

## ***God has Spoken in His Word: English Bible Translations***

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Stark Road Gospel Hall

Summer Series: *God has Spoken*

August 24, 2005

### **A. The Inspiration of the Bible**

#### **1. God is the Author of every word of Scripture.**

- **All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness [2 Timothy 3:16 ESV].**
- **It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” [Mt 4:4 KJV].**
- **...as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice...” [Hb 3:7 ESV].**

The Bible is “God-breathed” (Greek θεόπνευστος / *theopneustos*). This does not mean that God breathed something *into* the writers, but rather that the words of the Bible came *out of* the mouth of God.

#### **2. Although the human authors’ personalities and viewpoints come through in their writing, God superintended, so that they recorded His revelation without error.**

- **Because no prophecy ever originated through a human decision. Instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit [2 Pt 1:21 ESV].**

The Holy Spirit steered the writers along, providing them with truth and keeping them from error.

#### **3. Inspiration extends to every letter of every word in Scripture.**

- **For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled [Mt 5:18 KJV].**

A “jot” is the smallest letter of the alphabet—*iota* in Greek, *yod* in Hebrew. A “tittle” is a small penstroke that distinguishes certain similar Hebrew letters from each other (e.g. *dalet* ד and *resh* ר.) Thus inspiration extends even to *parts* of letters.

#### **4. Inspiration applies to every nuance in the text, not just to general concepts.**

- **And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God: “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”? He is not God of the dead, but of the living” [Mt 22:31-32 ESV].**
- **Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, “And to seeds,” as of many; but as of one, “And to thy seed,” which is Christ [Gl 3:16 KJV].**

In the first example, Christ’s argument rests on the tense of the verb “am”—God used a present tense when speaking to Moses about men long dead, proving that they still existed. Paul’s argument in the second examples hinges on the singular number of “seed” in Gn 12:7. The Holy Spirit built significance into even the finest points of grammar in the Bible.

### **B. The Preservation of the Bible**

#### **1. The Original Text of the Bible (in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek) has been verified by the objective science of textual criticism. Here are the issues:**

- a. The “autographs”—the actual original documents—no longer exists for any book of the Bible.

- b. God has preserved His Word in currently existing original-language manuscripts. The Greek NT is attested by more than 5,300 Greek manuscripts, the oldest dating within 25 years of the death of the apostle John (John Rylands manuscript, A.D. 125, at the University of Manchester). Homer’s *Iliad* holds second place in the number of existing manuscripts, 643—and none within 1,000 years of the original document.
  - c. There are minor differences among these manuscripts. Once easily-solved variants are removed, however, 99.9% of the words in the Bible can be confirmed without question, and *no Bible doctrine is dependent on the solution to any one variant*.
  - d. The existence of variant readings in no way compromises the verbal inspiration or the authority of the Bible. *The gospel is crystal clear in every manuscript*.
- 2. Four schools of thought have attempted to explain and resolve these variations:**
- a. **King James Only.** This approach insists that the 1611 A.D. King James Version Bible English was directly inspired by God.
    - It equates the Word of God—in the sense of the original autographs—with the KJV, and claims that original-language manuscripts no longer have any significance: “The Holy Ghost...honored the English text above any Greek or Hebrew text” (Peter Ruckman, *Bible Believer’s Bulletin*, Oct 1978).
    - This “1611 KJV-only” view is wrong. We now have Greek manuscripts that are up to 1,000 years older than those used by the KJV translators, and older manuscripts—all else being equal—are less likely to have additions or deletions.
  - b. **Majority Text Only.** This view holds that the doctrine of inerrancy demands that an error-free extant version of the NT must still exist. The “Majority Text only” position claims that God preserved the pure NT in the text supported by the largest *number* of manuscripts. Since the largest number of manuscripts is found in the “Byzantine” manuscript tradition, the “Majority Text only” viewpoint gives the Byzantine family of manuscripts priority over all other traditions.
    - This view promotes the KJV and NKJV, which are based on this “Majority Text.”
    - However, no single “Majority Text” actually exists, since each manuscript of the Byzantine text-type differs at least slightly from the others. In addition, the argument that “the greatest number of copies must contain the best text” is a *non sequitur*—a logical fallacy.
  - c. **Westcott & Hort.** Westcott and Hort were English Bible scholars who worked on the English Revised Version of 1885. By their time, four major text types had been identified:
    - (1) The Byzantine Text (the “Majority Text”)
    - (2) The Alexandrian Text (including *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus*)
    - (3) The Western Text
    - (4) The Caesarean Text
    - Westcott and Hort concluded that external evidence, that is, manuscript families, outweighs internal evidence, and that the Alexandrian family—all other factors being equal—should be preferred.
    - It is true that the Alexandrian family contains the oldest and highest-quality manuscripts, especially *Vaticanus* (325 A.D., in the Vatican City) and *Sinaiticus* (350 A.D., at the British Museum). But the argument that “the oldest must be the best” is another *non sequitur*.

