

Do Words Matter

Proverbs 30.6

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Our culture is proliferated with versions of the Bible (well over 300) written in the English language. Many of them say approximately the same thing. So, the question arises, do the words really matter?

This question is best answered directly from the Word of God itself. Do the Words of scripture matter to God? God commanded mankind to be very careful not to change a single word contained within His precious and inspired Word. The Bible reads:

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

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

***Proverbs 30:6** Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.*

Clearly, both the Old Testament and the New Testament warn us not to change the Word of God in any way. Jesus revealed the level of integrity that God requires from His Word when He said,

***Matthew 5:18** 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.*

Jesus' words inform us that not so much as a cross on a "t" or a dot on an "i" should be lost or changed within God's Holy Word. Hence, God implies

emphatically that the words and even the pen strokes contained within His written Word matter.

So how does this affect the modern translations of the Bible? When one examines the motives and philosophies of those who work upon the various translation committees it becomes readily evident that only those who served on the committees serving to translate the King James Bible had hearts desiring to maintain an absolutely literal translation of the written Word of God. Those men who translated the King James Bible recognized the divine inspiration of the Bible. They recognized that it was God's Holy preserved Word, and they were determined to lose absolutely nothing in its translation.

It should be obvious that only a literally translation of the Bible can in any way maintain the word for word intent of God contained within the Bible. The New International Version (NIV) is a dynamic equivalency; it intends to translate thought for thought. This is far from God's revealed intension concerning His precious Word. The Message can be nothing less than a paraphrase at best, it attempts to reveal culturally significant meaning. This is also far from the word for word intent of Almighty God. Of the commonly accepted versions of the Bible only the King James and the New American Standard version claim to be literal translations.

Hence, if God's intent is that mankind change nothing contained in His Word then only a literal translation can even come close. The King James translators were so concerned about not adding a single word to the Bible that when they felt they had to add words for grammatical clarity they placed those words in italics so every reader could clearly see which words were not contained in the original text. The New American Standard version gives no such indication. Hence, only the King James Bible is a literal translation in the truest sense of the form.

There is also the issue of the manuscripts used in the translation of the Bible. The King James translators were the only ones who used the Textus Receptus which represented those manuscripts that had been in the Churches hands since its beginning, and were considered the very Word of God. The New American Standard claims to base its authority on the three ancient incomplete texts know as the Alexandrius, Vanticanus, and Sinanaticus all of which were relatively recent discoveries and often disagree with one another. Hence, the King James translators held the attitude that God's word was still God's Word in their day, perfectly preserved and maintained by God. Modern translators only attest that we

have an approximation of the original text of the Bible, which explains their tendency to be less concerned with each individual word.

God said that the words and pen strokes mattered. He said that not a single pen stroke would ever change in His hallowed Word. But do they really make a difference?

There are two levels of understanding for each and every passage of Scripture. These are revealed in Scripture as well. These are the milk and meat of the Word of God. The Bible states,

*1 Peter 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere **milk of the word**, that ye may grow thereby:*

Hebrews 5:11-14 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. ¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. ¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

God demands that every word be perfectly maintained because God, through the Holy Spirit, draws the milk and meat of the Word out of each passage and word as He see appropriate for each individual child of God. If some translator changes a single word then he makes it completely impossible for the milk or the meat of the Word to find its appropriate place. Mans opinion cannot replace the inspiration (out breathing) of God in the penning of His written Word. Therefore, the words really do matter.

If a translator takes even a slightly lower attitude in his consideration of the Word of God then his resulting translation is a result of his motivation. If the translator does not believe that he is handling a perfectly preserved written Word of God when he starts, then the result of his work will reflect his position. The translation can only be as good as the translator and the translator can only be as good as his point of view concerning his starting point.

When a diligent comparison of passages between the various translations is performed the importance of the words becomes evident. In 1 John 5.6-7 one discovers that verse five is missing from the passage all together. In Luke 4.4 the phrase "but by every word of God" is missing. In Romans 5.8 the word

"commendeth" is changed to "demonstrates" which completely and incorrectly changes the meaning of the verse, God does not desire to show us His love but intends to unite us with his love.

These are just a few of the changes that permeate the whole of the biblical text. Changes can be found in almost every passage, and in most cases these changes **do matter**. Why do these changes matter so much, not because we think they matter but because God said they matter. God is the one who commanded us not to change a single word that is contained in His written Word. The question is, will we hear and heed God, or will we hear and heed the philosophies of modern scholars?

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