26: "For such an high priest **became** us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He got his dictionary, looked up **became**, and read: "*past* of BECOME."

So he looked up **become** and found the first meaning of become is "1. To happen." Being a good absolute predestinarian who did not believe anything just "happens," my studious friend rejected that definition and went to the next ("2. To come to be; as, a caterpillar *becomes* a butterfly"). Here he found the "interpretation" of Hebrews 7.26 that satisfied him. He later told me this is what the text means: "When Elder Blank or you go into the stand, that's not Elder Blank or you up there any more! It's Jesus Christ. He *becomes* you, and now it's not you preaching any more; it's Jesus Christ up there in the stand preaching!"

There are countless people who believe such an approach is sound Bible study, and they cannot see the fallacy of such nonsense.

B. One may read an interpretation into a text that supports his personal feelings and desires. The story was told about a young adults' Sunday School class in which the teacher asked Betty what her *interpretation* was of "Let the dead bury their dead" in Matthew 8.22.

Betty said, "Ummm...I think it means I should break up with Willie?"

"That's wonderful! Marvelous!" said the teacher. "Bob, what's *your interpretation* of 'Let the dead bury their dead'?"

Bob, who for a long time has had a deep and abiding interest in getting better acquainted

with Betty, said, "Uh, I think Betty's right. I also think it means she should break up with Willie!"

It is for reasons like these that I fairly well despise the words "interpretation" and "interpret"—not the words themselves, but these words *as they are generally misunderstood and misused in this way today!*

Interpretation is not subjective; it is not what you *think* or *feel* a text means to you. That **may** (or **may not**) be an *application*. **A correct interpretation is translating the words of the original text in a way that conveys as exactly as possible what the writer originally said and meant.**

Summary

The people in the Bible, whether in the Old or the New Testament, faced the fact of international language differences and difficulties. Shall we, by God's grace and His Spirit's leadership, do anything less? They provided translations in the Bible text itself where necessary in the multicultural world in which they lived. Must we in this lazy, self-indulgent, fat and flabby age, not rise to the challenge presented by a few obsolete or hard-to-understand old English words here and there?

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20.32)."

Those who hunger for the truth of God's inspired word will gladly search it with whatever tools they have, and they will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Peter 3.18).

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article is used by permission granted by David Kupelian, the Vice President and Managing Editor of the **World Net Daily** website (<https://www.wnd.com/>). This piece is ten years old, but it reflects the trend in many cities and counties in the USA.

While I worked for the City of Dallas, Texas, that municipality had similar zoning restrictions on their law books, regulating property usage (including residential neighborhoods), off-street parking requirements, the maximum number of people who could assemble per floor-space of the building (in this case, one's home), and the like.

As Christianity increasingly falls into disfavor, as the general trend seems to be, we cannot expect the situation to become any better. Whether or not you participate in home Bible studies or you agree or disagree with the pastor and his wife in every detail is not the issue; the cardinal issue is our citizens' Constitutional right as guaranteed by the first clause of the First Amendment: **"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."**

No State, city, or other governmental entity may *legally* pass and/or enforce unconstitutional laws that prohibit Constitutionally guaranteed rights.—CCM

Home: No place for Bible study

World Net Daily website

<https://www.wnd.com/>

22 May 2009

A San Diego pastor and his wife claim they were interrogated by a county official and warned they will face escalating fines if they continue to hold Bible studies in their home.

The couple, whose names are being withheld until a demand letter can be filed on their behalf, told their attorney a county government employee knocked on their door on Good Friday, asking a litany of questions about their Tuesday night Bible studies, which are attended by approximately 15 people.

"Do you have a regular weekly meeting in your home? Do you sing? Do you say 'amen'?" the official reportedly asked. "Do you say, 'Praise the Lord'?"

The pastor's wife answered yes.

She says she was then told, however, that she must stop holding "religious assemblies" until she and her husband obtain a Major Use Permit [MUP] from the county, a permit that often involves traffic and environmental studies, compliance with parking and sidewalk regulations and costs that top tens of thousands of dollars.

