

[Is the "Peace Process" Dead In the Mideast?](#)

War in Iraq! U.S. cruise missiles slam into southern Iraq after Saddam Hussein sends his elite Republican Guard into Irbil, a major Kurdish city in northern Iraq. Once again, one of the most strategically important parts of the world erupts in violence, and the U.S. and other major powers are immediately involved. What does it all mean? Will Saddam Hussein, as irrational as it would seem, once again turn in fury on Israel in an attempt to create a wide-spread war in the Mideast? Will he bring other Arab powers into armed conflict against a common enemy? Is the last chance for peace in the Mideast slipping away?

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The controversy over modern Bible translations is bigger than you may realize. Dozens of books, tracts, and pamphlets have been published claiming that "newer" translations such as the RSV, NIV, NASB, NKJV, etc., are dreadfully inferior to the King James. Some go on to argue that they show evidence of "New Age" influence, and even label them "satanic counterfeits"! Are these claims true? Just what is the evidence?

["Trick or Treat?"](#)

Every fall, Ghouls, goblins, ghosts, and witches find their way to the doorsteps of tens of thousands of homes across the country, as the professing Christian world dons the trappings of an ancient festival honoring the "Lord of Death."



[What I say to, I say to everyone: Watch! \(Mark 13:37\)](#)

[Close Encounters With the God Kind](#)

It seems that man has been seeking contact with extraterrestrial life from the beginning.

The countdown to contact may be sooner than many think!

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Close Encounters With the God Kind

It seems that man has been seeking contact with extraterrestrial life from the beginning.

The countdown to contact may be sooner than many think!

by Lloyd W. Cary

Have you seen them? They're everywhere. Aliens. Space creatures. Close encounters of the third kind. If you believe the entertainment media, that is. We've been invaded by Invaders From Mars, War of the Worlds, E.T., Starman, Superman, Star Trek, Star Wars, The Man From Planet X, and Predator. The list seems endless. On a more serious level there have been numerous documented sightings of unidentified flying objects, as well as speculation about "the face on Mars" and, more recently, the alleged Martian mete-orite "that mayor may not support evi-dence of a one-time single-celled organ-ism," according to one NASA official.

It seems that there is some innate longing or desire within man that compels him to reach out and touch someone who is not quite of this world. Someone with powers and intelligence far superior to ours. Someone with the answers to all man's ills and problems. It is as though mankind is being conditioned and set up for such an encounter.

The good news is that such a Being exists. The bad news is that most people are looking in the wrong places and to the wrong beings.

Close Encounters With the Demonic Kind

Jesus Christ spoke of such a being when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18). Ezekiel 14:12-14 speaks of the same incident: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

Long before man was created, Lucifer, the fallen angel who became Satan the devil, walked on our planet. Thwarted and detesting God's plan to reproduce Himself through mankind, this evil genius now set out on a long range plan to overthrow mankind. Through devious means, falsehood and counterfeits he has succeeded in deceiving all of mankind (Revelation 12:9). In II Corinthians 4:4 he is called "the god of this world" who "hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." In Ephesians 2:2 he is referred to as "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

This evil being will use any means at his disposal spiritualism, psychic phenomenon, UFOs, reincarnation, false religion, and the occult to deceive and distract man from seeking the true God. In the last days he will empower his false prophet to actually work miracles "with all power and signs and lying wonders" (II Thessalonians 2:9) inasmuch as to actually enable him to call down fire out of heaven in the sight of men (Revelation 13:13). He will have mankind as a whole so hoodwinked that they will actually turn to fight Christ at His Second Coming (Revelation 17:13-14; 19:19). Undoubtedly, they will believe that He is an invading being from outer space. In the end, however, Satan will be defeated. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet were cast, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

Close Encounters With the God Kind

Although Jesus Christ will, in effect, come from "outer space," He is no alien. He is the One who created the heavens and the earth as well as mankind itself (John 1:1-3). They belong to Him. Soon, Jesus Christ is coming again to set up a kingdom upon the earth that shall never pass away (Daniel 2:44). Mankind's desire for a Being with far superior powers to solve the world's problems will be realized at last. After the millennial reign of Jesus Christ, God the Father will also dwell upon the earth. Satan has millions deceived into believing that they are going up to heaven, but God's Word reveals that no

man has gone to heaven (John 3:13); rather, that God is coming herecoming home to tabernacle with men. God the Father has begotten us as sons and has a burning desire to be with His family.

Nevertheless, we do not need to wait until Christ's Second Coming to enter into a close encounter with the God kind. We are able to commune with God daily, in prayer (Ephesians 6:18) and Bible study (II Timothy 2:15). "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). How ironic that, while so many people are looking for contact with alien life forms elsewhere, they are ignoring a much closer, loving, and more powerful encounter with the God kind that is only a prayer away!

God reveals Himself as Abba, our heavenly Father. Abba is an Aramaic word which corresponds to our "Da-da," "Daddy," or "Papa," and is often the first word framed by the lips of infants, and expresses an unreasoning and total trust. "Father" expresses an intellectual understanding of their relationship. The two terms together express the total love and intelligent confidence of the child. It is found three times in the New Testament: In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed, "Abba, Father" (Mark 14:36); the apostle Paul linked the Christian's cry of "Abba, Father" with the "Spirit of sonship" (Romans 8:15); and, again, Paul writes, "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!'" (Galatians 4:6). It is the strongest relationship imaginable, transcending mankind and melding it to the very God kind. This is our destiny. (Be sure to send for our free booklets, What Is Your Destiny? and God's Seasonal Plan).

What a blessed privilege it is to be given the right to actually call the great Creator, "Abba, Father"! This is truly our close encounter with the God kind both now and forever.
End

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By Garner Ted Armstrong

Once again, the most volatile region in the world erupts in flame! Saddam Hussein sends several divisions of soldiers with many tanks and artillery pieces into Kurd territory in northern Iraq, and the U.S. retaliates with cruise missile attacks against targets in southern Iraq.

This time, neither Turkey nor Saudi Arabia approved of the attacks, nor would they allow U.S. aircraft to operate from their territories. With the exception of Britain, none of the former coalition allies backed the American attacks.

What will happen next?

Will these events, and growing Arab anger over Israel's new prime minister's policies toward the Palestinians lead to another major war in the Mideast?

When Arab terrorists drove a big tanker truck up to the barricades outside an American troop barracks in Dhahran and blew the building apart with an estimated 5,000 pounds of explosives, the shock waves reached Europe and Japan as well as the United States, who mourned nineteen air force personnel killed, and hundreds injured.

The bombing of the U.S. Air Force barracks in Saudi Arabia came in the aftermath of elections in Israel, with Benjamin Netanyahu having narrowly defeated Shimon Peres, the successor to slain Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin. Rabin had been the architect of the "peace process" in the Mideast, had granted major concessions to the Palestinians, had effected a treaty with Jordan, and was offering to negotiate with Syria over the Golan Heights, along Israel's northeastern border with Syria.

Will these and other recent events in the Mideast lead to the building of the Third Temple, and the placing of the prophesied "Abomination of Desolation"?

Remember, a major indication from Christ Himself that the Great Tribulation was about to begin was "When you see armies surrounding Jerusalem."

The U.S. and Saudi Arabia An Uneasy Alliance

The pictures were horrifying. Like a haunting reminder of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the shattered front of multi-storied barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, testified to the murderous force of the largest terrorist bomb in history that ripped apart concrete, steel, and glass killing, maiming, and cutting.

Shocked and heartbroken families attended memorial services as bodies were returned home, along with many of the walking wounded. President Clinton attended two memorial services in Florida on the same day families and friends grieved and wept.

In the aftermath, Americans were incensed to learn that the Saudi government had not been the docile, cooperative partner many had assumed.

Not only had the Saudis refused to allow U.S. intelligence agents access to five terrorists who had exploded a bomb months earlier, and were then beheaded, but the U.S. commander at the site of the Dhahran bombing had been refused permission to place the concrete barriers much further away from the building.

