

Intro:

Today I want to summarize our teaching in this series of lessons. We are going to work our way backwards over the course.

I. English Bible Versions

A. Recommended

1. King James Version (or Authorized Version) [KJV or AV]
2. New American Standard Bible [NASB – NAU]
3. New King James Version [NKJV]
4. English Standard Version [ESV]

B. Rationale

1. Literal translations (“essentially literal” – recognizing the difficulty of translation word-for-word)
2. Faithful to the original text
 - a. Some modern versions leave out disputed verses [ESV, NIV] (e.g., Mt 17.21; 18.11)
 - b. Others retain them with a footnote [NAU, NKJ]
 - c. These variants are from the majority text, have been long accepted, and in themselves not unfaithful to the teaching of the Bible
 - d. Footnoting these variants is a faithful means of handling the facts of the case (and is a major reason for my preference of the NAU)
3. Godly translators
4. God centered, not reader centered (equivalency debate)
5. Reverence
6. Completeness
7. Clarity

II. The manuscript question

A. Older manuscripts given more weight

1. However, majority manuscripts cannot be ignored as witnesses
2. Each variant must be examined on its merits (not purely on the source manuscript)

B. Rationale

1. All manuscripts have some errors
2. It is more reasonable to believe that those closer to the original in point of time have less potential errors
3. No credible evidence is given suggesting deliberate corruption of the older manuscripts
4. Theories suggesting that the Majority Text existed prior to the 5th century in the main lack evidence and/or credibility

C. General outlook on manuscripts

1. The differences are small in comparison to the agreement
2. Most differences are easily explained
3. No differences involve words that do damage to any doctrine of scripture
4. The fact that there are differences in manuscripts should not be a matter of great concern

Conclusion:

This concludes our study of the Versions Controversy. I hope that you have come to a better understanding of the issues and have confidence in your Bible.

Even more important, I hope you regularly read your Bible devotionally, with reverence to our God who gave it to us.