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Why Are Verses Missing? **Selected Passages**

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PowerPoint Presentation included: none

SermonAudio Blurb: This sermon is designed to give a broad introduction to the issue of textual criticism in light of how the KJV has passages in it that do not appear in other translations. This is an attempt to bring light to the issue and encourage the members of the church to go deeper into this fascinating and encouraging subject.

I. Introduction. [slide 2]

- A. We take a brief break from Acts for me to give a basic introduction to how we got our bible and some of the challenges that are attached to the translations you all have in your possession.
- B. This whole thing came about because of Acts 8:37. Why is vs 37 in Acts 8 treated so differently in various translations?
 1. KJV has, “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”
 2. NASB has it in italics or in parentheses.
 3. ESV and NET don’t have it at all.
 4. Many translation will have a notation in the margin or a footnote that says something like, “Many mss do not have this verse.”
 5. So why do we have this happening?
- C. At issue is how we got our bible and how do we know if we can trust it?
 1. This is known as textual criticism and it is quite fascinating but it is also rather technical.
 2. Every one of you who is holding a bible is actually holding a translation of the bible. And most of you really have no idea how you got it and why verses are written the way you see them on your page.
 3. When the type of preaching and teaching tends to stay at a high level and avoids details in the biblical text, these differences in translation can be missed. But the more intense you look at the bible passages the more those differences come into question.

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D. Simple examples:

1. 2 Corinthians 5:14:

- a. “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died.” (LSB)
- b. “For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.” (NIV)
- c. One of these is more literal than the other. One leaves the question of interpretation to the reader while the other makes that decision for you. The interpretive question is “love of Christ.” What is meant here?
 - (1) Option #1 is called a subjective genitive and would be rendered as NIV has chosen to do.
 - (2) Option #2 is called an objective genitive and would be rendered “our love for Christ”
 - (3) These are very different and the text doesn’t tell us which it is and this is part of what a bible student must address when doing serious study.
 - (4) With most translations it is left as a simple genitive, “the love of Christ. . . .” and therefore ambiguous enough to leave to the student. But NIV chose to translate it the way they thought it was intended.

2. 1 Corinthians 11:3ff.

- a. Most translations translate “man” and “woman” with regards to head-coverings.
- b. ESV chooses to translate them as “man” or “husband” and “wife” or “woman” in vss 3-13.
- c. This is interpretation in translation. It is fine if it is correct but it creates an unnecessary barrier to understanding the text by choosing to translated the two Greek words for man and woman as also “husband” and “wife” at times.

E. Then you have missing verses.

1. This is a cause of great concern for many if they were raised with the KJV and then switch translations or have a church that uses a different translation.

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2. Matthew 18:11, “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.”
 - a. Parentheses with many translations.
 - b. ESV just drops it completely.
 3. Mark 11:26, “But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.”
 - a. Parentheses for most.
 - b. ESV drops completely.
 4. At the end of Mark there are three different endings possible. Most likely the gospel ends at vs 8. But there are manuscripts that have vss 9-20. And some have additional words for vs 20.
 5. John 7:53-8:11 is the woman caught in adultery.
 - a. Probably not part of the Gospel of John
 - b. It is quite involved and somewhat complex, but allow me to give some basic explanation.
 - c. Various manuscript families, only 1 of these families has this story in it, and even then it is often missing. The oldest manuscripts do not have it at all.
 - d. None of the early church fathers mention it. When they are commenting on John they go straight from 7:52 to 8:12.
 - e. When it finally does show up in some manuscripts it wanders around; being found after 7:36, 44, 21:25, and even in the Gospel of Luke instead, after 31:38.
- F. I want to approach this carefully but quickly. It can easily become a trail you go down and never find your way out of.
1. Jesus prays in John 17 that God would sanctify/make holy/set apart believers in truth. Then He says this, “Your word is truth.”
 2. David writes that God’s word is a lamp to his feet and a light to his path in Psalm 119:105.
 3. He writes in Psalm 19 that the word of God is perfect and able to restore a soul.
 4. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 3:16-17, “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in

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righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”

5. At the core of this whole thing is whether the bible is trustworthy and authoritative.
 - a. It is written in the bible that God is innately truthful and therefore trustworthy. *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* (Num. 23:19)
 - b. If God is not trustworthy then how can we have hope in the gospel? *“Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago. . . .”* (Tit. 1:1-2)
- G. This whole issue opens up a side debate that some have regarding the superiority of the KJV over all other translations. Some of that debate is useful but often it descends into name-calling and vitriol.
- H. I want to systematically address this whole subject but also do it in a relatively simple format that is a basic introduction to textual criticism.

