

Bible Mistranslations

It is easy to miss the mark when translating from one language to another. But an incorrect translation can cause a reader to take a wrong turn and end up way off course. As God's Plan moves along, further light causes the Bible to become a book where hidden things get revealed. Truths are emerging to be understood correctly as time marches on. As we are hungry for truth, His Spirit leads us into more truth.

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7. Mistranslation: Romans 10:4

*"4. For Christ is the END of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."
Romans 10:4 King James Version*

This is a very misleading translation. It is not the "end" in terms of "termination", but in terms of "end purpose", as stated in the footnote of "The Scriptures". Let's look at an accurate translation to help compare the difference.

*"4. For the GOAL at which Torah aims is the Messiah, who offers righteousness to everyone who trusts. 5. For Moshe writes about the righteousness grounded in the Torah that the person who does these things will attain life through them."
Romans 10:4 The Complete Jewish Bible*

The word "GOAL" is also used in this verse in The Scriptures translation, and in The English Aramaic New Testament. Verse 5 in the King James Version gives context to prove that "end" is not termination, but the fullness in its perfect beauty. The Concordant Literal New Testament has "Christ is the CONSUMMATION of law for righteousness to everyone who is believing." Walking in the law is a by-product of our walking in Him, and so it is still important as confirmed in many scriptures, including the following:

*"14. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."
Revelation 22:14 The New King James Version*

Obviously there is much more to this subject. For more on this, see "Mistranslation No. 06" below to understand that there are two types of laws. Many places in the Renewed (New) Covenant are referring to religious traditions...not the ways/teachings of God.

6. Mistranslation: Matthew 23:1-5 in the King James Version (KJV) & all other English Translations that were translated from Greek or Aramaic manuscripts. Here is how the mistranslation reads in its context:

- “1. Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples,
2. saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat [authority].
3. Therefore whatever **THEY** tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.
4. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. 5. But all their works they do to be seen by men...” **Matthew 23:1-5 New King James Version**

But here is how it reads from the Hebrew in which Matthew was originally written:

- “2. saying: “The Pharisees and sages sit upon the seat of Moses.
3. Therefore all that **HE** [Moses] says to you diligently do, but according to their [Pharisees & sages] reforms and their [Pharisees & sages] precedents do not do, because they [Pharisees & sages] talk but they [Pharisees & sages] do not do.”

They talk as though they have the authority of Moses, but they do not do what Moses told them to do. The religious leaders exalted themselves as though they had the same authority that Moses had. Yeshua (Jesus) exposed this for the lie that it was. This undermining of the authority of the religious leaders infuriated them. By imposing their man-made religious regulations they were adding to and taking away from the Word. This is in direct violation of Deuteronomy 4:2, 12:32, 13:1, Proverbs 30:6, and even repeated in the last chapter of the Word in Revelation 22:18,19.

The mistranslation is very misleading, for it says to do whatever the religious leaders tell you to do. **Mark 7:13** is one verse that makes it clear that religious rules & traditions make the word of God ineffective. These religious directives shift one’s focus from hearing God to hearing men. It is an “instead-of-Christ/Messiah” spirit. The religious reforms & precedents lead people into the bondage of works of the flesh (Adam nature), not of the Spirit; while keeping the people blind to the truth, (**Matthew 23:13**).

Now let’s learn a bit about this Hebrew manuscript source. Early church fathers recorded that when Matthew wrote his Gospel, he wrote it in Hebrew. (A few of these copies still exist today.) *Later* his book was translated into Aramaic & Greek, and from them to other languages. Only the text from the Hebrew harmonizes with other scriptures. What Y’Shua (Jesus), is saying is to obey the writings of Moses, (the first five books of the Bible, the “Torah”)...but to not obey the traditions of the religious leaders.

To question the religious leaders brought out their insecurity. Questioning the religious leaders greatly threatened their control over the people. Yeshua (Jesus) repeatedly hammered this point home. Here are 3-examples that Yeshua (Jesus) made:

He healed on the Sabbath.

His disciples ate grain from stalks in the field on the Sabbath.

His disciples did not always wash their hands before eating.

There are no Torah instructions to forbid these things, but these things were all against the religious traditions of the day. Yeshua (Jesus) was trying to shift the focus of the people back to what the Word said...to point out what Yehovah (God) said, as opposed to what man said. The difference is the difference between freedom vs. bondage.

How did the mistranslation occur? In Hebrew, the difference between “he” and “they” is the difference of one letter being present or absent at the end of a word. The letter is a small, nearly vertical line that would be easy for a scribe to miss. It is also possible that this was purposeful mistranslation, since the organized church system was in charge of making many of the translations from the Hebrew. I say this because the pattern exists with many other mistranslations which all just happened to give more authority to the religious leaders. Even King James gave a mandate to have his translation point to church leaders as the authority to not question. The context is from a King James who decreed himself to be the authority of the church. His goal was to consolidate both religious and political power together to himself.

