

TABLE TALK

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...these words... shall be upon your heart; you shall
teach them... and talk of them... Deut. 6:6,7



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The Lutheran Ministerium and Synod describes itself as Biblical, meaning that it “stands on the Divinely inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God.” By this is meant that the *authors of the original texts* of the Bible were divinely inspired of the Holy Spirit so that what was written were the *'without error'* and *'completely trustworthy'* words of God Himself. But we do not have the original autographs. What we have are copies, and translations of copies, and copies of the translations of copies, of the original. So what can be said of the reliability of the Bibles of today? This is the question dealt with in the paper that follows, originally presented to the annual Conference of the LMS-USA in June of last year.

Textual Comparison of Four English Versions

Skeptical scholars challenge the Bible for its text, literary structure, and historicity.

Our concern at this time is with the text.

The Question: What did Jesus say? What did Jesus do? Can we with assurance assert that the our four transmitted and translated texts of the four Gospels are accurate and reliable copies of the autographs?

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Announcing

The 2014 LMS Annual
Conference and Convention
June 21-22 at Chetek, WI

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Variants:

Textual critics have examined the ancient Biblical manuscripts and identified almost every variation of one text from another.

Some critics have counted the number of variants (hundreds of thousands?) and have concluded that we cannot be confident that we have the texts as originally given.

A question in abeyance: Where are the variants found? For example, how many of the variants are found in the Byzantine (Majority) texts?

‘Living and Abiding Word’

As over against such skepticism, we read that Jesus claimed, ‘Heaven and earth will pass away but My Words will not pass away’ (Mark 13.31, 1 Peter 1.23-25). He explained the preservation and application of His text (‘living and abiding Word’) as the work of the Holy Spirit (John 14, 16).

By this did He mean that the original words would be fixed and preserved, and everyone must learn that language spoken and/or written?

Great Commission

In addition to the claims of Jesus concerning His enduring Words, we note that Jesus also commissioned His followers to ‘make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that He commanded’ (Matthew 28.18); His Commands as provided in the Gospel of Matthew.

The urgency was to fulfill Jesus’ Great Commission. His faithful followers may well have expected the end of this age to come relatively soon (as many commentators propose), but that only increased the urgency to proclaim by all means the Gospel to all nations.

Were they to teach the Gospel in the original languages (Greek and Hebrew/ Aramaic) to all nations or to translate it into the languages of the people? Apparently the early Church understood Jesus’ Commission as His directive to translate and transmit the texts into various native languages (Aramaic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Egyptian, Latin, Gothic, etc.).

Fulfillment

Has Jesus fulfilled His promise that His message would be enduring and implicitly accurate always (Mark 13.31)?

Evaluation of Transmissions

As over against the counting-method of some skeptical scholars, even the evaluation of individual passages, we are proposing another way to evaluate the transmission of the texts. Instead of counting the number of variants, we have traced four lines of transmission: Byzantine, Alexandrian, Aramaic, and Latin into English, comparing the four English versions derived from each line of transmission.

We submit to you such a comparison.

Four English Versions: Four ‘Routes’ of Transmission

We are of the opinion that the following four English texts well represent the major transmissions and translations of the original four Gospels.

Texts from BW9: DRA Douay-Reims (1582) KJV King James Version (1611) ERV English Revised Version (1881/1885) MRD Murdock’s Peshitta Translation (1852)

1/ *First, the Douay-Reims (1582), an English translation of Jerome’s Latin Vulgate (384-405).*

In the Roman Church the Greek New Testament was being translated into Latin by the second/third century. Tertullian (160-220) is regarded as the

'father of ecclesiastical Latin'. Moreover, Jerome (340-420) referred to many available Latin manuscripts. Jerome was commissioned by Pope Damasus (382) to translate the Greek text into the Latin, which he did with great care and scholarship. He moved to Bethlehem in order to gain access to the original Greek.

In response to a widespread request for the Bible in the English language, the Roman Catholic Church authorized and later officially recognized Douay-Reims (two Roman Catholic Universities), a translation of the Latin Vulgate ('ordinary Latin').