- d. **A Balanced Eclectic Approach.** Most conservative scholars take a “balanced eclectic” approach to textual criticism—it is *balanced* because it weighs both “internal” and “external” evidence; it is *eclectic* because it uses the best evidence to select the proper reading, without a premeditated bias toward one text type.
- John Darby, Thomas Newberry, and Samuel Tregelles followed this approach.

### C. **The Translation of the Bible**

1. The Lord Jesus and His apostles primarily quoted from a translation—the Septuagint—when citing OT Scripture, and fully regarded it as the Word of God. This completely validates our use of translations today. But translation is a serious task:
  - **“Let the prophet who has a dream tell the dream, but let him who has my word speak my word faithfully. What has straw in common with wheat?” declares the LORD [Jr 23:28 ESV].**
2. **Formal Correspondence.** Until about 1950, Bible translators followed the traditional method of translation called *formal correspondence*. They reproduced the words and forms of the original text as faithfully and transparently as possible.
  - a. The literary problem is this: the closer the translator stays to the original text, the more difficult it is to create a smoothly readable translation. When in doubt, however, a faithful translator will stay with the word-for-word progression of the original, and always make the Author’s interests supersede a reader’s preferences.
  - b. Martin Luther’s comment: “I have been very careful to see that where everything turns on a single passage, I have kept to the original quite literally and have not lightly departed from it. I preferred to do violence to the German language rather than to depart from the word.”
  - c. The translators of the KJV and a few other versions showed their regard for the sanctity of the original text by using *italic script*: They used *italics* to distinguish words that they had to insert for good English sense from words that actually corresponded to the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words.
  - d. Formal Correspondence is now often called *Essentially Literal Translation*. This is the translation method behind the KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, and Darby Bibles.
3. **Dynamic Equivalence (DE).** This newer translation method purports to translate *thought-for-thought* rather than words-for-word.
  - a. DE is also called *Functional, Idiomatic, Thought, and Impact Translation*.
    - “We take the original thought and convert it into the language of today” [Kenneth Taylor].
    - “The CEV is... an idea-by-idea translation, arranging the Bible’s text in ways understandable to today’s readers” [United Bible Societies].
  - b. Essentially, DE is what used to be called “paraphrase”—a clear departure from traditional word-for-word translation. The degree of license differs among versions:
    - Mildly loose (e.g. NIV)
    - Moderately loose (e.g. NLT, CEV)
    - Extremely loose (e.g. LB, *The Message*)
  - c. DE has removed all the objective controls from the translation process. Reckless “translations” like *The Message* are simply the logical result of the license that was unloosed when the DE method was uncritically accepted a generation ago. There is now far too much translator intrusion. When translators are allowed to insert their

viewpoints, the original meaning will inevitably become corrupted. *The sad legacy of DE translations today is a destabilized, relativized English Bible text.*

#### **D. Ten Dangerous Deficiencies of Dynamic Equivalence**

1. **DE Disregards the Words of Scripture.** The “thought-for-thought” concept is a fallacy. Inspiration applies to specific *words*, not to vague concepts and ideas, and thus the Bible sternly warns those who want to tamper with its *words*:

- **I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book” [Rv 22:18-19 ESV; see also Dt 4:2; 12:32].**
- **Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” [Pr 30:5-6 KJV].**
- **We impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit” [1 Cr 2:14 ESV].**
- **“The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life” [Jh 6:63 ESV].**

*Words* are the basic units of thought—the meanings of *phrases* must depend on the meanings of their individual *words*. Thus you cannot translate *meaning* or discern the *thought* without regard for the *words* of the original text.