For more fascinating background on this Hebrew manuscript, read Appendix 4 in Nehemia Gordon’s book, “The Hebrew Yeshua vs. the Greek Jesus”; or pages 208 & 209 of Michael Rood’s larger print edition of “The Chronological Gospels”. Both men are widely-recognized as Bible Scholars who often work together in Israel uncovering many mistranslations & myths.

As a parting teaser, Nehemiah Gordon discovered an ancient Torah manuscript where the Hebrew vowel markings were present to indicate that the name of God (YHWY) is not pronounced “Yahwey”, but “Yehovah”.

Another religious tradition is being rocked by Michael Rood. He ironed out several mistranslations to demonstrate that from Jesus’ baptism until the apostles received the Holy Spirit was exactly 70 weeks, and not 3 1/2 years as Eusebius (a church leader), first said! See his “Chronological Gospels” for more on that. Perhaps another time we’ll expound on those translation topics.

5. Mistranslation: Exodus 12:40 New International Version (NIV)

“Now the length of time the Israelite people lived in Egypt was 430 YEARS.”

This quote is from the New International Version, and most versions are very similar. The NIV shines out from the others though in that it directs people to a very informative footnote that reads, “Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint *Egypt and Canaan*.” This fits much better with other scriptures which show that starting with Abraham they were sojourning in Canaan 215 years and then Egypt for 215 years. My Bible Timeline Workbook lays these verses out to show those time frames. But why do we start with Abraham? The Concordant Version reads as, “Now the dwelling of the sons of Israel *and their fathers who dwelt in the land of Canaan and in the land of Egypt* was four hundred thirty years.” This version includes Canaan and includes the fathers of the sons of Israel. The father of Israel who dwelt in Canaan was Isaac, but also his father Abraham, who was the first father to dwell there.

4. Mistranslation: Psalm 22:1 King James Version (KJV) & most others

“1. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?”

Read this Psalm of David and you’ll have to agree that it’s theme is a Song of great trials with suffering, but that in the end there is great deliverance with total victory. The concluding triumph as seen in the last half of Psalm 22 is the grand finale. The Psalm emphasizes the point that even though at times all seems lost during the trials, we are to trust in what God is doing and to not be discouraged. In the big picture there is victory at the end. It is a Psalm that declares that the Father is in control and is working all things to the best. We eventually witness this at the end of the matter. The message of this song is the big picture that fits in harmony with the rest of scripture. (We’ll mention more of that in our last paragraph).

Meanwhile this first verse, is both mistranslated and taken out of context besides. Therefore we are left with the impression that the Father deserted Jesus when he was on the cross. So where do we find a more correct translation? We find the correct translation of **Psalm 22:1 in George Lamsa’s Translation:**

“My God, my God, why hast thou let me to live? and yet thou hast delayed my salvation from me because of the words of my folly.”

Why would the George Lamsa’s Translation be the more correct translation? For that

insight, see the explanation given later for the mistranslations of **Matthew 27:46** & **Mark 15:34**. These two verses are where we find the fulfillment of this prophetic Psalm. On that we can all agree. It is a very detailed prophetic account of the death of Jesus on the cross...except on this one point. The Father did not desert the Son...and the Son knew that very well.

We find in the Lamsa translation that all three verses (**Psalm 22:1**, **Matthew 27:46** & **Mark 15:34**), are in harmony with each other *AND* with the rest of the Word. They clearly express that the Father did not forsake the Son when He was on the cross. What the Lamsa verse above is saying is that the Father kept the Son alive for that moment to be the sin offering for all mankind. He was the perfect Lamb of God for a sin offering. His perfect sacrifice would atone for our sins so that we could receive His Spirit and walk in overcoming victory through our trials as He did. This great trial of the cross with the suffering for Jesus of the sin offering ended well. It ended in new life... resurrection life. Its results can be seen in tremendous victory both for Jesus *AND* for those descended from Adam in the end.

In summary, Jesus did not go to the cross lamenting that the Father had left Him, but rather He endured that suffering for the joy that He could see at the other end of the cross experience, (as told in **Hebrews 12:2**). In fact he even disregarded the shame, meaning He paid no attention to it. He could see the “big picture”...and now we can too.

3. Mistranslation: Acts 12:4 KJV & others

*“...intending after **EASTER** to bring him forth to the people.”*

The word “Easter” is an incorrect substitute for the Hebrew word that means “Passover”. It is translated correctly as “Passover” in 28 other places where it is found in the New Testament. It is from the Strong’s Greek word 3957. “Easter” is an intentional mistranslation in order to line up with church traditions. Deliberate mistranslations are like the tail wagging the dog, or the cart pulling the horse. Church tradition should never be put in front of the truth of the Word.