Not aimed at popular use, it was intended to equip the clergy to respond to the Protestant Bible-movement. It was officially approved during the Council of Trent, at which it was "... declared the only authentic and official version of the Bible" (1545). There are extant about 8,000 Latin manuscripts, representing centuries of manual transmission.

- 2/ Next we consider the **King James' Version** (1611; also termed the Authorized Version: AV). The dawning of the Renaissance stimulated an interest in the Greek New Testament (and the Hebrew Old Testament). This interest was further piqued by the arrival of Byzantine scholars into the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, and England, fleeing the Ottoman Turks (fall of Constantinople in 1456). The King James Version was the outcome of great interest in the Bible among Protestants, incited in part by John Wycliffe (1329-1384), who translated the Vulgate Bible into English (1382). Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536) prepared a Greek New Testament (1516), which became known optimistically as the *Textus Receptus* (in other words, the original 'received text'). This was based upon six texts (five Byzantine) from the latter part of the Middle Ages.
- 3/ The third route is that of the **English Revised Version** (New Testament, 1881). In 1859 Constantin von Tischendorf (1815-1874) discovered the *Sinaiticus* manuscript (in Greek) coming perhaps from the time of Constantine (274-337). In 331 Emperor Constantine ordered production of 50 Bibles. *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* (also in Greek) may have been two of them. The nineteenth-century-revisers relied heavily upon *Codices Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus*, convinced that those two 'Alexandrian' (see elsewhere under *Alexandrian versus Antiochene*) manuscripts were considerably older and hence presumably more reliable (a questionable conclusion, given the Alexandrian stress on the allegorical interpretation) than the Byzantine text. Because of these manuscripts and because the English language had changed some since the publication of the King James' Version (1611), there was motivation for an 'up-dated' translation. This was called the *English Revised Version*, which was regarded by most (not all) textual scholars as a considerable improvement upon the King James' Version. This text served as basis for the *American Standard* (1901) and *Revised Standard* (1952) Versions.
- 4/ The last text for our consideration is an English translation of the **Aramaic** (Syriac). The Orthodox Catholic Church claims that the Aramaic dates very early (probably the first century) and that the quality of transmission is much better than that of the Greek manuscripts (especially the Alexandrian group?). For this 'run' we have chosen James **Murdock's Peshitta Translation** (1852), known for its literal character. It came to us by way of the Aramaic transmission of the Gospels. Christian scholars (such as George Lamsa) of the Orthodox Catholic Church claim that the *Peshitta* ('common') should be traced back to the first century and that the Aramaic transmission is remarkably consistent and reliable.

Thus, with these four, we travel **four exceedingly long and varied 'routes'** of transmission and translations of Jesus' original Gospels. Are

they accurate witnesses to the autographs? How significant is this comparison?

Counter Balances

Thus we have four versions, and they stand in some protest of one another; hardly collusive:

The Douay-Reims (Latin Vulgate base) as over against the King James (Byzantine base).

The Murdock Peshitta (Aramaic base) versus the Greek manuscripts and the Latin Vulgate.

In the Greek, the Alexandrian (English Revised Version) versus the Byzantine.

Words and Works of Jesus

*The burning question before us is whether we have access to the **Words and Works** of Jesus.*

Comparison of Four English Versions

Following is our briefer list of translations for your perusal (bold print is ours and identifies differences):

Matthew 5:17

DRA Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

ERV Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill.

KJV Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

MRD Do not suppose that I have come to subvert the law or the prophets: [I have come] not to subvert, but to fulfill.

‘Destroy’ or ‘subvert’? Greek texts are unanimous: KATALUSAI literally, to ‘untie, set adrift’. Magiera, [Aramaic Peshitta](#), 2009, has “change.” *It seems to me that here and elsewhere the difference in versions is often only **lexical**.*

Matthew 5:18

DRA For **amen** I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle shall not pass of the law, till all be fulfilled.

ERV For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be **accomplished**.

KJV 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.

MRD For verily I say to you, that until heaven and earth shall pass away, one iota or one letter shall not pass from the law, until all shall be fulfilled.

Matthew 11:25

DRA At that time Jesus answered and said: I confess to thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to the little ones.

ERV At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and **understanding**, and didst reveal them unto babes:

KJV At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

MRD 25 At that time Jesus answered and said: I praise thee, O my Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and knowing, and hast revealed them to little children.