And if they fail to pay for the MUP, the county official reportedly warned, the couple will be charged escalating fines beginning at \$100, then \$200, \$500, \$1000, "and then it will get ugly."

Dean Broyles of the Western Center for Law & Policy, which has been retained to represent the couple, told WND the county's action not only violates religious land-use laws but also assaults both the First Amendment's freedom of assembly and freedom of religion.

"The First Amendment, in part, reads, 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,'" Broyles said. "And that's the key part: 'prohibiting the free exercise.' We believe this is a substantial government burden on the free exercise of religion."

He continued, "If one's home is one's castle, certainly you would think the free exercise of religion, of all places, could occur in the home."

Broyles confirmed the county official followed through on his threat. The pastor and his wife received a written warning ordering the couple to "cease/stop religious assembly on parcel or obtain a major use permit."

"The Western Center for Law and Policy is troubled by this draconian move to suppress home Bible studies," said the law center in a statement. "If the current trends in our nation continue, churches may be forced underground. If that happens, believers will once again be forced to meet in homes. If homes are already closed by the government to assembly and worship, where then will Christians meet?"

On a personal note, Broyles added, "I've been leading Bible studies in my home for 13 years in San Diego County, and I personally believe that home fellowship Bible studies are the past and future of the church. ... If you look at China, the church grew from home Bible studies. I'm deeply concerned that if in the U.S. we are not able to meet in our homes and freely practice our religion, then we may be worse off than China."

Broyles also explained to WND that oppressive governments, such as communist China or Nazi Germany, worked to repress home fellowships, labeling them the “underground church” or “subversive groups,” legally compelling Christians to meet only in sanctioned, government-controlled “official” churches.

“Therein lies my concern,” Broyles said. “If people can’t practice their religious beliefs in the privacy of their own homes with a few of their friends, that’s an egregious First Amendment violation.”

WND contacted a spokeswoman for San Diego County, who acknowledged the description of the incident seemed “bizarre,” but who was unable to locate the details of the account. She simply could not provide comment yet, she said, until she could become familiar with the case.

Broyles said the WCLP is nearly ready to file a demand letter with the county to release the pastor and his wife from the requirement to obtain the expensive permit. If the county refuses, Broyles said, the WCLP will consider a lawsuit in federal court.

Broyles also told WND the pastor and his wife are continuing to hold the Bible study in their home.

On Bible Study

Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)

Do not skim it or read it, but study it, every word of it; *study* the whole Bible, Old Testament and New; not your favourite chapters merely, but the complete Word of God from beginning to end. Do not trouble yourself with commentators; they may be of use if kept in their place, but they are not your guides; your guide is ‘the Interpreter,’ the one among a thousand (Job 33:23), who will lead you into all truth, and keep you from all error.

Not that you are to read no book but the Bible. All that is *true* and *good* is worth the reading, *if you have time for it*; and all, if properly used, will help you in your study of the Scriptures. A Christian does not shut his eyes to the natural scenes of beauty spread around him. He does not cease to admire the hills, or plains, or rivers, or forests of earth, because he has learned to

love the God that made them; nor does he turn away from books of science or true poetry, because he has discovered one book truer, more precious, and more poetical than all the rest together.

In so far, then, as time allows or opportunity presents, let us ‘seek and search out by word concerning all things that are done under heaven.’ But let the Bible be to us the book of books, the one book in all the world, whose every wisdom is truth, and whose every verse is wisdom. In studying it, be sure to take it for what it really is, the revelation of the *thoughts* of God given us in the *words* of God. Were it only the book of *divine* thoughts and *human* words, it would profit little, for we never could be sure whether the words really represented the thoughts; nay, we might be quite sure that man would fail in his words when attempting to embody divine thoughts; and that, therefore, if we have only man’s words, that is, man’s translation of the divine thoughts, we shall have one of the poorest and most incorrect of all books... But, knowing that we have *divine thoughts* embodied in *divine words*, through the inspiration of an unerring translator, we sit down to the study of the heavenly volume, assured that we shall find in all its teachings the perfection of wisdom, and in its language the *most accurate expression of that wisdom* that the finite speech of man can utter.