II. Why Do Some Bible Translations Have Verses Missing? Three explanations:

- A. First we must understand the issue of autographs. [slide 3]
 1. Represents the actual texts written by the authors of the various books of the bible. These are also usually called the original manuscripts.
 - a. We don't have those anymore.
 - b. Simple reason is that they were written once, then copied over and over and over as they spread outward.
 - c. The materials used for these manuscripts would last maybe 60-90 years but would have simply worn out.
 - d. We believe and teach that the original manuscripts were inspired by God and are both inerrant and infallible.
 - (1) The bible states over and over in one way or another that the words are God's words. Apostle Paul simply says that all of what is called Scripture is inspired/God breathed.
 - (2) When we say that the bible is inerrant we say that the bible is free from any error in all matters it addresses.

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- (3) When we say that the bible is infallible we mean that it will not lead the reader into error.
2. Therefore this term does not represent the copies made and it is important to remind yourself of that from time to time.
 - a. We do not have those original writings.
 - b. But we do have thousands of manuscripts and fragments and other sources that record every verse of the bible with which we can work with.
 - c. And that is what textual criticism is all about.
3. For the Christian, the bible is the ultimate authority and it is based upon a commitment that God exists and that God has revealed Himself through the bible.
 - a. This bible is many books but only one book with one story.
 - b. It was written by 40 different human writers but each was under the divine inspiration of God.
 - c. It was written in three different languages and the time frame spans over 1,500 years.
 - d. Like any worldview it cannot be proven; rather it is accepted by faith. This, however, is not the same thing as that there is no proof that can be examined. Again this is the issue of textual criticism.
4. When I teach the bible I teach it as being true and authoritative.
 - a. It is not some interesting document I get to play with.
 - b. Serious warnings in the bible about adding or taking away God's words.
 - c. **[slide 4]** Consider Paul's admonition to Timothy, "*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.*" (2 Timothy 2:15)
 - (1) The task of the preacher/teacher is to be found approved by God. That the testing grounds of a true teacher is how he handles the bible. Human opinions matter much less than God's opinion.
 - (2) Note that there is a right and wrong way to approach the bible. The very idea of accurately handling it means that

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you can also be inaccurate with it. You can handle it in such a way that it does not convey what it actually says.

- (3) And the designation of the bible as the “word of truth” indicates that it is not merely containing truth, but it is truth.
- (4) Now you can reject that or accept it, but this is how the bible describes itself.

B. Second, the issue of manuscript evidence for the KJV.

1. When we talk about the copies we have to understand there are errors in the copies. Unless there is one manuscript of the entire bible that we can know for certain was perfectly copied over and over, then this must be accepted.
 - a. **[Slide 5]** So this brings into play what are known as “variants.” And there are literally hundreds of thousands of these variations—in other words, there are no two copies which are absolutely identical.
 - b. But not only do we need to look at the number of these variants but also the nature of them. And when you do that, you find that almost 100% of them (98.8%) affect nothing of import.
 - (1) Most of the variants will be spelling differences. This is not surprising as over time name spellings change. There were no dictionaries and spelling often had differences. In fact it was only recently that we standardized spelling.
 - (2) Other times it is word order. It says Jesus Christ vs Christ Jesus. That counts as a variant but word order is not important in Greek like it is in English.
 - (3) But the tiny number of variants that do create theology challenges are what scholars spend a lot of time discussing and debating. Those debates are where your translations you use come into play.
 - (4) But even there, no essential doctrine is changed or distorted by even those few variants.
2. The reason for these many variations is not some evil thing with secret societies trying to lead people astray. It is simply because we have so many manuscripts available that were created over the centuries. And more are still being discovered.

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- a. For the other ancient Greek writers, such as Sophocles or Aristotle, on average there are less than 15 copies of their works. And the earliest copy that is available is 500 years after they wrote the original.
 - b. Compare that to the New Testament manuscripts. We have copies that are only a few decades after the original would have been written.
 - c. What is really behind the whole idea of textual criticism is the desire to handle accurately the word of truth.
3. It is not uncommon for a doubter to say that depending on which manuscripts you look at that theological differences can be made. And example of this would be the deity of Jesus.
- a. The book *The DaVinci Code* was a popular novel designed to push this idea that the deity of Jesus was not a belief until the Council of Nicaea in A. D. 325.
 - b. [slide 6] This is false and the manuscript evidence shows it. We have a papyrus called “p⁶⁶” that is dated 150 years prior to the Council which has text of John 1:1 which is the strongest statement on the deity of Jesus Christ.
4. But there are also debates about these manuscripts.
- a. These manuscripts fall into families or text types. Though these lines are not absolute. You will hear about the Alexandrian, Western and Byzantine text types.
 - b. These tended to be clustered in certain parts of the world and were caused by the spread of the bible and the need to make copies.
 - c. When you have a cluster of copies of manuscripts that contain identical renderings on all parts you have what is likely a set of copies that all came from one specific manuscript that was used to copy over and over.
 - d. By the 7th century Greek was not longer used by most of the world except the Greek Orthodox Church and from that point on it became the dominant Greek manuscripts copied and preserved. This became known as the Byzantine family.
 - e. The method these were copied in the beginning was that as a letter from Paul was read in the church it would be copied so that it could be kept and the original would go on to the next church.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