The blast has focused attention on an alliance that has grown increasingly tenuous, if not sour.

Saudi Arabia has been a pivotal ally in the Gulf, enormously important to Europe, Japan, and the United States because of its huge oil reserves. It has required the most delicate kind of diplomacy to preserve that relationship over the decades with one of the wealthiest and most strategically located Arab nations. Is all that coming to an end?

The Saudis flatly refused to become involved in America's cruise missile attacks against Iraq; refused permission to allow U.S. aircraft to operate from Saudi bases, which forced the U.S. to send B-52 bombers all the way from the U.S. to Guam, and to use Naval vessels already present in the Gulf.

These are hardly the actions of a staunch ally.

Unrest is building all over the Mideast as a result of elections in Israel, which appear to Arabs as Israeli rejection of the peace process.

As if to confirm Arab suspicions, the new right-wing government in Israel has once again renewed building Jewish settlements in the West Bank; has not withdrawn Israeli armed forces from Hebron; has insisted Jerusalem will never again be a divided city, and has stated it will not allow a separate Palestinian State to be created within Israel. Furthermore, it has balked on placing the return of the Golan Heights to Syria on the table.

Yet, all of these major political considerations were a part of the "peace process" initiated by slain Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin.

If a widening war comes in the Mideast, the world's great powers would be immediately drawn in. Following the U.S. cruise missile attack, many critics quickly pointed out that "When Saddam Hussein sends his army north to attack Kurds, the U.S. attacks Saddam Hussein in the south!"

Many government officials, including high-ranking British diplomats, were asked about these things by the media. Invariably, they spoke of the "strategic interests" of the U.S. and the whole world in the entire Gulf primarily Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

And they spoke of oil.

How American-Saudi Relations Began

In the 1930s, American prospectors, representing American oil companies, created a sprawling complex in the desert that would become Dhahran. From that time on,

Americans have lived and worked in the desert kingdom.

For decades, the United States has courted Saudi rulers, striving to maintain a delicate balance between U.S. support for Israel, and growing U.S. dependency of Arab oil.

In a recent article in U.S. News And World Report, Fouad Ajami wrote, "It was on the back of a napkin, historians tell us, that Franklin Roosevelt established the claim to American primacy in Saudi Arabia. 'Persian oil is yours,' FDR's scribble told Britain's ambassador. 'We share the oil of Iraq and Kuwait. As for Saudi Arabian oil, it is ours.'"

Blunt words. But such were the spoils of war. British power in the Mideast had been unchallenged for decades. Now, it was America's turn.

From the decline of the British Empire, American hegemony has been present in the Persian Gulf. The fall of the Shah of Iran, whose oppressive regime had been the darling of U.S. governments for many years, was the first major blow to American presence in the region.

American companies had invested heavily in Iran. Major oil companies, engineering and architectural firms, and businesses of every kind were involved, as attested to by the daring rescue of employees of Ross Perot, documented in his book, *Wings Of Eagles*. Who does not remember the American hostages in Iran during the Carter administration; the tragic mid-air collision in the desert when American forces tried to effect a daring rescue; the "Iran-Contra" scandal that rocked the Reagan administration and brought down Oliver North?

Once rabid Iranian Islamic fundamentalists had catapulted the "Ayatollah Khomeini" into power and the Shah had fled for his life, it was all over for the U.S. in Iran.

Then came the infamous years of the Iraq-Iran war. Now, it was expedient for the U.S. and European countries to build up Saddam Hussein's infrastructure, the Iraqi economy, and Saddam's growing war machine as a hedge against virulent Islamic fundamentalism and Iranian conquest. U.S. companies, along with many from Germany, Switzerland, Britain, and other countries, sold billions of dollars of high-tech communications equipment, chemicals, and weapons to Iraq. So did Saudi Arabia. For eight long years, the Saudis supported Saddam Hussein with lavish aid. It bought them nothing, for Saddam had obviously wanted to create chaos in Saudi Arabia, not only because he viewed it as a U.S. pawn, but also because he wanted to control the bulk of the world's oil supply. His invasion of Kuwait was seen as only a first phase toward taking control of Saudi Arabia.

After massive loss of life, the Iraq-Iran war ground to an indecisive halt, leaving major oil-producing and port facilities in smoking wrecks.

But Iran did not win. If it was not quite a win for Iraq, it was stalemate for the present, and the U.S. could heave a sigh of relief that the fanatic Shiite fundamentalist revolution seemed contained for the moment.

U.S. support for the Saudi family, commencing with King ibn Saud in the late 1940s, was always a calculated risk. "Moderate" Arab governments have always been courted by Western powers for obvious reasons.

For many years, the United States sold ever more sophisticated arms to Saudi Arabia always for purely "defensive" purposes of course. Helping offset Israeli alarm over such sales was massive U.S. aid to Israel, along with Israel's share of U.S. tanks and

guns.

Now, U.S. influence in the Gulf may have been dealt a nearly fatal blow. Almost absent from the Western media has been growing popular dissent in Saudi Arabia.

Massive demonstrations have taken place in Riyadh. Growing segments of the population are disgusted with the corrupt Saudi ruling family. The family itself is in disarray. There is growing competition between two of the family who hope to succeed the ailing king, Fahd ibn Abdul-Aziz.

Fahd's half brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, is pitted against Prince Sultan, who is defense minister, and the old king's full brother.

When Fahd was very sick, Crown Prince Abdullah was acting king. He continued Saudi Arabia's main policies, which were to simply keep on producing oil, trying to contain threats from both Iraq and Iran, and cooperate militarily with the United States.

But in the immediate aftermath of the bombing in Dhahran, Prince Abdullah called a special summit. He went to Damascus to see Syrian President Hafez Assad, and asked Mubarak of Egypt to join them. Assad was an air force general who seized power in a coup in 1970. Many of the Arab leaders see themselves as the major player among all other Arab states; many wish to see themselves at the head of an Arab union of some kind. Assad is no exception.

This hasty summit must have sent chills through many Western intelligence agencies, for it appeared as if Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Syria were attempting to revive the "UAR," or the United Arab Republic, which was the brainchild of Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, back in the 1960s.

The emergency meeting must have been particularly ominous to Israel and the U.S., since both Egypt and Saudi Arabia have been moderate Arab governments, and neither has done anything to sully Israel's rapprochement with them previously.

Since the Carter administration, Egypt has continued to fulfill its obligations under the Camp David accords, and has maintained peace with Israel. Hence, it was seen as an ominous event when Hosni Mubarak of Egypt closeted himself with the heads of state of Syria and Saudi Arabia.

But Assad sees himself as the victim of a "conspiracy" by Turkey, Israel, and Jordan; sees himself as "surrounded" by hypocritical forces. Turkey has a treaty with Israel by which it allows Israeli aircraft to use Turkish airspace. Not only this, but Turkey plans to build a 22-dam complex along the upper Euphrates River, which supplies water to Syria and Iraq.

It was noted that the huge Cairo summit of Arab leaders could not have taken place so swiftly had it not been at the urging of Saudi Arabia, and with the cooperation of Syria.

Will the Saudi Government Survive?

Millions of Americans now know that the U.S. military was very unhappy with lack of cooperation from the Saudis involving security at their compound in Dhahran.

Many television news reports have explained how U.S. investigative agencies, including the FBI, were frustrated when they were denied access to the terrorists who set off a bomb in November of 1995 outside a military complex in Riyadh, aimed at Americans who were training the Saudi National Guard.

Four Americans were killed, and a number of others injured. The Saudis tried the bombers, then beheaded them. Since the Dhahran bombing, strident voices of criticism

have been heard from within the military and the government in the U.S. concerning lack of Saudi cooperation.

It was no accident that the November bombers chose the site they did. The Saudi National Guard's primary objective is the protection of the royal family, which has an estimated four thousand princes. For decades, it has been common gossip that Saudi Arabian princes, with their many private intercontinental jets and their huge fortunes, have dropped millions of dollars into American and other gambling casinos.