2. **DE Confuses Translation with Interpretation.** DE is a ruse for *interpretation* rather than translation. The only legitimate role of the translator is to convert the words of Scripture into a receptor language as accurately as possible. It is then up to the *preacher* and *teacher* to proclaim these words, explain their meaning, and apply them—in the power of the Holy Spirit—to meet present needs.

- Μαριὰμ γὰρ τὴν ἀγαθὴν μερίδα ἐξελέξατο [Lk 10:42].
- **KJV: Mary hath chosen that good part.**
- **NIV: Mary has chosen what is better.**
- **NLT: There is only one thing worth being concerned about.**
- **CEV: Mary has chosen what is best.**

The NIV, NLT, and CEV all have the Lord pitting one of His servants against another—something He never did. This *interpretation* is seriously wrong—Martha’s error was not in preparing a meal, but in blaming Mary for not helping her. There is no contest here. Christ told Martha that what Mary chose was *good*, even as Martha’s service was good.

3. **DE Tampers with the Person of Christ.** We must take special care when handling truth about the Son of God. Unbridled speculation about His holy Person is perilous. Our thoughts of Him must be grounded in the very words of Scripture: **But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me [Jh 14:26 ESV].**

- Τίνι γὰρ εἶπεν ποτε τῶν ἀγγέλων· Υἱὸς μου εἶ σύ ἐγὼ σήμερον γεγέννηκά σε [Hb 1:5].
- **KJV: For unto which of the angels said he at any time, “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?” (ESV is similar.)**
- **NLT: For God never said to any angel what He said to Jesus: “You are my son. Today I have become your Father.” (NIV is similar.)**

By stating that God *became* the Father of the Lord Jesus, the NLT and NIV are denying His eternal Sonship—a *serious error*. The quotation “this day have I begotten Thee” from Ps 2:7 is the Lord’s public declaration on the day of the Messiah’s millennial coronation. Thus the phrase cannot refer to His incarnation or birth *primarily*. Ps 2:7 may be translated, “This day have I declared Your Sonship.” Each time the phrase occurs in Scripture, it is an official public declaration. Ac 13:33 refers to the time when Christ was raised up as a Prophet in Israel—John cried, “Behold the Lamb of God!” (Jh 1:29), and Matthew records, “And lo, a voice from heaven saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (3:17). Hb 1:5 may be especially referring to Christ’s resurrection, which (according to Rm 1:4) declared the eternal Sonship of the One whose deity was questioned by Satan in the wilderness and by His enemies during “the days of His flesh.” Hb 5:5 shows that the Christ’s priesthood is based on His eternal sonship.

4. **DE Discards Vital Theological Terms**. DE translations have generally obliterated such “churchy” terms as justification, sanctification, redemption, and propitiation, reducing these vital words to simplistic phrases. These substituted explanations are at best weakened and incomplete, and at worst misleading and false.

- δικαιούμενοι δωρεάν τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἰλαστήριον διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι [Rm 3:24-25].
- **KJV: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood. (ESV is similar.)**
- **NLT: Yet now God in His gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God’s anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed His blood, sacrificing his life for us.**
- **MSG: God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we’re in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear.**

The terms chosen by DE translators do not properly communicate the full and exact meaning of the original words:

- *Grace* is more than *gracious kindness* or *sheer generosity*.
- *Justification* is more than *declares us not guilty* or *put us in a right standing*.
- *Redemption* is more than *freed us by taking away our sins* or *got us out of the mess we’re in and restored us to where God always wanted us to be*.
- *Propitiation* cannot be reduced to *God sent Jesus to take to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God’s anger against us* or *God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin*.