Matthew 11:26

DRA Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight.

ERV yea, Father, for so it was **well-pleasing** in thy sight.

KJV Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight.

MRD Yes, my Father; for so it seemed good before thee.

Matthew 11:27

DRA All things are delivered to me by my Father. And no one knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither doth any one know the Father, but the Son, and he to whom it shall **please** the Son to reveal him.

ERV All things have been delivered unto me of my Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal *him*.

KJV All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

MRD Every thing is given up by my Father to me. And no one knoweth the Son, except the Father. Also, no one knoweth the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son is pleased to reveal [him].

Matthew 11:28

DRA Come to me, all you that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you.

ERV Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

KJV Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

MRD Come unto me, all ye wearied and heavily burdened, and I will ease you.

Matthew 11:29

DRA Take up my yoke upon you, and learn of me, because I am meek, and humble of heart: and you shall find rest to your souls.

ERV Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and **lowly in heart**: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

KJV Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

MRD Take my yoke upon you; and learn from me, that I am gentle and subdued in my heart: and ye will find rest for your souls:

Matthew 11:30

DRA For my yoke is **sweet** and my burden light.

ERV For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

KJV For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

MRD for my yoke is **pleasant**, and my burden is light.

Matthew 13:16

DRA But blessed are your eyes, because they see, and your ears, because they hear.

ERV But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

KJV But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

MRD But happy are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

Matthew 13:17

DRA For, **amen**, I say to you, many prophets and just men have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things that you hear and have not heard them.

ERV For verily I say unto you, that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which ye see, and saw them not; and to hear the things which ye hear, and heard them not.

KJV For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

MRD For verily I say to you, That many prophets and righteous [men] longed to see what ye see, and did not see [it]; and to hear what ye hear, and did not hear [it].

Matthew 28:18

DRA And Jesus coming, spoke to them, saying: All **power** is given to me in heaven and in earth.

ERV And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, All **authority** hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth.

KJV And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

MRD And Jesus came near, and discoursed with them, and said to them: All authority is given to me, in heaven and on earth. And as my Father sent me, so also I send you.

Matthew 28:19

DRA Going therefore, **teach** ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

ERV Go ye therefore, and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost:

KJV Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

MRD Go ye, therefore, and instruct all nations; and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:20

DRA Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you **all days**, even to the consummation of the world.

ERV teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you **always**, even unto the end of the world.

KJV Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, **even** unto the end of the world. Amen.

MRD And teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And, behold, I am with you always, unto the consummation of the worlds Amen.

Mark 1:1

DRA The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

ERV The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

KJV The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

MRD The beginning of the gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

Mark 1:9

DRA And it came to pass, in those days, Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

ERV And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan.

KJV And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

MRD And it occurred, in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee, and was baptized in Jordan by John.

Mark 1:10

DRA And forthwith coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit as a dove descending, and remaining on him.

ERV And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens rent asunder, and the Spirit as a dove descending upon him:

KJV And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:

MRD And immediately on his coming from the water, he saw the heavens cleft, and the Spirit descending like a dove upon him.

Mark 1:11

DRA And there came a voice from heaven: Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

ERV And a voice came out of the heavens, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased.

KJV And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

MRD And there was a voice from the heavens: Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I delight.

Luke 1:1

DRA Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a narration of the things that have been accomplished among us;

ERV Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been **fulfilled** among us,

KJV Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a **declaration** of those things which are most surely **believed** among us,

MRD Since many have been disposed to write narratives of those events, of which we have full assurance,

Luke 1:2

DRA According as they have delivered them unto us, who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word:

ERV even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,

KJV Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

MRD as they delivered them to us, who from the first were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word;

Luke 1:3

DRA It seemed good to me also, having diligently attained to all things from the beginning, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

ERV it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from **the first**, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus;

KJV It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

MRD it seemed proper for me also, as I had examined them all accurately, to write out the whole, methodically, for thee, excellent Theophilus:

Luke 1:4

DRA That thou mayest know the **verity** of those words in which thou hast been instructed.

ERV that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the **things** wherein thou wast instructed.

KJV That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

MRD that thou mayest know the truth of the statements, which thou hast been taught.