To the Islamic fundamentalists, such behavior is totally corrupt. They resent American presence, American television, American entertainment, and American culture. To them, the Saudi family has been completely corrupted by the "Great Satan." The recent bombing may only be the beginning of an attempt by fanatical Islamic groups to drive the U.S. from Saudi Arabia, and, if they can, to bring down the Saudi government.

Now, the Saudi National Guard is being expanded by some twenty-two thousand men, and being provided with heavier weapons. Like feudal lords of old, the princes of the Saudi family are seen surrounding themselves with elite guards. The Washington Times reported that a purchase package of some \$3.4 billion dollars has been allotted to the Saudi National Guard for purchasing about 1,000 Canadian-built armored vehicles, TOW anti-tank launchers, and 155mm howitzers.

That this is a sign of growing popular dissent in the country goes without saying. The dissenters included infiltrators from Iran and Iraq. About 17 to 20 percent of the Saudi population is Shiite Muslim, and most of them live in the oil-producing part of Saudi Arabia. They violently oppose the Saudi ruling family, and the U.S.

Though U.S. forces have been placed on much more intensive security alert, no one believes that the massive bomb that exploded in Dhahran was the last terrorist attack.

The last thing the U.S. wants is the overthrow of the Saudi regime. Yet, with Iranian and Iraqi infiltrators, along with plenty of home-grown Islamic fundamentalists who have coalesced into various terrorist groups, the odds are against any kind of long-term tranquility in Saudi Arabia.

Why the Israeli Elections Outraged Arabs

Though Benjamin Netanyahu won by only a narrow margin, he did so on fiery campaign rhetoric that flew directly in the face of the "peace process" put in place by slain Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin, and continued by his successor, Shimon Peres.

Netanyahu made it clear that he believes fervently in a united Jerusalem which will never again be a divided city; that he believes the "settlements" (towns and villages erected along the West Bank, in land captured from Jordan during the 1967 Six Day War) must continue to be developed; that Israel will never abandon the Golan Heights, and that there will never be a sovereign "Palestinian State" within Israel.

Yet, each of these represent the four major objectives of the PLO, and all their Arab supporters throughout the Islamic world.

Repeatedly, spokespersons for the PLO, from Yassir Arafat himself to Hanna Ashawri, an outspoken female official in the PLO, make uncompromising statements about a "Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital."

They say these are absolutely preconditions to peace. They say there can never be peace with Israel until these goals are accomplished; until the Golan is returned to Syria, the settlements are discontinued, and those which presently exist are abandoned and demolished.

The language of the final communique which came from the Cairo Summit was said to have been virtually written by Hafez Assad himself. Assad was said to have managed to "impose his views on the usually-divided Arab world."

Chillingly, the Arab communique clearly said that the region could be "pushed back to violence," and called upon Turkey to reconsider its recent treaty with Israel.

Immediately following Netanyahu's narrow victory, many Arab states, along with the U.S., and, surprisingly, the European Union, issued statements which clearly told Netanyahu everyone expected him to continue the "peace process."

It was as if dozens of governments expected Netanyahu to immediately abandon his entire platform which had propelled him to victory, and adopt the policies of the very government he had set about to defeat!

From that time to this, he has been speaking of "peace with security."

Shortly after taking office, Prime Minister Netanyahu addressed the American Congress. He spoke of the "moral force" of the United States. He said, his voice ringing with passion and emotion, "We want peace." But, he said, "Peace is based upon security for all," and spoke of Israeli citizens who have been subjected to "more terrorist attacks in the past three years than in the previous ten." He told how friends of his were driving through one of Israel's northern towns when a Katyusha rocket screamed overhead. The flames from the rocket burnt their car, injuring a woman, who is recovering.

He said, referring to the bombing in Dhahran and acts of terrorism in general, "The common goal of terrorism is to remove any Western and primarily American presence in the Mideast."

Urgently, he said the Western powers must quit trading with Iran, continue isolating Iran and Iraq, and "stop the nuclearization of terrorist states."

He said that to allow such states to become nuclear armed would mean "catastrophe for Israel, and for the whole world." He urged, in a voice of fervor, "Time is running out!" He said, "We have to ACT!"

His speech contained some powerful statements which hurl the challenge directly at all Arab states to understand that the entire concept of "land for peace," so far as he and his new government is concerned, is dead.

He said "No one will uproot us from the land," and promised that Israel plans to "uproot no one." This was in unmistakable reference to Hebron and the Jewish settlements along the West Bank, and in the Golan Heights.

In a moving sketch, he explained how he had lived in Jerusalem from his boyhood; how from 1967 it had become, for the first time in two thousand years, truly the "City of Peace."

He showed how all believers in all faiths (referring to nominal Christians, Jews, and Muslims) have free access to their holy sites; how the city has one government, one police force; that it is one unified city. He said, "We shall not allow a 'Berlin Wall' to be built in Jerusalem."

After describing how Jerusalem had been divided, with coils of barbed wire and machine-gun emplacements between the two parts, he said, "There will never be such a division of Jerusalem again NEVER!"

That this statement absolutely infuriated Yassir Arafat and all other Arab states, particularly Syria, goes without saying. Without a doubt, dozens of Arab heads of state and hundreds in their governments were sitting, glued to their television sets, watching

the speech.

They have already warned that unless Netanyahu virtually follows the policies of his predecessor, there would be violence!

A CNN correspondent observed in the immediate aftermath that Benjamin Netanyahu "Drove a stake through the heart of the concept of 'trading land for peace.'"

The Arab states no doubt were watching closely as Netanyahu formed his new government. Had he appointed crusty Ariel Sharon (who led his troops into Lebanon and was accused of standing by while dozens of civilians were murdered in refugee camps) as minister of defense, there would have been screams of outrage.

Sharon had helped keep David Levy out of the race for prime minister. Surprisingly, David Levy refused Netanyahu's offer of foreign minister. Netanyahu has since created a "new ministry" which has broad and rather vague implications for Sharon.

Instead of defense, Sharon was made the head of a new "super-ministry," that of "infrastructure." That could include anything from roads and bridges to buildings and communications all of which are vital to defense.

Presently, the Arab states, along with many others, are treating the elections in Israel as a major threat to world peace.

Is Egypt Arming Itself With SCUDs?

When Saddam Hussein launched his SCUDs against Israel, he wanted to accomplish several important goals. First, he wanted to cause massive loss of life in Israel, thus bringing them into the war. He fully expected immediate retaliatory attacks from Israel.

Had he even expected the Israelis to use nuclear weapons?

He may have, because it has been revealed in recent months that, not only did Hussein possess chemical and biological warheads for his SCUDs and for aerial bombs, but he had deployed them in forward areas. Defecting Iraqis and captured documents have indicated Saddam Hussein may have given the order to use them, but that the orders were either disobeyed by commanders in the field, or else there was simply no time.

Had the Israelis entered the war, the tenuous coalition of various Arab countries would have disintegrated immediately. Hussein knew full well the reluctance of Arabs to fight against fellow Arabs, even if Kuwaitis and some Saudis were furious over his brutal occupation of Kuwait.

Today, there are claims by dozens of veteran's organizations in the U.S. that when U.S. forces blew up forward ammunition dumps, chemical and biological warheads exploded, sending clouds of poison gas and biological agents high into the atmosphere. The "blow back" effect has caused dramatic illness among some veterans of the war in the Gulf.

Initially, when U.S. veterans complained of strange illnesses, the Pentagon denied they could have been caused by blowing up chemical or biological weapons. But on June 21, 1996, they suddenly announced they now had evidence that one Iraqi bunker north of Kuwait was blown up by U.S. soldiers, and that it had contained mustard gas and nerve gas.

The United States News and World Report, in its July 8 issue, reported that two Army paratroopers and combat engineers, who had been in top physical condition, and had always scored in the top 1 percent of fitness tests, were now in bad shape.

The men are Brian Martin and Chris Tullius.