No translator has the right to truncate these vital words. It is rather the preacher’s task to mine the riches of their meaning from an unadulterated text.

- εἰς τὸ εἰδέναι ὑμᾶς τίς ἐστὶν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς κλήσεως αὐτοῦ [Ep 1:18].
- **KJV: That ye may know what is the hope of his calling.**
- **ESV: That you may know what is the hope to which he has called you.**

- **GW: You will know the confidence that he calls you to have.**
- **NLT: That you can understand the wonderful future he has promised to those he called.**

The alterations from *hope* in the DE translations are seriously misleading, because their substituted expressions capture only part of the original meaning—and add extraneous material not found in the original. In GW, *confidence* misses the fact that *hope* points to the future. And *confidence* is purely subjective—a feeling—whereas *hope* in the NT carries both subjective and objective meanings. Objectively, hope includes the return of Christ (Tt 2:13), our resurrection (Ac 26:6-7), and our glorious future in heaven (Cl 1:27). The NLT’s expression *the wonderful future he has promised to those he called* does provide an objective definition for hope, but it loses the subjective meaning. The DE translations also break the connections between Ep 1:18 and other passages where Paul uses the term *hope*. Part of the meaning of a passage comes from its connection to other verses that employ the same words. DE translations make word study (in English) impossible—when they discard important terms like *hope*, the reader loses all connection with other verses that contain the same word in the original text.

5. **DE Erases Gender Distinctions.** All DE versions blur or erase gender distinctions. Gender-inclusive language may seem to be only an annoyance—a concession to political correctness—but it is in fact heretical:

- “It was recognized that it was often appropriate to mute the patriarchalism of the culture of the biblical writers” [Preface to the NIV *Inclusive Language Edition*].
- “The patriarchalism of the ancient cultures in which the Biblical books were composed is pervasively reflected in forms of expression that deny the common human dignity of all hearers and readers” [excerpted from internal guidelines used by the Committee on Bible Translation for the NIVI].

With audacity, these translators belittle God’s own Word for denying the “common human dignity” of His creatures! They expose themselves as relativists who value a feel-good spirit of tolerance and inclusiveness over theological faithfulness and precision.

- ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ με τὸν λόγον μου τηρήσει, καὶ ὁ πατήρ μου ἀγαπήσει αὐτὸν καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐλευσόμεθα καὶ μονήν παρ’ αὐτῷ ποιησόμεθα [Jh 14:23].
- **ESV: Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.” (KJV is similar.)**
- **NRSV: “Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”**

The DE translation alters generic singular pronouns *anyone*, *he*, and *him* to plurals *those* and *them*. But the clause *make our home with them* now denotes a group of people, while *our home* is still a single dwelling place. Thus the NRSV has the Father and Son making a single home with a plurality of people *together*—the idea of the indwelling of the local assembly (1 Cr 3:10-15) or the body of Christ (Ep 2:22). The true meaning—that the Lord Jesus and God the Father make their home in each individual believer—has been struck from the verse! Further, the clause “my Father will love them” now suggests that the Father loves them as a group, while the original expression actually teaches that the Father will love each individual separately for personally loving His Son.

- δεῖ οὖν τὸν ἐπίσκοπον ἀνεπίλημπτον εἶναι, μιᾶς γυναικὸς ἄνδρα [1 Tm 3:2].
- **ESV: Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife... (KJV is similar.)**
- **CEV: That’s why officials must have a good reputation and be faithful in marriage...”**
- **NRSV: Now a bishop must be above reproach, married only once...**

The CEV and NRSV expunge the clear evidence that Paul expected the elders to be men. Their purposely deceptive glosses of this verse insert gender ambiguity where the Greek has none, and they continue the deception throughout the passage by altering every occurrence of the male singular “he” to the ambiguous plural “they.”