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- (1) These copies would then also be copied and spread outward from there. Sometimes this would be an official task so that it would be done so that the letter or group of letters were created for a library.
 - (2) By the Middle Ages the work mostly was done by monks in the monasteries. In the late 1400's Constantinople, which was the capital of the Byzantine Empire, fell in 1453. Many monks fled for their lives and with them came many manuscripts of the bible.
 - (3) These copies covered hundreds of years of copies and they found themselves in Europe now. These were what formed the basis of the future bibles that would be placed in the hands of the Reformation leaders.
- f. Erasmus.
- (1) He created a whole new Greek New Testament in 1516 that was the basis, most famously, of the KJV. He was a Catholic priest who was brilliant. He was the greatest Latin scholar in his day. He learned Greek in his 30's and became one of the top Greek scholars as well.
 - (2) He was passionate about the bible in its original languages. At that time the Roman Catholic Church used what is called the Latin Vulgate translated by the theologian Jerome in the 300's. That was the accepted version of the bible. Erasmus actually did his own translation of a Latin bible.
 - (3) When he made his GNT it was produced on the newly invented printing press and subsequently he did five editions of it to fix errors and improve on it. It was not based only from Greek manuscripts brought over from the fall of Constantinople, but also included always produced it with Latin alongside. This Latin was his own translation.
 - (4) He used only 8 Greek manuscripts to create his New Testament. The oldest was from the 11th century. But three of them were what he used the most.
- g. *Textus Receptus*.
- (1) TR (Received Text, which was a title developed by advertisers) is a series of printed Greek texts of the NT.

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These were done by Erasmus, Stephanus and Beza in the early to late 1500's. These three books were then the basis of the kjv New Testament.

- (2) The earliest one was Erasmus, then Stephanus relied heavily upon Erasmus. Beza came at the end of the century and he leaned heavily upon Stephanus.
 - (3) For the first edition Erasmus literally did not have a complete Greek text of Revelation. So he simply used his own Latin translation and translated that back into Greek for the parts missing. The result are Greek renderings that show up no other place in any Greek manuscript anywhere. At times, when using the few manuscripts he had available, there were differences in rendering. If he could not resolve it then he would do a Greek translation from the Latin and make that the official standard.
 - (4) The second and third editions sought to resolve many typos that were present. What is most important to note is that between these two editions the infamous **Johannine Comma** was introduced. I will explain this in a short bit.
 - (5) The TR that is used today was a result of a compilation by Scrivener in the late 19th century. This Greek text that is based off an English text. He took the Greek texts that KJV translators used and looked at what text choices were made. It is key to note that point. These Greek texts had variations to them. Then compared them with how the KJV translators translated into English. Then, he created the TR we have today based on how the KJV translated the various manuscripts into English.
 - (6) What is critical to know with this is that there is no single Greek manuscript that is identical to the TR. In other words, it is just like the Critical text in the sense that it is a compilation of texts and the editors chose various textual renderings as the valid ones.
5. Three examples:
- a. **[Slide 8]** Ephesians 3:9:

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- (1) “. . . and to bring to light what is the **administration** of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things.” (NASB)
 - (2) “And to make all men see what is the **fellowship** of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things **by Jesus Christ:**”
 - (3) The word *oikOnomia* (administration) vs *koinOnia* (fellowship). The sound is very similar. Every manuscript has the word for administration except for one which was used in the TR. Only that manuscript had “by Jesus Christ” as well.
- b. [slide 9] Revelation 16:5:
- (1) “And I heard the angel of the waters saying, "Righteous are You, who are and who were, **O Holy One**, because You judged these things.” (NASB)
 - (2) “Righteous art Thou, which art and who wast, and **shalt be**, because thou hast judged thus.” (KJV)
 - (3) But every other translation has “Righteous are You, who are and who were, O Holy One. . .” The difference being *hosios* (holy/righteous one) vs TR *esomenos*). That word was inserted by Beza because he felt it fit better with no Greek supporting it.
- c. [slide 10] 1 John 5:7-8:
- (1) “For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.”
 - (2) “For there are three that bear record in heaven, **the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost:** and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. (1 Jn. 5:7)”
 - (3) This did not exist in the first two editions Erasmus produced. It was in the Latin but there was not a single Greek manuscript that had it. But pressure from the Church was strong on him to include it.
 - (4) He famously stated that if there was one Greek manuscript that had these words then he would included them. Shortly

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thereafter a new Greek manuscript appeared and these words were in it. This was the only manuscript but he was true to his word and he included it.