"Now Martin can't walk around the block without getting weak. He has chronic

diarrhea, insomnia and headaches, and he gets lost if he drives more than three miles from his home. Tullius's problems are mainly gastrointestinal. After he began vomiting blood, he had nine corrective surgeries."

Thousands of Gulf War veterans have complained of many illnesses. Some believe the anti-nerve gas pills they took prior to the campaign may have caused their problems.

Recently, William Marcus, a senior science advisor at the Environmental Protection Agency, testified at a congressional hearing that the occurrence of several kinds of cancer of the brain and nervous system, for example is 7 to 14 times higher among Gulf War veterans than among the general population.

There is ample evidence that Saddam Hussein possessed chemical and biological weapons, and that, contrary to media reports during the Gulf War, that he had the technology to affix them to the warheads of his SCUDs.

Netanyahu was obviously stung by Egypt's position at the Cairo Arab Summit. He said, "I'd like to deepen and expand the peace between us. This is why I was particularly disappointed in the posture that Egypt undertook vis-a-vis the Cairo summit. I would hope that this is a temporary phase and that they would go back to the pattern of genuine peacemaking and genuine good neighborliness that has characterized our relationship in previous years."

Netanyahu knows more than he revealed.

As Arab leaders were convening in Cairo, the Washington Times released an article which cited a CIA report claiming North Korea had recently sent several large shipments of advanced SCUD missile materials, and that production of short-range missiles would begin in Egypt soon.

The report was dismissed by Egyptian officials as being a ploy from "certain quarters in Washington" who "did not want this summit to take place."

A managing editor of the semi-official newspaper Vorontsov Al-Ahram in Cairo said, "This [the Times article about SCUDs] can lead the region into a negative attitude toward the role of the U.S. in the Middle East peace process."

Don't doubt for a moment that Israel's intelligence agency, the famed Mossad, is not aware of such shipments.

What Is Prophesied To Happen In the Middle East?

For many years, Twentieth Century Watch has been saying, "Watch the Mideast! Watch Jerusalem!" In special columns within this publication, we have continually updated our readers on little-known negotiations between Israel and the Vatican; have revealed how discussions have taken place concerning Jerusalem and its "holy places" becoming like a "second Vatican," under the jurisdiction of the Pope.

The following are some possible scenarios we should watch for:

(1) Watch for major events which would galvanize the Israeli government and the population to begin the building of a temple in Jerusalem.

(2) Watch to see whether the Arab mosques which now stand on the Temple Mount, the famed Dome of the Rock and Al Aksa mosques, will either be destroyed, or whether a temple will be built immediately adjacent to them.

(3) Watch for the emergence of a powerful military and political leader among the Arab nations, perhaps Egypt, who would fulfill the prophetic role of "king of the south" of Daniel 11:40-45.

(4) Watch for the setting up of "the abomination of desolation" in the Holy Place.

The Holy Place seems to obviously indicate a temple, if not a temporary tabernacle over a dedicated cornerstone.

(5) Watch for the emergence of the "beast" power; a political-military dictator who will form a ten-nation coalition which will intervene in the Mideast, occupying many countries, including Israel and Egypt (Daniel 11:40-43).

Jesus Christ predicted we would be living in a time of "wars and rumors of wars."

He said, "See that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows...And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand:) Then let them which be in Judaea flee into the mountains...for then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened [cut short by God's intervention!], there should no flesh be saved [alive]; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened" (Matthew 24:6-22).

The abomination of desolation has been typically fulfilled in the past. Antiochus Euphianes desecrated the Temple, set up a statue of Jupiter Olympus in the Holy Place, and commanded that swine's blood be sacrificed to it. The Romans set up a boar's head over a city gate, and placed their standards in the vicinity of the ruined Temple. For a fuller understanding, write or call for our booklets, *The Abomination of Desolation*, and *Will a Temple Soon Be Built in Jerusalem?*

Today, many nations possess weapons of such awesome destructive power that all mankind could be killed! Horrifying weapons, such as biological agents, chemicals, and nuclear weapons are in the hands of many nations! Gangster nations are working to acquire nuclear weapons!

It is known that many tons of biological agents possessed by Iraq were never found by U.N. investigators following the Gulf War. For fuller information about this, write or call for your copy of our booklet, *The Great Tribulation Is It About To Happen?*

Immediately following Daniel's description of an invasion of Israel and Egypt by the "king of the north," he says, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book" (Daniel 12:1).

It is obvious this is speaking of the same time that Jesus Christ described; a time of global catastrophe greater than any other time in all human history. This is nothing short of a nuclear-chemical-biological World War III, in which countless millions will die!

In each case in the prophecies of Matthew 24 and Daniel 11 and 12 the triggering events which immediately precede the great tribulation are the occupation of Palestine and Egypt by the armies of the king of the north and the setting up of the abomination of desolation in the Holy Place.

The Holy Place means the "Holy of Holies," which was the innermost sanctuary in the Temple. It originally contained the Ark of the Covenant, with the two tables of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, a sample stone jar of manna, and the Book of the Law, or the Torah. It was entered only once each year by the high priest on the Day of

Atonement.

When Jesus warned of an abomination of desolation standing "in the holy place," the Temple still stood! The Holy Place of which He spoke was within walking distance of the Mount of Olives, from whence He uttered His prophecies.

Is it necessary that a third temple be built before this prophecy can be fulfilled? This is likely, but it is not absolutely required. We can place no limits on God's determination to work out His plan here below.

Perhaps a symbolic cornerstone of a new temple could be laid, or a temporary structure of some kind built. But whatever is to be understood by the Holy Place in our time, now, it will become obvious that something abominable, which will bring about terrible desolation, or destruction, will be placed in Jerusalem!

Luke's parallel account of Christ's Olivet prophecy says, "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies then know that the desolation thereof is nigh" (Luke 21:20).

Thanks be to God, He says "And when these things begin to come to pass [the horrifying things of the tribulation], then LOOK UP, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh!" (verse 28).

Jesus Christ promised, "But there shall not an hair of your head perish" (verse 17), and commands His people, "WATCH ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man" (verse 36).

He warned us, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting [excess], and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (verses 34,35).

Once again, violence and war has broken out in the Mideast. Once again, the United States has launched cruise missiles into Iraq to "teach Saddam Hussein a lesson." Once again, our attention is focused on this most strategic part of the world, and we are reminded of the "vital interests" of the United States, Japan, and Europe of the "unimpeded" flow of oil from the Persian Gulf.

Some have charged that President Clinton used Saddam Hussein's attack against the Kurds as an excuse; that the cruise missile attacks against Iraq were only a political ploy to enhance his campaign for reelection. The Russian foreign minister was of this opinion, as was the Iraqi government. The White House categorically denied any such allegations, saying there were no political considerations involved.

Whatever the reasons for American attacks against Iraq, everyone knows that the overriding consideration is oil. All the major powers shudder to think of Saddam Hussein moving back into Kuwait, or moving into Saudi Arabia, thus controlling the bulk of the whole world's energy supplies.

Today, the nations call for "Peace! Peace!" Jeremiah wrote, "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people [glossed over the national crimes and sins of the people] slightly, saying, 'Peace, peace'; when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14).

Israel's new prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, while abandoning nearly all of the initiatives of his predecessor, Yitzak Rabin, which were a part of the Mideast "peace process," nevertheless continues to speak of "peace with security."

But all the Arab nations, and particularly the Palestinians and Syria, are bitterly

incensed at the turn to the right taken in Israel. Don't think for one moment all kinds of contingency plans have not been discussed between major Arab powers in the Mideast. Arab summit meetings are not merely "photo-ops," but are conducted at many levels. Economic, political, and military experts meet behind closed doors to discuss options.

Clear warnings have been issued by Arab heads of state that, unless the "peace process" begun by Rabin is continued, then a "return to violence in the region" is inevitable.

