

Difficult Texts In The Bible

Why All The Brackets?

(II Ti 3:16-17)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Evening
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series of lessons on the "Difficult Texts In The Bible."
 - a. What do we mean by "difficult texts in the Bible?"
 - i. We are dealing with texts that have multiple interpretations associated with them.
3. The passages under consideration.
 - a. **Mk 16:9-20; Ac 8:37; I Jn 5:7-8**
4. What about these brackets we see sometimes.

I. The Reason For The Brackets

- A. There is textual divisiveness concerning these scriptures
 1. That means that some manuscripts have the verses and some do not.
 2. Therefore you have some who say it belongs and some who do not.
- B. Through time there has been many translations made
 1. Through the years we now have more and more than were in the past.
 2. For example when the Westcott & Hort was assembled, the Greek N.T., in 1860's & 70's there were only 1,500 Greek manuscripts (MSS) at the time.
 - i. By 1964 there were over 5,000. (Fort Worth Lectureship 1981 "The Problem Of Interpolation: Should Mark 16:9-20; Acts 8:37, And I John 5:7-8 Be In Our Bibles" by Woodson, William pg. 41)
 - ii. Today it is said that there are 5686 MSS today. (<http://carm.org/manuscript-evidence>)
- C. Thus as new MSS arrive the text is looked at for verification of accuracy
 1. The idea being the more we have the better.
 2. By the way this is a good thing.

II. Mark 16:9-20

- A. This particular passage is under attack mainly because of one verse
 1. That verse being **Mk 16:16**.
 - i. Those that deny baptisms necessity like to find reasons to remove this simple verse to, in theory, excuse themselves from baptisms need.
- B. MSS evidence against it
 1. These last 12 verses are absent from...
 - i. The two oldest MSS we have.
 - a. Aleph & Vaticanus.
 - ii. Certain Latin, Syriac, & Armenian versions.
 2. Clement of Alexandria (c150-c215AD) & Origen (c184-c253AD) show new knowledge of the existence of the verses, Eusebius & Jerome (Latin Vulgate) make mention that these verses were absent from most of the MSS they worked with.
 3. Also some of the MSS that contain the verses mark it as questionable or as not in some MSS.

Difficult Texts In The Bible

- C. MSS evidence for it
 - 1. Though it sounds like these verses are not in the majority of the MSS this is wrong.
 - 2. As far back as Iranaeus (c130-c200AD), states they are authentic and thus original.
 - 3. Almost all of the ancient MSS of Mark have these 12 verses.
 - i. They are found in most of the uncial MSS
 - ii. They are found in all of the cursive MSS
 - 4. Also if you look closely at the Aleph & Vaticanus it would appear they were written by the same person.
 - i. Not to mention a lot is missing from these.
 - ii. The book of Hebrews is missing from one of them.
 - 5. Lastly it is extremely unlikely that the last statement in Mark would be "and they were afraid." This is simply illogical with the rest of scripture.
- D. Conclusion
 - 1. There is more evidence for these verses than against such.

III. Acts 8:37

- A. This particular passage has led to much discussion
 - 1. We will focus on the MSS evidence.
- B. MSS evidence against it
 - 1. It is not found in Papyrus 45, 47, Aleph, Alexandrinus, Vaticanus or Ephraem.
 - 2. It is not found in the minuscules 33, 81, 614...
 - i. McGarvey wrote, "In regard to scarcely any reading are the textual critics more unanimously agreed, or on better manuscript evidence, than the rejection of this verse as an interpolation." (Fort Worth Lectureship 1981 "The Problem Of Interpolation: Should Mark 16:9-20; Acts 8:37, And I John 5:7-8 Be In Our Bibles" by Woodson, William pg. 43)
- C. MSS evidence for it
 - 1. There is no real good textual evidence.
 - i. Iranaeus alludes to it.
 - ii. Cyprian (258AD) quoted this verse.
 - 2. There is good reason to suggest it however.
 - i. "Are we to believe that Philip said nothing in answer to the question? And yet the eunuch commanded the chariot to be still-that both got out of it and went down into the water in silence. Can any sane man believe it?"
- D. Conclusion
 - 1. Though the textual evidence is not there, there still remains a strong possibility for it.

Difficult Texts In The Bible

IV. I Jn 5:7

- A. This is the only verse were most scholars are unanimous
 - 1. They are unanimous that it does not belong.
- B. It seems that Erasmus' Greek N.T. who's MSS the KJV is translated from kept his word.
 - 1. There is no evidence for it except for one MSS the Codex Britannicus.
 - 2. "In view, therefore, of the overwhelming manuscript evidence against the insertion of the verse, it is properly omitted from the American Standard Version, and all New Testament Greek texts today. It would never have found its way into the "Received Text," (basis for the older translations), had not Erasmus promised to insert it if it could be found in any Greek manuscript; and discovering that it was in the late Codex Britannicus, in keeping with his commitment, put it in the Complutensian edition of 1514.* The most conservative scholars have refereed to this act of Erasmus as "stupidity," and the effort itself, "mere caprice." There is, therefore, not the slightest ground for assuming that these words were a part of the original composition of the apostle John, or entitled to a place in the sacred text; nor is there any loss whatsoever in yielding them up as spurious, since nothing is taught in them not abundantly taught elsewhere in the New Testament." (Fort Worth Lectureship 1981 "The Problem Of Interpolation: Should Mark 16:9-20; Acts 8:37, And I John 5:7-8 Be In Our Bibles" by Woodson, William pg. 45)
- C. Thus there is overwhelming evidence against it
 - 1. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." (KJV)
 - 2. "For there are three that testify: 8 the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree." (ESV)
- D. Conclusion
 - 1. The KJV of verse 7 should be removed or at least marked through.

V. What Does All That Mean?

- A. It doesn't mean we have to know the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
 - 1. I've taken Greek and I don't know Greek very well. However you can buy interlinear Bibles and lexicons to help in this area. If you have a computer there are numerous programs that are free that aid in this area.
 - 2. One of the best things to do is have multiple translations so you can see any differences. This is a good indication to study further.
- B. It doesn't mean we can't trust God's Word
 - 1. God has kept His Word in giving us all we need.
 - i. **II Pt 1:3** "as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness..."

Difficult Texts In The Bible

2. We just need to remember that translations are mans work not God's.
 - i. Just look at all the horrible translations that are out there.
 - ii. There are great translations though, and all should have one or more of them.
- A. It means that we must do our homework to know God's Word
 1. All scripture is God breathed but let it not be said of any of us that we speak what God has not breathed or hold back where God has breathed.
 - i. **II Ti 2:15** "Study [be diligent] to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (KJV)

CONCLUSION

1. Miles Coverdale wrote, " It will greatly help you to understand scripture if you note – not only what is spoken and written, but of whom and to whom, with what words, at what time, where, to what intent, with what circumstances, considering what goes before and what follows." (<http://tinyurl.com/6xzqtb2>)
2. Invitation¹
 - a. God's Plan of Salvation
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

¹ A great deal of thanks to brother William Woodson's sermon "The Problem Of Interpolation."