Every word of God is as perfect as it is pure (Psalm 19:7; 12:6). Let us read and re-read the Scriptures, meditating on them day and night. They never grow old, they never lose their sap, they never run dry. Though it is right and profitable, as I have said, to read other books, if they are true and good, yet beware of reading too many. Do not let man’s book thrust God’s book into a corner. Do not let commentaries smother the text; nor let the true and the good shut out the truer and the better.—Edited from Chapter 6 of *Follow the Lamb* by Horatius Bonar, 1861.

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3. Other books may be purchased at half price each, plus \$3.00 shipping per book, as follows:

The Select Works of Elder Samuel Trott: Formerly \$20 plus \$3.00 postage, now \$13.00 postpaid.

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The Trial of Job, by Elder Silas Durand: Formerly \$14 plus \$3.00 postage, now \$10.00 postpaid.

4. **PLEASE NOTE:** This sale applies **ONLY** to the Welsh Tract Publications books indicated above and in the chart on page 17. It does **NOT** apply to the other books (**Pagan Festivals of Christmas and Easter** by Shaun Willcock, which is still \$10.00 postpaid, and **Absolute Predestination** by Jerome Zanchius, which is still \$9.00 postpaid).

We must ask \$3.00 *per Welsh Tract Publication books* for mailing costs, no exceptions. The chart on page 17 summarizes our sale prices.

This is an excellent opportunity to round out your library or to buy extra copies of these historic books for loaning or for gifts.

While they last, please consider buying these valuable books for donating to public libraries (church, city, county, state, or college libraries).

Texas residents please add 6.75% State sales tax to all orders. As a favor to Texans, the tax amount has been calculated for you and appears in the far right column of the chart on the next page.

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BOOKS BY ELDER STANLEY PHILLIPS STILL AVAILABLE

We have received updated word from Brother Hoyt Sparks on the availability of the books that Elder Phillips was preparing at the time of his passage from this life:

Brother Sparks only has the following titles by the late Elder Stanley C. Phillips left. These books will be sold until the inventory is exhausted, and there will not be additional ones published. **Each book will be sold for \$20.00, which includes shipping and handling FOR USA SHIPMENTS ONLY.** [*Those ordering from outside the USA should inquire from Brother Sparks about shipping costs before ordering.*—CCM]

Particulars on the two remaining books are as follows:

1. WRITINGS BY ELDER WILSON THOMPSON, Volumes II and III.

[Elder Phillips did not publish a Volume I because he considered *The Autobiography of Elder Wilson Thompson* to be Volume I.]

While they last, Volumes II and III will be sold only in sets, \$40 per set, postpaid.

There are nine (9) extra copies of **Volume III**, and while they last, these may be ordered separate from Volume II at \$20 each, postpaid.

2. GOLDEN AGE OF BAPTISTS IN AMERICA 1791—1890:

For sale are Volumes I and II, and these will be sold in sets only, \$40 postpaid.

All proceeds, after shipping costs, will go to the widow of Elder Phillips, Sister Alma Phillips. Sister Phillips has been a semi-invalid for about 40 years. Her family and friends are making efforts to keep her in

the family home for her remaining years, rather than her residing in a nursing home.

Please send your orders with payments directly to:

**Hoyt Sparks
486 Choate Dairy Road
Sparta, NC 28675-9249**

(Home phone: 336 372 6289)

(Cell phone: 703 615 0071)

(Email: hoytsparks@hotmail.com)

If you have any questions, please let me know.