2. Mistranslation: 2Corinthians 5:21 KJV

*“21. For he hath **MADE HIM TO BE SIN** for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”*

This one is muddy at best. I was always taught this as basic religious thought. But it can be misleading. According to a footnote in the Williams New Testament, the Greek word for “sin” should be translated as “sin offering”. The reason is that “sin offering” is how the Greek word is used in the Old Testament. This footnote is likely referring to The Septuagint Translation, which was a translation made more than 200 years before the birth of Jesus. The Septuagint was a translation from the Hebrew Old Testament

into Greek. (It was then translated into English in 1851.)

The value of the Septuagint shines in how it provides evidence of how ancient Greek words were used at the time to translate Hebrew words. The meanings of words in languages often change over time. The Septuagint translation gives insight into what both the Hebrew and the Greek words meant at that time. Here in our example, the Greek word for “sin” had typically been translated as “sin offering” when used in the Septuagint. The New International Version also has a footnote for **2Corinthians 5:21** saying that it could also be translated as “sin offering”. That is how it is translated in the Concordant Literal Translation of the New Testament. It is also clarified as “sin offering” in Jonathan Mitchell’s Translation of the New Testament. Adam Clarke’s Commentary confirms that it was indeed the Septuagint that translates this Greek word as being used 94 times as “sin offering”.

The meaning here is obvious. We now can distinguish that Jesus was without sin, but in the role of a sin offering. This is in harmony with the rest of the scriptures. The sin offering is perfect and takes on the *PUNISHMENT* for sin, but the sin is not imputed to the sinless sacrifice. *Christ takes our punishment for sin, but does not become sin for us.*

This is seen also in the sacrifice of the two goats on the Day of Atonement in the Feast of Tabernacles, (**Leviticus 16**). The first goat could not be an offering for sin unless it was a perfect lamb/kid without blemish. The sins of the people were placed upon the head of the second goat, not the first one. So the blood of the first goat protects the second goat from the punishment for sin. But the second goat must then remove the sins and leave them in the wilderness. How? By its strength? No, but by the “fit man”, a type of the Holy Spirit. So the second goat, (us), the guilty one, goes “free” to walk by the fit man, (His Spirit), through the wilderness. Why? To be tested until victorious... until the sin nature no longer has a hold on us...until we are mature in Christ. (For fuller understanding, read our Lesson No. 09 on “Two Goats & Two Doves”.)

That “sin offering” should be the correct translation is seen plainly in this next verse, which is translated correctly in the same translations that miss it in **2 Corinthians 5:21**:

*“And walk in love, as Christ has also loved us and given Himself for us,
an OFFERING AND A SACRIFICE to God, for a sweet-smelling aroma.”
Ephesians 5:2 New King James Version (NKJV)*

For more info on this, see our further explanation in “Religious Myths vs Bible Truths”.

1. **Mistranslations: Matthew 27:46 & Mark 15:34 KJV, NKJV, & most others**

“46. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Matthew 27:46 NKJV

“34. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?” which is translated, “My God, My God, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?”

Mark 15:34 NKJV

At first appearance this would seem to be confirmation of a correct translation rather than a mistranslation. Furthermore, one would be hard pressed to find an English translation that reads otherwise. It should however seem strange to us as not being in harmony with so many other scriptures, other than the mistranslation of **2Corinthians 5:21**, which we explained above. We so readily accept the discrepancy also because the thought appeals to our carnal, natural understanding. But read on.

There is however one translation that reads differently. Could the one that stands alone be correct in this instance and all the others be wrong? It is worth exploring to find out. We take a look at George Lamsa’s translation. What is the difference in scholarship between essentially all of the English Translations and this one? It is that the majority of English Translations have their origins in translating either from the Greek or from other translations that have their roots in translating from the Greek. George Lamsa’s however translates from the Aramaic. (For more info see our review on his translation under our “Review of Bible Translations”.)

Basically, his stand is that the original scriptures were first written in Aramaic, and *THEN* later translated into the Greek. And he makes a great case for that. The Aramaic copies made their way into the Eastern church and are still the basis for their translations into modern languages today. Only the Greek copies made their way into the Western church. This led the Western church to believe that the scriptures were first written in Greek. Such a misunderstanding is like building a scaffolding for renovating a building, then discovering that it is attached to the wrong building. We’ll leave that issue for you to explore further as His Spirit leads you, but first we’ll help point out the way. Here is the same verse from the Lamsa translation:

“46. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice and said, Eli, Eli, lemana shabakthani! My God, my God, FOR THIS I WAS SPARED!”

Matthew 27:46 George Lamsa Translation

This verse also has a footnote. It reads, “This was my destiny.” In other words, Jesus was making the point that the Father’s plan was for Jesus to go to the cross as the Passover Lamb so that the sins of mankind would be atoned for. It was the whole purpose of His

life and ministry and teaching. It was to make a way for the sons of Adam to endure through the wilderness of this world and move on into the Promised Land of Christ.

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