Luke 24:46

DRA And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead, the third day;

ERV and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day;

KJV And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it **behoved** Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

MRD And he said to them: Thus it is written, and thus it was right for Messiah to suffer, and rise from the dead on the third day;

Luke 24:47

DRA And that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, unto all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

ERV and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

KJV And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

MRD and that, in his name, repentance for the remission of sins should be preached among all nations, and that the commencement be at Jerusalem.

Luke 24:48

DRA And you are witnesses of these things.

ERV Ye are witnesses of these things.

KJV And ye are witnesses of these things.

MRD And ye are the witnesses of these things.

Luke 24:49

DRA And I send the promise of my Father upon you: but stay you in the city till you be endued with power from on high.

ERV And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high.

KJV And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

MRD And I will send upon you the promise of my Father. But remain ye at Jerusalem until ye shall be clothed with energy from on high.

John 1:1

DRA In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

ERV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

KJV In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

MRD In the beginning, was the Word; and the Word was with God; and the Word was God.

John 1:2

DRA The same was in the beginning with God.

ERV The same was in the beginning with God.

KJV The same was in the beginning with God.

MRD He was in the beginning with God.

John 1:3

DRA All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made.

ERV All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that hath been made.

KJV All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

MRD Every thing was by his hand; and without him, was not any thing whatever that existed

John 1:14

DRA And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we saw his glory, the glory as it were of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

ERV And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth.

KJV And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

MRD And the: Word became flesh, and tabernacled with us: and we saw his glory, a glory as of the only begotten from the Father, that he was full of grace and truth.

John 1:18

DRA No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

ERV No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

KJV No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

MRD No man hath ever seen God; the only begotten God, he who is in the bosom of his Father, he hath declared [him].

John 14:1

DRA Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me.

ERV Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

KJV Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.

MRD Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, and, believe in me.

John 14:2

DRA In my Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you: because I go to prepare a place for you.

ERV In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

KJV In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

MRD There are many mansions in the house of my Father: and if not, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

John 14:3

DRA And if I shall go, and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and will take you to myself; that where I am, you also may be.

ERV And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

KJV And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

MRD And if I go to prepare for you a place, I will come again and take you to myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

John 14:4

DRA And whither I go you know, and the way you know.

ERV And whither I go, ye know the way.

KJV And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

MRD And whither I go, ye know; and the way ye know.

John 14:5

DRA Thomas saith to him: Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

ERV Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; how know we the way?

KJV Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

MRD Thomas said to him: Our Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

John 14:6

DRA Jesus saith to him: I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me.

ERV Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me.

KJV Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

MRD Jesus said to him: I am the way, and truth, and life: no one cometh unto my Father, but by me.

John 14:7

DRA If you had known me, you would **without doubt** have known my Father also: and from henceforth you shall know him, and you have seen him.

ERV If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

KJV If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

MRD If ye had known me, ye would also have known my Father: and henceforth, ye know him, and have seen him.

John 14:8

DRA Philip saith to him: Lord, shew us the Father, and it is **enough** for us.

ERV Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

KJV Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

MRD Philip said to him: Our Lord, show us the Father, and it will suffice for us.

John 14:9

DRA Jesus saith to him: Have I been so long a time with you; and have you not known me? Philip, he that seeth me seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, Shew us the Father?

ERV Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Shew us the Father?

KJV Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Shew us the Father?

MRD Jesus said to him: Have I been all this time with you, and hast thou not known me, Philip? He that seeth me, seeth the Father: and how sayest thou, Show us the Father?

John 14:25

DRA These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you.

ERV These things have I spoken unto you, while *yet* abiding with you.

KJV These things have I spoken unto you, being *yet* present with you.

MRD These things have I said to you, while I was with you.

John 14:26

DRA But the **Paraclete**, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you.

ERV But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance **all** that I said unto you.

KJV But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

MRD But the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you every thing, and will remind you of all that I say to you.

Acts 1:21

DRA Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us,

ERV Of the men therefore which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among us,

KJV Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

MRD It should therefore be, that one of these persons, who have been with us all the time that our Lord Jesus went in and out with us,

Acts 1:22

DRA Beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of his resurrection.

ERV beginning from the baptism of John, unto the day that he was received up from us, of these must one become a witness with us of his resurrection.

KJV Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.