God bless,

Hoyt D. F. Sparks, SL

BOOK:

“PAGAN FESTIVALS OF CHRISTMAS AND EASTER”

The book, “Pagan Festivals of Christmas and Easter,” by Shaun Willcock, is a concise, 64-page booklet on the origins of “religious holidays.” It has been appreciated by our readers since we first advertised it. Copies may be ordered from *The Remnant* at

**The Remnant Publications
P. O. Box 1004
Hawkins, TX 75765-1004**

Single copies are **\$10.00 postpaid to the USA; \$17.00 to other countries.** Texas residents please add 6.75% sales tax (48¢) for each copy ordered.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20.32).

**IMPORTANT NOTICE FROM
BROTHER HOYT SPARKS
ABOUT ELDER BEEBE'S
EDITORIALS, VOLUME #1**

Brother Hoyt Sparks has sent the following notice to our readers:

Jan 16, 2016

Elder Morris:

I have Elder Beebe's Volume #1, with a Topical Index for all 7 volumes, along with other articles on my computer. I have been copying these onto CDs that I give away to anyone wanting one...For anyone ordering ANY book(s) from you, I will include this CD at no cost.

Those who have Elder Beebe's volumes #2 through #7 and wish to have Volume #1 that is on my CD, and they do not intend to place an order with you, I will furnish one to them for \$2.00 to cover the postage. (For orders outside the USA, please add another \$2.00 for additional postage.)

God bless,

Hoyt D. F. Sparks, SL

Order all books as usual, from The Remnant, PO Box 1004, Hawkins, Texas 75765-1004.

For those ordering ONLY the \$2.00 CD from Brother Sparks, please order directly from him. His address is:

Hoyt D. F. Sparks

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Sparta, NC 28675-9249

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A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES:

The following is an outline of principles the readers of *The Remnant* may expect to see maintained in this publication. Under no circumstances do the publishers or writers for *The Remnant* seek to delineate herein a standard of doctrine or views to be imposed upon the readers. Rather, we set these principles before the readers that they may know what general principles guide our efforts. All attempts at declaring articles of faith will be marred by prejudices and frailty, and ours are by no means any exception.

We believe these principles are, in the main, harmonious with the articles of faith published by predestinarian associations and churches of the old order of Baptists known as Primitive, Particular, or Old School Baptists the world over.

1—The eternal existence, sovereignty, immutability, omnipotence, and perfections of Jehovah God; He has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these sacred Three are One; Jesus Christ was and is God manifest in the flesh, and in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;

2—The Old and New Testaments in their original languages are the verbally inspired word of God, and they are the complete and only valid guide of faith and practice; the King James Version is the preferred English translation;

3—The will of the eternal God is the first cause of all causes;

4—The absolute predestination of all things;

5—The eternal personal election of the redeemed in Christ, before the world began, and their eternal, vital union with Him; their number is fixed, certain, and sure, and can neither be increased nor diminished; their fall in

their federal head Adam into spiritual death, total depravity, and just condemnation; their utter inability to recover themselves from this fallen state;

6—The blood atonement and redemption by Jesus Christ are for the elect only, and are both efficacious and effectual in accomplishing the will and purpose of God to reconcile His people unto Himself;

7—The sovereign, irresistible, effectual work of the Holy Spirit in quickening the elect of God; the new birth is by the direct operation of the Holy Spirit without the use of any means;

8—The final preservation, perseverance, and eternal happiness of all the sons of God, by grace alone;

9—No works are good works other than those which God Himself has so designated; none of the works called good are left up to men to perform or not, at the creature's discretion; nor do the works of the creature, either before or after regeneration, result in merit accruing to his account in God's sight;

10—The peaceable fruits of righteousness are the certain result of God's working in His people both to will and to do of His good pleasure, and His people will be found walking in paths of righteousness for His name's sake;

11—The separation of church and state;

12—The principles outlined in the Black Rock Address of 1832;

13—The bodily resurrection, first of Christ, and also that of all the dead;

14—The final and eternal judgment; and,

15—The bliss of the redeemed and the torment of the wicked are both eternal and everlasting.