6. **DE Obscures Assembly Truth.** Assembly truth has been perpetuated and revived by teachers who respected every nuance of every word in Scripture. DE versions rob us of many of these subtle but vital truths about assembly practice.

- οὗ γὰρ εἰσιν δύο ἢ τρεῖς συνηγμένοι εἰς τὸ ἕμὸν ὄνομα ἐκεῖ εἰμι ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν [Mt 18:20].
- **KJV: For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. (ESV is similar.)**
- **NASB: For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.**
- **NIV: For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.**
- **NLT: For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them.**

The verb *gathered together* is in the passive voice—the Holy Spirit gathers men and women to Christ’s name. Further, the verb’s aspect (“tense”) is perfective—they have been gathered from a starting point in the past up until the present. The DE translations completely ignore these points, and even NASB misses the fact that the verb is passive.

- ἐπεὶ ἐὰν εὐλογῆς ἐν πνεύματι ὁ ἀναπληρῶν τὸν τόπον τοῦ ἰδιώτου πῶς ἔρεῖ τὸ Ἄμην ἐπὶ τῇ σῆ εὐχαριστίᾳ ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν; [1 Cr 14:16].
- **KJV: Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say “Amen” at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?**
- **NKJV: ...he who occupies the place of the uninformed...**
- **ESV: ...anyone in the position of an outsider...**
- **NASB: ...the one who fills the place of the ungifted...**
- **NIV: ...one who finds himself among those who do not understand...**
- **NLT: ...those who don’t understand...**

1 Cr 14:16 is discussing the Lord’s Supper—a meeting consisting of praying, singing, and blessing. Since believers express their doctrinal fellowship physically by sharing the “bread which we break” and “the cup of blessing which we bless,” it is vital to demarcate the members who are “within” from the unlearned and unbelievers who are “without.” Thus the verse describes a physical place (τόπος / *topos*, as in topography). Note that it

is not merely a condition, but a position—Paul does not simply say “one who *is* unlearned,” but rather than “one who *occupies the location of* the unlearned.”

7. **DE Limits the Meaning of Ambiguous Expressions.** Many words and phrases in the Bible can be interpreted properly in more than one way.

- ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς [2 Cr 5:14].
- **ESV: For the love of Christ controls us...** (KJV is similar.)
- **CEV: We are ruled by Christ’s love for us...** (NLT, NIV are similar.)

The phrase “the love of Christ” could be an objective genitive (our love for Christ) or a subjective genitive (Christ’s love for us). In such cases of ambiguity, DE translators will decide on the “correct” meaning, and then employ wording that enforces that meaning and bars readers from access to other possible meanings. The translators seem to regard their readers as theological nitwits who are incapable of making their own decisions. They assume a priestly role, doling out the “proper” interpretation to the benighted masses. In contrast, proper translation will shun interpretation as much as possible by carrying all of the possibilities that are in the original text over to the receptor language.

8. **DE Pampers the Reader Instead of Honoring the Author.** The consumer-oriented Gallup-poll mentality of our culture has led translators and publishers to give readers what they want—rather than what they need. DE wrongly prioritizes the reaction of the reader instead of the intent of the Author. *It’s all about you* (the “target audience”)—the translators pander to a narcissistic spirit that puts the reader rather than the text at center stage.

- “*The NIV Adventure Bible.* Kids can’t get into grown-up Bibles. But this revised edition is perfect for your 8-12 year old! Give kids the Bible that speaks their language!”
- “*The NIV Teen Devotional Bible.* Why do young people make such a strong connection with this Bible? Because the 260 dynamite daily devotionals were written by teens—you can’t get any kid-friendlier than that!”
- “*The NIV Teen Study Bible.* Cool and colorful, this Bible speaks clearly to the issues your 11- to 16-year olds face, and helps them make healthy, godly decisions. ‘Dear Sam’ advice column, ‘Direct Line’ to God on various topics, ‘Jericho Joe,’ the cartoon character.”