MRD commencing from the baptism of John, unto the day he was taken up from us,—should be, with us, a witness of his resurrection.

Acts 6:1

DRA And in those days, the number of the disciples increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

ERV Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

KJV And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

MRD And in those days, when the disciples had become numerous, the Grecian disciples murmured against the Hebrew, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration [to the needy].

Acts 6:2

DRA Then the twelve calling together the multitude of the disciples, said: It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

ERV And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not **fit** that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables.

KJV Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

MRD And the twelve legates convoked the whole company of the disciples, and said to them: It is not proper, that we should neglect the word of God, and serve tables.

Acts 6:3

DRA Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good **reputation**, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

ERV Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

KJV Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

MRD Therefore brethren, search out, and elect from among you, seven men of whom there is good testimony, men full of the Spirit of the Lord, and of wisdom; that we may place them over this business:

Acts 6:4

DRA But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

ERV But we will continue **steadfastly** in prayer, and in the ministry of the word.

KJV But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

MRD and we will continue in prayer, and in the ministrations of the word.

Acts 17:26

DRA And hath made of one, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times, and the limits of their habitation.

ERV and he made of one every **nation** of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed **seasons**, and the **bounds** of their habitation;

KJV And hath made of one **blood** all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

MRD And of one blood hath he made the whole world of men, that they might dwell on the face of all the earth: and he hath separated the seasons by his ordinance; and hath set bounds to the residence of men:

Romans 1:16

DRA For I am not ashamed of the gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first, and to the Greek.

ERV For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

KJV For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

MRD For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto life, to all who believe in it; whether first they are of the Jews, or whether they are of the Gentiles.

2 Corinthians 8:18

DRA We have sent also with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel through all the churches.

ERV And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is *spread* through all the churches;

KJV And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches;

MRD And we also sent with him that our brother, whose praise in the gospel is in all the churches;

Summation:

1) *Have we then **access to the authentic Words and Works of Jesus** by way of accurate and reliable transmissions and translations?*

2) *Is Jesus thus keeping His promise that **His Words will endure** beyond the end of this world?*

3) *Do the translations and transmissions serve as **objective evidence** that the Holy Spirit preserves and applies the Words and Works of Jesus in and through all ages, including ours?*

*Considering the range of time, geography, cultures, alphabets, and vocabularies, I myself am greatly amazed at the harmony that seems evident, so I answer with a firm and loud **'amen'** to these questions concerning the texts.*

It seems to me that throughout this comparison we have the clear 'imprint of the autographs'.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13.8).

Prayerfully submitted,

Donald C. Thorson

2014 January 21

The following is a chapter from the book, "**The Personality We Have Missed**, Studies in the Life of Jesus" by Jacob Tanner. The chapter titled, "The Master on the Cross" gives food for thought in this Lenten Season.

The Master on the Cross

by
Jacob Tanner

The priests, scribes, and Pharisees are permitted to manipulate the tragedy of the night, because they are carrying out their part of God's plan. The details of the night are a ghastly list of inhuman cruelties and torture.

As Jesus stands in the court of Annas with bound hands, an officer slaps Him in the face (John 18:12, 22). In the court of Caiaphas, while He is still bound, they spit in His face, hit Him with their fists and, covering His face, hit Him repeatedly, asking Him to tell who struck Him (Matt. 26:67-68; Mark 14:65). Herod and his soldiers have a hilarious time mocking and insulting Him and finally draping Him like a royal clown (Luke 23:11). In the court of Pilate He hears His own people shout at the top of their voices, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him, crucify Him, give us Barabbas" (John 19:15; Luke 23:18). Then He is flogged on the bare back till the skin is broken and the back is a bloody mass (Matt. 27:26). When Pilate has sentenced Him to be crucified, the whole battalion of Roman soldiers put on a gala performance crowning Him king. They strip Him and put a soldier's robe on Him. Making a crown of thorns, they press it on His head, give Him a reed to hold and fall down on their knees and salute Him, "Hail, king of the Jews." Then they spit on Him and take the reed and hit Him on the head. And during the whole scene the soldiers pour upon Him a constant stream of filthy and vile gibes and jokes.

Let us pause for a reflective moment.