Just how close are we, now, to another terrible war in the Mideast? It could be months. It could be only weeks, or it could be a few years. But you and I know, as we have learned continually, that war can break out in the Mideast at any time.

Paul wrote, "But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, 'Peace and safety'; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape. But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are the children of the light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as do others [be spiritually asleep; oblivious to conditions around us]; but let us watch and be sober" (I Thessalonians 5:1-6).

There is nothing you or I can "do" about wars in the Mideast. Nothing we can do about major events over which we have no control, for we have absolutely no political power, no involvement. But Jesus Christ spoke of those whom, when the Lord shall come, He shall find "so doing," meaning living their lives close to God, and being engaged in the work of God!

"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye might be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man," said Jesus (Luke 21:36).

The one major prophecy being fulfilled now is the prediction Jesus made in the verse just before His warning about the abomination of desolation! He said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

Thank God for those whose hearts are in God's work of witness and warning!
End

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"Must I Use Only the King James Bible?"

The controversy over modern Bible translations is bigger than you may realize. Dozens of books, tracts, and pamphlets have been published claiming that "newer" translations such as the RSV, NIV, NASB, NKJV, etc., are dreadfully inferior to the King James. Some go on to argue that they show evidence of "New Age" influence, and even label them "satanic counterfeits"! Are these claims true? Just what is the evidence?

By Darren M. Cary

What would Paul or John or especially the Ethiopian eunuch think if they saw a child today toting a small "gift award Bible"? How would they react if they saw the Scriptures bound in leather, gilded, and engraved with your name? What if they saw someone with twelve or more translations of the Bible sitting on his or her bookshelf?

They would be amazed, and even envious! To be able to walk through a store and select the Bible of your choice would be stunning to them! Unreal!

A retail salesman at a Christian book store in Tyler, Texas said, however, that not all buyers are impressed. When asked which Bible translation they were looking for, some customers have said, "There's only one real translation," or "I'm only interested in buying a Holy Bible." At first, the salesman was taken aback. Glancing over his right shoulder at the stacks of different translations, he thought: Which Bible is that? I thought they were ALL Holy Bibles!

He soon realized they were referring to the King James Bible. He later learned that some of them really did believe there was only "one real translation"; all others were mere paraphrases. But what made some of his potential buyers so particular and believe so strongly in the translation of the King James? It is certainly a fine Bible, but why the emotional singularity of choice?

There is a reason.

Controversy and the King James Bible

Some "conservative" extremists claim that the only true Word of God to be found is the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, or the so-called "Authorized Version." According to them, true knowledge from the all-powerful God of the universe is confined and packaged in a single translation, channeled through a single committee of translators. All others are absolutely satanic, or at least heavily tainted by the Devil's influence.

It sounds shocking to those who have not been affected by this controversy not to mention those who have been studying a different translation for years. But that idea is out there!

In fairness, not all proponents of the KJV make these drastic claims. Many just prefer it over other translations and that's perfectly acceptable. They grew up with its language; they are comfortable with it; they feel no need to "change" their Bible. After all, its almost "majestic" style and accuracy has kept it in popular usage for 385 years since its publication in 1611.

It is unfortunate, however, that others are intimidated into believing that post-seventeenth century translations are "Satan-breathed," inspired of the Devil. To hold an NIV (New International Version) would be sacrilegious. To seriously study the NASB (New American Standard Bible), termed "Satan's Masterpiece" by author Peter S. Ruckman, would be flirting with the "New Age" movement. That kind of "Christian bullying" is not acceptable, for their arguments are not grounded.

Why the Suspicion?

The main reason the King James Bible is upheld so highly by most is tradition. "The King James Bible..." wrote Olga S. Opfell, "still holds sovereign place and is printed and circulated more widely than any other version. Familiarity and tradition, to be sure, enter into that popularity" (The King James Bible Translators, p. 133). The KJV is no longer the best-seller, but there are still more copies of it in circulation than any other Bible.

We don't like to break tradition. We generally cling to what is comfortable and stick with that which is familiar to our ears. Certain phrases that have been adopted into our daily conversations, such as "labor of love," "lick the dust," "clear as crystal," "the root of all evil," "the sweat of thy brow," "the fat of the land," "a soft answer," and many others, can be traced to the KJV of 1611. We grew up with the King James. Many of us were converted through it. Any scriptural renderings that are "different," therefore, even if the meaning is the same, just don't seem "right" or "natural" to us in comparison. You could almost say they were "weighed in the balance and found wanting." They simply don't fall on our ears the same, so we naturally get defensive. And that's understandable.

However, those who spearhead the "KJV Only" movement (a term coined by James R. White, author of The King James Only Controversy) in its more radical form want to bring Satan into the picture. Their reasoning is as follows: Satan is the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). Satan, being "transformed into an angel of light," has his own ministers (11:14,15). Therefore, he must also have his own Bibles (i.e., NIV, NASB, RSV, NKJV, NRSV, and so on)! Counterfeit Bibles for his counterfeit religion!

This step-by-step argument, resembling logic, may sound convincing, but there is a serious flaw in its reasoning: These "counterfeit Bibles" point to Jesus Christ! They teach the truths and doctrines conveyed in Scripture. The nature of God, our need to be

convicted of sin, the necessity of a Savior, our requirement to repent and obey God's laws are expounded in "modern" translations of the Bible!

But that fact is quickly and emotionally contested by hard-bitten KJV Only advocates.

Weighing the Evidence

A peculiar characteristic of most KJV Only literature is the imputing of evil motives. If anything has been "changed," "added," or "deleted," it is assumed that a particular doctrine is being viciously attacked. If a scripture in a modern translation doesn't match up word-for-word with "the Bible" (i.e., the KJV), its roots must be rotten. It is even proposed, most notably in Gail Riplinger's widely-read book, *New Age Bible Versions*, that all the modern translators have joined hands in conspiracy. It is said that their goal is to harmonize a diluted brand of Christianity with "New Age" and eastern religions: a "one world church" with "Luciferian" doctrines.

Such, however, is demonstrably not the case.

Barry Burton is the author of *Let's Weigh the Evidence*, a small 95-page book summarizing some of the popular arguments espoused by "KJV Onlyists." One chapter is entitled, "Doctrines There Is A Difference!" In it, Burton attempts to show that differences in Bible translations are not trivial or inconsequential, but rather profound affecting fundamental Christian doctrine.

Let's briefly address the doctrines Mr. Burton alleges are "under attack": (1) the deity of Christ, (2) salvation by faith and the Atonement, (3) the Resurrection of Christ, (4) the Second Coming of Christ, (5) the Virgin Birth, and (6) the Word of God. If the accused "conspirators" are to call their work a success, then "their" Bibles will not defend the above truths.

Deity of Christ

Whole volumes have been written supporting the divinity of Christ. Not surprisingly, the authors of many of these works use the NIV and the NASB as well as the KJV. They are able to show ample evidence in support of this doctrine no matter which translation they use. This study is a huge one, so rather than go into the established proofs of Jesus' deity, let's approach it from the standpoint of detecting evil motives. Can it be proven that certain translation committees each consisting of many members who keep each other in check have conspired to do away with the idea that Jesus Christ is a God Being?

Let's begin with the Gospel of John. In John 1:1, the KJV, NIV, and NASB all render the verse: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That is simple enough. The context of the chapter makes plain that the "Word" is the One who became flesh, Jesus Christ.

Now notice verse 18 in the New International Version: "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." Who is at the Father's side? "God the One and Only," referring not to the Father Himself, but to Jesus Christ. This is very plain, and would be a gross mistake for a plotting editorial staff to overlook.

Likewise, this verse in the New American Standard Bible supports Christ's divinity:

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." Here, the One in the bosom of the Father is "the only begotten God." Again, Jesus is clearly identified with divinity.

Do these look like tracks left by Arian conspirators?