- C. The issue of manuscript evidence for the Critical Text.
1. Normally refers the United Bible Societies/Nestle-Aland Greek New Testaments. The vast majority of your English translations use this as their based Greek text. This is based off of over 5,000 Greek manuscripts and over 25,000 other witnesses. These usually found into the writings of the early Church fathers.
 2. Part of the wonderful way the bible was protected was in the way it was copied and handed down to church after church. Multiple lines spanning many centuries. It is not in any one place and under only one person's control. That is good.
 - a. An example of how people try to make this bad is the idea of the "Phone game" where what is originally said ends up very different at the end of the line. But that is actually a good example of why the multiple lines of copying is so helpful. You have many, many other examples to compare the different message to.
 - b. So using the phone tag, imagine you have 5 people write down a paragraph you dictate. Then they all go to their own different people and do the same. And after several iterations you can compare. The errors will be a lot easier to determine because you have so many examples of the copies. An example is p⁴⁶ which was written around 125 to 150. Most of the epistles written by Paul which makes them about 60 years after Paul wrote some of them.
 - c. So now you can have a person claim that some teaching or another used to be in the bible but has been removed by some council or another to hide the truth. A common conspiracy theory in atheist forums is that some doctrine was invented or hidden by a council in the 300s. Well this is easily debunked because you have a massive number of manuscripts available prior to 300 AD to see if that is true.
 3. It is actually surprising for many to find out that the Reformers did not have these 1000s of manuscripts. They had very few manuscripts available, **but** they were eager to use what God had provided to bring the Bible into the hands of the people.

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- a. It was not that the Reformers had all these manuscripts available and they rejected them all because they believed that only a few manuscripts were the best.
- b. They essentially had Erasmus' TR to use. In fact, Erasmus did not have a single Greek manuscript of the entire Revelation. So he used a friend's commentary that was Latin and there was Greek in it and so he took that Greek and made it into a manuscript. And even then the part of chapter 22 was missing so he then just translated the Latin Vulgate into Greek as he thought it best fit.
- c. A fun fact about that is that with all of the other manuscripts we have today it is easy to compare those last verses he did with the other manuscripts and see how his renderings are completely unique. Even when compared to other Byzantine texts that were later discovered. And to this day those utterly unique renderings are present in the KJV bible.

III. Conclusion.

- A. Let me make a few comments on the KJV as compared to other translations to bring all of this together:
 1. The debate about translations is not as big a deal today as it was in the 70's and 80's. For the most part you will ultimately land somewhere and it won't be based upon the most data available. You are usually going to do whatever is most comfortable for you and what you were raised with. For some, it will be a bit more informed one way or the other but still, most will go with what works, so to speak, for them.
 2. The debate can be very unkind and for the most part I would say that you will seldom benefit from getting into an argument. I use to follow one man who argued that the KJV 1611 was actually inspired. So as the translators worked from the various manuscripts they were so moved by the Spirit that they translated them perfectly. So perfectly, that if you were to see what appeared to be an error in the KJV when looking at the manuscripts used, it was believed that the translation is the accurate one.
 3. The central objective is to explain how we got the bible and why we can trust it. But there are many forces that push this off center and other points strive to be the focus. The two main groups will be those who use the critical text and those who use the received text. Both of those break down into other subgroups: CT–higher criticism vs lower criticism; RT–the superior text–inspired text–KJV superiority of some type–KJV inspired text. Often the debate has nothing to do with which text family is

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used, though on the surface it may appear to be. Usually it is a strong conviction that the KJV is the superior translation. But there is also the pushback against modernizing of language.

- B. Regardless, what is important is for you is to have the confidence in the veracity and trustworthy.
 - 1. At the core of this issue is the person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - 2. If we cannot trust the Word of God then we cannot have hope that what it tells us about forgiveness of sin; of who God is; of how God reconciles sinners to Himself works; how we do not need to fear God's wrath or judgment because of Jesus Christ and a host of other doctrines.
 - 3. We are a people of the Book. And the amount of labor and time and energy invested in giving us translations in our language so that we might know God and be saved is staggering.
- C. Pick a good translation. But more importantly, read it until it becomes a very part of your thinking and living.

Benediction

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing the good news of Jesus Christ, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Suggested reading from simple to hard:

New Testament Criticism: A Concise Guide, Black; David Alan.

The King James Version Debate: A Plea for Realism; Carson, D. A.

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?; Bruce, F. F.

The Canon of Scripture; Bruce, F. F.

Is There A Synoptic Problem?: Rethinking the Literary Dependence of the First Three Gospels; Linnemann, Eta, trans by Robert Yarbrough.

A General Introduction to The Bible; Geisler, Norman L. And Nix, William E.

On The Reliability of The Old Testament; Kitchen, K. A.

The Text of The New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration, 3rd Edition; Metzger, Bruce M.