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things in His hands - with these words John begins the story of the night (John 13:3-4). He is conscious of having all power and still He does not lift a finger to free Himself from the murderous hands that are directing Him to the cross. He has all the prerogatives of God at His disposal and still He humbly and without murmur lets Himself be spit and slapped in the face, ridiculed, flogged, and crucified. He has set His feet in the way to the cross and He has the moral strength, courage, and willpower to walk all the steps, even the last one. And when the hatred of men gleefully sees Him nailed to the cross. He prays that their sin may be forgiven.

Truly, He is the Master.

And now He is walking the last step.

It is about 9 o'clock Friday morning the 15th of Nisan in the year 30 A.D. (The 15th of Nisan year 30 would be April 7th). The place is Golgotha.

The soldiers have completed their grisly job. The nails through the hands and feet hold the body to the cross while it rests on a wedge-shaped support fastened to the cross with the sharp edge turned up. It is so placed that it fits into the crotch between the legs, the weight of the body resting on the sharp edge.

Having been nailed to the cross,

the two robbers are left alone. But not Jesus. The insatiable hatred of Israel's religious leaders find a vicious satisfaction in mocking and ridiculing Him even when they see Him writhing in the unspeakable agony of the cross.

Then He takes over.

The Romans crucified countless people, but only His crucifixion was lifted out of the obscurity of the past where the others disappeared, and placed in the limelight of history.

And it was Jesus Himself who did it.

By the power of His personality, a naked man, hanging on a cross between two criminals, hated, ridiculed, cursed, infuses into this hellish spectacle a divine glory that makes His crucifixion history's greatest religious and moral victory.

He prays.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Never had a prayer like this been prayed on a cross. Or anywhere else.

It focuses the purpose of His coming to the world. Not judgment is His mission, but forgiveness and salvation. And He begins with His murderers.

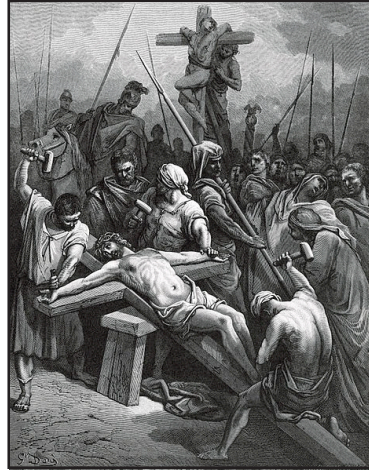
He brings God's love, mercy, and forgiveness into the foreground and changes the whole picture. What man started as an act of hatred and revenge, He changes into a manifestation of God's saving love.

His unconquerable love makes Him the Master even on the cross.

And He is the Master in the extreme situation of the dying robber.

The theology of the Pharisees and the scribes had no salvation for a robber on the cross. He has no time to demonstrate his worthiness to God by acts of repentance and good works.

But Jesus has salvation even for



Crucifixion of Jesus
Gustave Doré

him. The forgiveness He is founding is free enough and full enough to wash away the blood-red sins of a dying robber pleading for a crumb of mercy. "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).

In His third word He continues to demonstrate His healing love. "Woman, behold your son! ... Behold your mother!" (John 19:26-27).

During His official years He had refused to let His mother wield any privileged influence in His life, not for lack of love, but because her authority ended where His Messianic work began. It must have puzzled His disciples that when Jesus spoke to her He used the word woman, not mother. When He now in this conspicuous way provides a home for her, it seems that He also wants to emphasize His love of her for the sake of the disciples. He had not taken this step before because He knew He would have the best opportunity from the cross.

So far His whole concern has been for others. In the fourth word, "I thirst" (John 19:28), He gives expression to the burning thirst that crucifixion generates. But even this

word is not mainly personal. In recording it, John adds, "to fulfill the scriptures." The exclamation reveals that Jesus suffers all the physical torture in full measure. There is no sham. He fulfills the scripture in His body as well as in His spirit. Not only is He fully aware that He in every detail is working out God's plan of salvation, but His personality so dominates the situation that His every word brings out God's motive and purpose.

Indeed He is the Master.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!'" (Matt. 27:45-46).

The prophet said that Jehovah has laid on him the iniquity of us all and shall make his soul an offering for sin (Is. 53:6 and 10).