The King James Version, now, says something slightly different: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." What is this? The one in the Father's bosom here is simply called the "Son." What son? The biological son of Joseph? The son of Sam, George, Harry, or Tom? Of course not! The context of this passage makes it painfully obvious what is meant. Even in the same chapter, He is called the "Son of God" several times as well as the "Lamb of God." Anyone who can read the Gospel accounts knows exactly what the "Son" is.

But who says the KJV is trying to veil the glory of Christ's divinity? Nobody. It would be absurd to do so. But is it not equally absurd to claim that translations which bring out the divinity of Christ more clearly than the KJV are Devil-inspired attempts to veil this great truth?

Let's look at a few more of these examples.

The NIV, in regards to the people of Israel, says in Romans 9:5: "Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen." Christ is "God over all," according to this reading.

In the KJV and NASB, this is not made as plain: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (KJV; NASB is similar).

It seems, in this example, that one translation supports Christ's divinity more strongly than the others. But that is not necessarily the case; it is simply an instance where more than one justified translation is possible. Can the translators of these two versions rightly be called plotters and evil-doers? Hardly.

Again, the NIV says in Titus 2:13, "While we wait for the blessed hope the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

The NASB reads "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

Both of these versions confirm that Jesus Christ is a legitimate and actual part of the God Family.

The King James Version, also not working anti-Christ agendas, translates the verse: "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." If you read this verse alone, its English construction leaves two possibilities: (1) the glorious appearing is of God the Father and also His Son, or (2) the glorious appearing is of Jesus Christ, who is our God and Savior. Either possibility is acceptable, for each is true.

But there is no need to concentrate on one verse and ignore the context, thought, and message of Scripture. Such blindness will cause you to stumble over and over.

Would it be fair, then, to accuse the King James translators of trying to "do away" with Christ's divinity? Certainly not. But, indeed, hardcore King James Onlyists love to impute satanic motives after pointing out alternate renderings in other translations.

Salvation By Faith

Of all the doctrines to accuse modern translations of attacking, this one seems to be the most bizarre. The most liberal of all Christian teachers and writers believe that all you must do to obtain salvation is "accept" Jesus into your heart. There is no need to do anything. It is a simple "A-B-C" method of salvation.

Yet, according to some in the KJV Only camp, these "liberal translations" are teaching salvation by works. It is hard to understand how they reach this conclusion, but they do attempt to show "proof":

John 3:36, KJV: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

John 3:36, NASB: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Barry Burton comments on the above verses: "Here the verse is changed from God's declaration that is by believing...to salvation is by obedience.

"Salvation is not obtained by obeying that's worksSalvation is obtained by believing!" (Evidence, p.30).

Burton seems to have forgotten the first clause of the NASB's rendering, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life." But his point is that the NASB equates belief with obedience. Are we to believe that these two concepts oppose each other? Is it possible to believe in the Son and obey Him? The truth is, there's no other way.

That faith and obedience go hand-in-hand is precisely what James taught. "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God [faith]; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:17-20, KJV).

So what makes the NASB's "does not obey" an acceptable translation? The Greek word *apeitheo*, from which it and the KJV's "believeth not" are translated, actually embraces both meanings. It can be rightfully rendered either way. The translators of the King James Bible themselves understood this. In I Peter 3:1; 4:17, and Romans 2:8, the KJV translates the same word "do not obey" and "obey not." Yet, nobody would accuse these translators of teaching salvation earned by works when they wrote: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath" (Romans 2:7,8).

How can a rational mind, free of biases and presumptions, think that a translation such as the NASB intended to teach salvation of our own selves? The same version in Titus 3:5,7 says, "He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit...that being justified by His grace we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

Does this sound like "works-salvation" to you? Instead of clear passages like this, critics select scriptures with translational or textual difficulties. Then they are zeroed in upon, twisted, and blown up to say something they never intended to convey!

Resurrection of Christ

The historical death of our Savior is of grave importance, not only to Christians, but to all mankind. More important, however, is His resurrection, which is raised by critics as being yet another doctrine modern translations are attacking. Can this be demonstrated?

It would be difficult in the light of contrary evidence.

In Luke's account of the resurrection, the women entered the tomb and saw two men in brilliant clothes. The NIV says, "In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" Then they remembered his words" (Luke 24:5-8; see Matthew 16:21; 17:22,23; Mark 9:30,31; Luke 18:33).

In Peter's famous sermon on the day of Pentecost, he commented on Psalm 16:8-11: "Seeing what was ahead, he [David] spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact" (Acts 2:31,32, NIV).

Imagine the Committee on Bible Translation, sponsored by the International Bible Society, preparing their text to be published as the New International Version. Supposedly, they were conspirators trying to pervert the gospel, compromising the truth in order to blend with other religions. But when they came across such passages, testifying plainly of the resurrection of Christ, who was responsible for letting them "slip by"?

Likewise, when the Lockman Foundation commissioned the Editorial Board to produce the New American Standard Bible, who "missed" these very same scriptures?

Is there evidence that a grand conspiracy is "stamping out" the risen Lord Jesus Christ in our Bibles? Any such evidence would be overshadowed by the many, many references and allusions to the contrary.

The "evidence" that is invariably cited, however, is the questionable passage found in Mark 16:9-20. All modern translations note that the oldest two manuscripts and others do not contain these verses. It is fiercely and emotionally defended, as if the teaching of Christ's resurrection hinged upon this text alone. Instead, its authenticity should be thoughtfully considered. It should be rationally appraised.

Most contemporary scholars lean toward Mark's Gospel ending at verse 8. Their textual studies lead them to believe that the "longer ending" was probably composed in the beginning of the second century. Beside this, other "endings" have been discovered four in all. One manuscript even adds a paragraph between verses 14 and 15. Furthermore, some of the manuscripts that do contain the "long ending" are tagged with critical marks (similar to asterisks or obeli). This indicates that the scribe copying the text was noting its questionable nature. In addition, the passage is questioned on the basis of its vocabulary, style, and content.

Does this in any way affect the truth and historical fact of Christ's resurrection? In no way! Write for our free brochure, *The Resurrection: Real Event or Historical Hoax?* and see all the resurrection narratives fit together to form compelling evidence.

James White offers his thoughts:

"What can we say, then, about Mark 16:9-20? We can speculate about how the longer ending arose. Did Mark issue two versions of his gospel, adding the longer ending

later? No one can say, but that would certainly account for the various endings now in existence. More likely, early scribes felt the abrupt ending of Mark lacked the necessary proclamation of the resurrection, and hence some 'parallel corruption' took place, drawing from oral stories and the other gospels to create the longer ending. Whatever the case may be regarding the genesis of the various endings of Mark, we can say that given the external evidence, we believe every translation should provide the passage. However, we also believe that every translation should note the fact that there is good reason to doubt the authenticity of the passage as well. Allow the readers of Scripture to 'be diligent' (2 Timothy 2:15) in their own studies and come to their own conclusions" (The King James Only Controversy, p. 257).

While KJV Onlyists point out that modern translations "erase" this witness of the Resurrection, these Bibles do in fact print the entire text for all to see, with notes indicating the problem. Of which, one of the most honest is found in the margin of the New King James Version, which reads, "Vv.9-20 are bracketed in NU as not in the original text. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other mss. of Mark contain them."

The Today's English Version, though not generally recognized as an outstanding translation for study, gives two endings to Mark within the text. The first is called "An Old Ending to the Gospel of Mark" (i.e., verses 9-20); the second is "Another Old Ending," which is a two-verse ending.

When the facts are presented to the reader, how can there be a "cover up"?

Second Coming of Christ

Barry Burton lists only one verse, quoted from the New American Standard Bible, that "does away" with the Second Coming. In the King James Bible, Titus 2:13 says, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

But in the NASB, the verse is rendered, "Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."

"LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! LOOK! LOOK!" writes Burton. "Here they changed it from the 'glorious appearing of Christ' to...the appearing of 'the glory'.

"What kind of 'glory' are we supposed to look for? If that isn't CHANGING the Word of God, I don't know what is!!!

"It's dangerous to look for a 'glory'. The anti-Christ will probably look like a 'glory'" (Evidence, p. 35, emphasis his).

