Can We Trust Our English Bible Versions? Part 2

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INTRODUCTION

- We do not possess any of the original autographs of either the old or new testaments.
- So how can we be confident that our English versions are trustworthy?
- So why are there variations in the English text of the New Testament, even in these standard versions? Because there are variations in the Greek manuscripts.

1 Manuscripts: Handwritten in the Original Language

1 Peter 1:24–25

- In this topic, a manuscript is a handwritten document in the original language.
- We have over 5,795, either partial or complete copies of the New Testament. And some of them date within 40 years of the time they were written.
- When you have over 5,700 manuscripts, some of them dating to within less than a century of when they were written, you can compare them. And you can determine what the original was.
- God said through Peter in 1 Peter 1, verses 24 and 25, my word endures forever.

2 Versions: Handwritten in a Different Language

- What's a version? In this case, it's a handwritten document in a different language.
- So are you aware, class, that the New Testament was translated into old Syriac? It was early on.
- It's not as strong as this one. Why is that? Because this is in the original language. This is in different languages.

3 The Church Fathers Quoted Scripture

- In the first century and on, there were lots of leaders in the church in different places that wrote letters to one another.
- In those letters that they wrote, they quoted Scripture a lot.
- So extensive are the citations that if all other sources of our knowledge of the text of the New Testament were destroyed, the citations of the early Christian writers would be sufficient alone to reconstruct the whole New Testament.

4 Transmitted Through the Hands of Copyists

Acts 8; Mark 16:8

- Scribes had a tremendously important responsibility. And they took their job so seriously that they copied every line by line, capital letter after capital letter, no spaces, no punctuation.

- They're the most ancient, almost complete copies of the Bible that are in existence anywhere on earth.
- Human copyists are susceptible to slips and faults of either the eye or the ear.
- Scribes were also sometimes susceptible to trying to improve a text by making it agree with other passages of scripture.

5 The Proper Way to Count Variations

Matthew 1:18

- From one point of view, class, it could be said there are over 200,000 errors in the Greek New Testament text.
- The count is misleading. So I'm going to show you the proper way to count.
- There are no variations in these manuscripts in 86% of the text.
- One and a quarter page. Of any significant variations.

6 Significant Variations: Which One Is Right?

Acts 8:37; 1 John 5:7–8; Mark 16:9–20

- If you're going to try to decide what's in the original autograph, and the manuscripts differ, which one is right? That's the question.
- Don't use the King James version for 1 John 5, 7 and 8. It's based on almost no evidence.
- Don't you worry one minute about Mark 16. The evidential support for it is massive. It belongs in the original autograph.
- If all of those significant variations were not in the autographs, you haven't lost a single doctrinal issue in the text.

> THE CHALLENGE
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> **Please leave here with great confidence that when you read these standard versions, and particularly when you compare those together with each other, you've got what God wants you to do.**

MY NOTES