To us His physical sufferings are most evident, but they are only preliminary, an introduction to His soul suffering. The climax is reached during the three hours of darkness, when His soul is engulfed by the abyss where sin and guilt complete the separation from God and the full horror of damnation is experienced. It is from this abyss that the fifth word of Jesus comes.

Our mind is unable to penetrate into this mystery where our sin separates the Lord from His God. But one glorious fact stands out. He is able not only to take our sins into the judgment of God's wrath and endure the condemnation, but He is also able to make a full atonement for our sin and bring back a saving forgiveness of sin.

He is the Master even in the abyss.

The sixth word, "It is finished," is the triumphant proclamation that the Saviour's task is completed (John 19:30). He has now atoned for the sins of the world and is bringing life and salvation to His sin-cursed

brethren.

The Master is returning in victory.

"Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' And having said this he breathed his last" (Luke 23:46).

A crucified person will live thirty-six to forty-eight hours and more before he dies from sore fever and exhaustion. His pitiful cry for water grows weaker and weaker till it becomes a mere whisper that no one can hear. At last there is not strength enough even for a whisper and finally the last breath flickers away.

Jesus committed His spirit into His Father's hands by a voluntary act after six hours on the cross. He had told His disciples that "I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17-18).

His work on the cross is finished and so He uses His power to take the last step, to die for our sins while still in possession of His mental and physical strength. From first to last He is the Master who has full control over every event and of His own free will surrenders Himself to suffer and die for our sins.

Yes, He is the Master.

But death and grave did not end the story of the Master.

Jesus had told the disciples that He would rise from the dead. He had even specified the time. It would take place on the third day after His crucifixion (Matt. 16:21).

And He was true to His word.

The resurrection released God's power unto salvation, the forgiveness of sin (Rom. 4:25). A new day had dawned, the day when all flesh shall see the glory of Jesus Christ.

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O Darkest Woe

by
Johann Rist

An important hymnwriter at the time of the Thirty Year's War was Johann Rist, pastor, poet, and playwright, who spent the greater part of his life at Wedel, close to Hamburg. Rist was recognized as one of the great literary lights of his day, and in 1664 was crowned poet laureate of Germany by Emperor Ferdinand III. Born at Ottensen, March 8, 1607, Rist received his inspiration for hymn-writing while studying at the University of Rinteln under Joshua Stegmann. Later he pursued studies at the University of Rostock until the Thirty Years' War almost emptied that institution of its students. He himself almost succumbed to the pestilence which raged there in 1633. Two years later he was appointed pastor at Wedel, where he led "a patriarchal and happy life" despite the bloodshed, famine, plundering and plague which characterized the era.

He died in 1667.

Rist was a prolific writer. Two of his plays depict vividly the times in which he lived. Other secular works also are of considerable historical interest. As a hymn-writer, he was the author of no less than 680 lyrics, for which some of the best musicians of the day composed tunes. As a result, Rist's hymns were soon being sung all over Germany. It is said that even the Romanists became deeply intrigued by them. Invariably they reflect and abiding trust in God and a fervent love to Christ. Still in common use today are "Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light," "O living Bread from heaven," "O darkest woe," "Arise, the kingdom is at hand," "Help us. O Lord, behold we enter," "Rise, O Salem, rise and shine," "Lord Jesus Christ, Thou living Bread," "Arise, sons of the kingdom," and many others.

The Story of Christian Hymnody,
Fortress Press, 1959. p. 85

*O darkest woe! Ye tears, forth flow! Has earth so sad a wonder,
That the Father's only Son Now lies buried yonder!*

*O sinful man, It was the ban Of death on thee that brought Him
Down to suffer for thy sins, And such woe hath wrought Him.*

*Behold thy Lord, The Lamb of God, Blood-sprinkled lies before thee,
Pouring out His life that He May to life restore thee.*

*O Ground of faith, Laid low in death! Sweet lips not silent sleeping!
Surely all that live must mourn Her with bitter weeping.*

*Yea, blest is he Whose heart shall be Fixed here, and apprehendeth
Why the lord of glory thus To the grave descendeth.*

*O Jesus blest! My help and rest! With tears I pray - Lord, hear me;
Make me love Thee to the last, In the grave be near me!*

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