Instead of focusing on one translation's word order (the NIV and NKJV say "glorious appearing") and stretching the limits of absurdity, creating from it a sinister scenario of doctrinal tampering, why not put all the pieces together and get a good look at that?

What does the NASB mean when it cites the two men in white clothing saying "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11)? Does it mean anything other than the KJV's rendering?

For further evidence, please write for our free booklet, Why Christ Must Return, and follow along with any translation including the NASB. You will see that the validity of this doctrine does not depend on a single Bible version's reading of Titus 2:13.

(In passing, did you recall Burton's Scripture reference and which version supported Christ's deity more clearly?)

The Virgin Birth

There are indeed scholars who do not believe in the Virgin Birth of Jesus. But of course these are the same people who don't believe in anything supernatural which seems odd for being interested in religion. They try to explain everything in physical terms.

Their influence, KJV Onlyists believe, has infiltrated today's Bibles. How do they know? Isaiah 7:14.

Instead of the KJV's "virgin," the Revised Standard Version uses "young woman": "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Have we discovered an undercover ploy in the RSV? Does this relatively young version conceive Mary to be less than pure at Jesus' conception?

The Hebrew term *almah* can in fact be correctly translated both "virgin" and "young woman" an unmarried woman of marriageable age. Some offer the explanation that Isaiah's prophecy had an immediate as well as latter fulfillment, in which the woman was not necessarily chaste sexually.

Realize, too, that the KJV is not perfectly consistent with its translation either. White notes, "...the KJV renders the more technical term that specifically refers to a virgin, the Hebrew term *bethulah*, as 'maid' in such places as Jeremiah 2:32 and 51:22. But, it also translates the less specific term, *almah*, which is the term in dispute at Isaiah 7:14, as 'maid' in Exodus 2:8 and Proverbs 30:19. Hence, it is hard to defend the KJV from the charge of irregularity in rendering Hebrew terms" (Controversy, p. 217).

But how did Matthew apply Isaiah's prophecy to Jesus' birth? The same RSV says, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel' (which means, God with us)" (Matthew 1:22,23).

Again, if there were a grand conspiracy, the RSV would have "fixed" the New Testament quotation of the Old! Furthermore, the NIV, NASB, and NKJV all use "virgin" in the Isaiah passage, so the unilateral "conspiracy" has failed miserably.

The New American Standard Bible (also NIV) is also criticized for allegedly claiming Joseph, not God, was Jesus' father. It says in Luke 2:33: "And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him."

But the King James says "Joseph."

Before accepting the NASB's version as blasphemy, read the following two verses in the KJV:

"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover" (verse 41).

"And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing" (verse 48).

Here, the King James Bible is calling Joseph Jesus' father!

We find back in verse 33 a textual difference room for debate. But all the versions do refer to Joseph as Jesus' father. And they are correct. Who did the young Jesus consider

as His earthly "parents" and his "father"? He was "parented" by Joseph and Mary; they were responsible for Him. Joseph "fathered" Jesus, being the household's masculine authority figure. He was father by role, not by genetics.

The Word of God

There are those in many religious organizations who, when speaking of "the Church," are referring to their church alone. They do not see the church of God as anything but themselves. They are exclusivists. And they can list many "proofs" in their support, but those proofs are only relevant as long as a premise stands that Jesus Christ is active in one organization alone.

Leading KJV Onlyists also base their arguments on faulty premises. First, they believe, there is only one legitimate Bible translation God approves of. This introduces us to the next premise: The King James alone is the Word of God alone. The danger in this is its inherent circular reasoning. If the King James alone is the Word of God alone, then all variant readings are "deletions," "omissions," "additions," and "changes." But changes from what? Deletions from what? If the premise is true, then any variations would be inappropriate, for they would indeed be changes and deletions. However, there are no grounds to establish the premise.

Why should the KJV be the standard to which all other translations are compared? Why not Wycliffe's Bible? It was the very first whole Bible available in English, completed in 1382.

The question should be: How does the rendering compare to the actual words penned by the original biblical authors? Of course, none of these original manuscripts have survived, but thousands of copies are extant. All translations, therefore, including the King James Version, must be examined under the same light. They must all be subject to the weight of manuscript evidence.

Nevertheless, Burton writes, "We believe that the Bible (KJV) is the Word of God, and we also believe that God has preserved it perfect for us today. It was not just perfect in the original autographs" (Evidence, p. 7).

His "prooftext" immediately follows: "The words of the Lord are pure words...Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:6-7, emphasis his). Does this prove the existence of an inerrant, word-for-word translation?

Think it through.

When the psalmist David writes of the Lord's "words," what does he mean? Was he speaking of real, literal words, which when strung together form sentences? If so, it does not help the lay reader today; David wrote in the Hebrew tongue, not English. But do we still have God's Word today? Of course.

"Words of the Lord" does not refer to individual words, but to the meanings they convey. The expression "word" means complete thought or message. In Psalm 119, for example, synonyms for word or words in poetic parallelisms include precepts, judgments, way, understanding, testimonies, commandments, and so on. This magnifies the importance of the message, not the words. Hence, two different words conveying the same meaning are both acceptable. The goal, then, is to choose words that are as clear and meaningful as possible.

Interestingly, the NIV translates Psalm 12:6-7 this way, and of course is sorely criticized by KJV Onlyists: "And the words of the LORD are flawless...O LORD, you will keep us safe and protect us from such people forever."

Instead of saying the "words" would be kept safe and preserved, it says "us." Were these translators trying to lessen our faith in the Scriptures? No. Contrariwise, their intent was wholesome. They were in fact trying to be faithful to the scripture's meaning.

Read Psalm 12 in its entirety. The psalmist is crying out for delivery from the wicked, from the oppressors, from the double-hearted. Verse 7 says in the KJV, "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." Who, or what, is "them"? Is it every English word in the King James Bible, or could it refer to those who are oppressed? Undoubtedly it is the latter that is to be saved from this generation, or people, forever.

Do modern translations such as the NIV, then, seek to diminish the authority of Scripture? "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:16,17, NIV).

We have seen so far that modern Bible translations do not assault, viciously attack, or in any other way do violence to Scriptural doctrine. They are not antagonistic to the truth. Yet there are differences in translation.

The Purpose of Translation

Why have the Scriptures been translated throughout the many years? The answer lies in the meaning of the word: "to turn (something written or spoken) from one language into another." Another definition is, "to explain in terms that can be more easily understood; interpret."

"In the earliest days of English Christianity the only known Bible was the Latin Vulgate, made by Jerome between A.D. 383 and 405. This could be read by the clergy and by monks, the only ones who were familiar with the language" (The New International Dictionary of the Bible, article "Bible, English Versions," p. 150).

But the people wanted to read the Bible for themselves, in their own language. There was a demand to be filled. And what could be more valuable? So through the years, English translations were created so that the common man could have the Word of God in a meaningful format. If it doesn't mean anything to me, the reader, then what good is it? How can I live and obey something that "looks Greek to me"?

That is precisely the purpose behind modified English versions of the Bible today. There is a demand. The English of 1611 is not the English we use today.

Ted, now a member of the Church of God, International, told his story late one summer night. He grew up in another church, and wanted desperately to be a good Christian to understand and be knowledgeable about the Bible. Raised to trust only in the King James Bible, he read it, and read it, and read it again, but not without a load of frustration. He prayed to God as a teenager, "Please help me to understand your Word; I want to understand it, but it just doesn't make sense to me!" He prayed that, somehow, God would answer him and open his mind.

Some time later, he was given a new Bible except this one wasn't his standard KJV. He was weary of it at first; he hardly opened it. But one day, he did get it out and began

to read it. "Wow!" he thought. "I can actually understand this!" To this day he still uses the translation that renewed his love for the Scriptures, and probably the same worn-out copy.

Isn't that what it's all about? Communicating ideas from one party to another? For him, the largest obstacle to hurdle was not theology or philosophy it was language. The only language he deemed trustworthy was actually a burden, a barrier.