Contrast this attitude with the words of Psalm 115:1—“**Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake.**”

9. **DE Oversimplifies and Trivializes the Bible.** According to a promotion piece for *The Message*, “Eugene Peterson’s fresh paraphrase is written in the informal rhythms and easy idiom of contemporary English—the way you’d talk to your friends, write an e-mail, or discuss the big football game.” DE translations treat the Bible as a casual book, reflecting our society’s selfish preference for easy informality. They also treat the Bible as a simple book whose meaning should be transparent at once even to unbelievers, meshing nicely with a general laziness that expects all pursuits in life, including Bible reading, to be easy. While essentially literal translations (e.g. KJV, ESV) require a high school reading level, DE translations patronize their readers by writing at a third or fourth grade level. They write as if their readers are an *embarrassment*—people incapable of serious thinking and impatient with any sentence that is not immediately understandable.

God’s Word demands our utmost, not our least. It is not a magazine, and should not be read like one. It contains things “hard to be understood” (2 Pt 3:16). In fact, the writers themselves did not always understand what they were writing (1 Pt 1:10-1). The

Ethiopian eunuch could not grasp the meaning of Isaiah 53 without the help of Philip and the Holy Spirit (Ac 8:26-33).

A good translation elevates the people to the Bible, rather than lowering the Bible to the people. The Bible tells of events and reveals truths that are worth building a life on, and staking eternity on; its words should convey *gravitas*—weight, authority, and power.

- **And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, “Abraham”: and he said, “Behold, *here I am.*” And he said, “Take now thy son, thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of” [Gn 22:1-2].**
- Compare the featherweight tone of the CEV: **Some years later God decided to test Abraham, so he spoke to him...The Lord said, “Go get Isaac...”**
- **And Samuel said, “Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams” [1 Sm 15:22]**
- **CEV: “Tell me,” Samuel said, “Does the Lord really want sacrifices and offerings? No! He doesn’t want your sacrifices. He wants you to obey him.”**

With the DE renditions, the awe is lost. Their slangy tone is unfaithful to the original and unworthy of the momentous truths recorded in these accounts. The KJV is dignified not because it is archaic, but because it employs timeless wording and stately rhythms. Moreover, an archaic ring is not necessarily a flaw—it better fits the telling of events that occurred thousands of years ago, and helps to check what C. S. Lewis called “chronological snobbery”—our constant tendency to overvalue the events and beliefs of our own era, and to dismiss the significance of all that has preceded us.

10. **DE Blurs the Gospel Message.** While the gospel is in every version, and God has blessed His word in DE form, there is still a danger here.

- **Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit [Ps 32:1-2 ESV].**
- **Count yourself lucky, how happy you must be—you get a fresh start, your slate’s wiped clean. Count yourself lucky—God holds nothing against you and you’re holding nothing back from him” [Ps 32:1-2 MSG].**
- **Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” [Jh 3:5 ESV].**
- **Jesus said, “You’re not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the ‘wind hovering over the water’ creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life—it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom” [Jh 3:5 MSG].**

Does forgiveness of sins really come from getting “lucky” with God, or from submitting to “this original creation”?

## **E. Conclusion**

1. DE translations clearly do not measure up, and really should not be considered as *Bibles*. We may find a use for them as *commentaries*.
2. In contrast, *Essentially Literal* translations (KJV, NKJV, ESV, NASB) have carefully preserved:
  - a. The Accuracy of the Bible

- **Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth [2 Tm 2:15 ESV].**
- b. The Majesty of the Bible
    - **The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is full of majesty. The voice of the LORD breaketh the cedars; yea, the LORD breaketh the cedars of Lebanon [Ps 29:4-5 KJV].**
  - c. The Sufficiency of the Bible
    - **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God [Mt 4:4 KJV].**
  - d. The Power of the Bible
    - **Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee [Ps 119:11 KJV].**
3. If we were suddenly transported into God's immediate presence, and heard His voice, we would *tremble*. Should it be any different when we hear Him speak in Scripture? Do we revere His Word and treat it with the utmost respect?
    - **But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word [Is 66:2 ESV].**