It is the goal of any translation "to explain in terms that can be more easily understood." This does not mean, however, that such a translation needs to sacrifice content and substance for readability, called "dumbing down" by some.

Herbert M. Wolf writes, "When it comes to translations of the Bible, we can observe two extremes. One kind of translation emphasizes a literal, word-for-word rendition that tries to preserve the grammatical and syntactical features of the Hebrew and Greek. Such a translation favors the source language over the receptor language and while it may claim to be a very accurate translation it sometimes misses important nuances of meaning and is hard to read. The other approach pays little attention to strict grammatical correspondence and attempts to convey the general idea found in a particular sentence. By striving to produce a smooth and readable translation, such a version often favors the second medium at the expense of the source language and is really a paraphrase rather than a translation" ("When 'Literal' Is Not Accurate," *The NIV: The Making of a Contemporary Translation*).

While these are extremes, a balance is desired. The first kind of translation, the literal, word-for-word rendition, is called formal equivalency. The second, a thought-for-thought translation, is called dynamic equivalency, which desires to affect the reader in the same way the original text affected the original readers. The perfect translation lies in between.

The KJV Onlyist blinds himself to these concepts, or rather, does not tolerate others' freedom of choice. While the King James Bible is generally a formal translation, it also contains dynamic elements. The same is true for the New American Standard Bible. But any departure from renderings unique to the KJV translators is deemed unacceptable. Why? Because the KJV alone is the Word of God alone. And why's that? Just because.

If the English reader is unaccustomed to today's standard the awkwardly constructed sentence structure, the atrocious number of run-ons and semicolons, and the outdated vocabulary of the KJV, he too has a right to imbibe of the Word of God without getting indigestion. Reading one translation does not make the reader any more spiritual than another.

There are, of course, good translations and bad translations. Some are downright cheap and insulting. And you may even come across a few irresponsibly translated Bibles that are doctrinally biased. But how can we know which is which? Unless you are an expert in Hebrew, Chaldee, Greek, and Aramaic, you'll have to depend on those who are, just as the devout reader of the KJV does.

But instead of limiting yourself to a particular translation, compare several. When you compare the works of different teams of translators, you will begin to understand "more clearly" the message intended to be conveyed by the Author.

To understand is most important. Paul made this point to the Corinthians when trying to establish order in the church. "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air" (I

Corinthians 14:9, KJV). This same principle can be applied to Bible translations if one or more are not "easy to be understood."

Must God use only the King James Bible to get His message across? The King James translators knew better: "For is the kingdom of God become words or syllables? why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no lesse fit, as commodiously?" (Preface to the King James Version).

If neither God nor the King James translators were King James Onlyists, should anyone be?

End

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"Trick or Treat?"

Every fall, Ghouls, goblins, ghosts, and witches find their way to the doorsteps of tens of thousands of homes across the country, as the professing Christian world dons the trappings of an ancient festival honoring the "Lord of Death."

by Vance A. Stinson

It's that time of year again that is, time for Samhain, the Celtic "Lord of Death," to permit the "souls" of the wicked to return to their earthly homes for an evening. It's also time for bonfires, apple-bobbing, scary stories, jack-o'-lanterns, fortunetelling, and children arrayed as the "hosts of hell." In other words, it's time for Halloween.

Have you ever wondered why Christian parents permit, even encourage, their youngsters to "dress up" like evil, God-defying, wicked creatures? Why would God-fearing, Bible believing Christians want to participate in a festival of ancient pagan origin?

"But what difference does it make if Halloween customs were handed down from the pagans?" someone asks. "After all, isn't the celebration just a fun tradition?"

Indeed, Halloween is a tradition, and it's been around for a long time. Though not well accepted by many early American settlers, it has been alive and well in the United States since the influx of large numbers of Irish and Scottish immigrants who, along with their customs and traditions, made their way to American shores in the 1800s.

But what does the Bible say about tradition? Does "tradition" justify the things we do?

Jesus said to the Pharisees, "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:9).

Tradition, then, does not necessarily justify our actions.

But what about Halloween? Does it really make any difference that the custom developed from ancient pagan festivals?

Yes, it does! God warned Israel not to follow after the gods and religious customs of heathen peoples. "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them...and that thou inquire not after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise...thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto their gods...what thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it" (Deuteronomy 12:30-32).

Through the prophet Jeremiah, God says, "Learn not the way of the heathen...For the customs of the people are vain" (Jeremiah 10:2,3).

But is there any real proof that Halloween was derived from paganism?

Actually, anyone capable of looking up the word "Halloween" in an encyclopedia at any library can easily discover the pagan origins of the custom. (For more information on the origins of Halloween, write for a free copy of our brochure entitled "Hallowe'en.")

"But we don't observe Halloween as a religious custom," someone argues. "It's just fun, especially for the kids."

It may be fun, but consider this: God commands us to keep His appointed festivals His weekly and annual holy days. (For a thorough study of the holy days, write for our booklet, God's Seasonal Plan.) We are commanded, at the Passover season, to take the symbols of our Lord's shed blood and broken body; to eat unleavened bread seven days during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, picturing our dependence upon the "Bread of Life" as the Source of our salvation; and to annually, at the Feast of Tabernacles, picture the fact that we are "pilgrims" and "sojourners" in this world, as we look forward to the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon this earth.

In other words, God commands us to "act out" His plan; and in so doing, we become more and more like Jesus Christ, who is portrayed in some way in each of God's annual feasts and holy days.

Apparently, many professing Christians would rather have their children pretend to be witches, ghouls, ghosts, and other "hosts of hell" than have them "act out" God's plan. Why? Because its easier to go along with the crowd than chance being labeled an "odd ball" or risk loss of social status.

Most parents wouldn't approve their children adopting the rituals of satanismeven the seemingly "harmless" rituals. Yet, thousands of children from professing Christian homes go out dressed as ghosts, or "souls departed from the body" (a completely pagan and unbiblical concept), demons (twisted, warped, angelic beings who followed Satan the devil in rebellion against God), witches (disciples of an ancient anti-God mystery cult), ghouls (walking, murderous, half-decayed, "living" corpsesa mockery of the glorious resurrection promised to Christ's true followers), and other weird, demonic, creatures of darkness.

Does it not seem curious that we teach our children customs derived from ancient, pagan religious/harvest festivals, while completely ignoring God's harvest festivals?

God's Feast of Tabernacles, occurring at the end of Israel's harvest year (September-October), is generally ignored. In fact, thousands of professing Christians have never so much as heard of the festival. Many reject it outright, calling it "Jewish," or claiming that the Sabbaths and holy days were "nailed to the cross" and shouldn't be kept. Yet, a festival associated with ancient, pagan superstition is "fun" for nearly everyone.

But what if your pastor, just for "fun," decided to throw a big "Buddhist" party at the church's fellowship hall? Suppose everyone was to come in Buddhist religious garb, carrying little Buddha images; the walls of the fellowship hall were to be decorated with traditional Buddhist religious art work; and, of course, images and incense were to add to the "Buddhist spirit" of the party.

The pastor explains that the party would be "in the spirit of Christianity," and assures his parishioners that "it's just for fun."

Do you honestly think Jesus Christ would be pleased with such a party? Is it fitting that a Christian church don the apparel of pagan Buddhism? Probably, a good number of church members would be utterly outraged, absolutely refusing to participate in such an affair.

Yet, incredibly, tens of thousands of professing Christians the same people who would adamantly refuse to attend the "Buddhist party" would think nothing of attending a church-sponsored Halloween celebration, or of taking their children (dressed as demons, witches, and ghouls) "trick-or-treating"!

What about you? Will you observe a festival founded on superstitiona celebration with roots extending into pagan antiquity? And what of God's festivals? Will you ignore them?

The Creator of the universe commands us to obey His laws. And His laws forbid the observance of heathen religious customs. Are you willing to obey Him?

The choice is yours.

End

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