

– Falsified Bible Texts –

*"How do you say, 'We are wise, and the Law of Jehovah is with us'? [Israel]
Behold, the lying pen of the scribes has certainly worked deceit."
Jeremiah 8:8*

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The manual copying of any document opens the possibility of inadvertent copyist errors. This is also true therefore of all ancient hand written copies of both our Old and New Testament scriptures in their original languages.

However, a comparison of Old Testament quotations in our New Testament exposes a more serious issue than this. This problem of difference has often been written off as simply the New Testament writers quoting from the pre-Christian Septuagint Greek translation of the Old Testament rather than from the ('more accurate', implied) original Hebrew language, the common standard of which today is the Jewish Massoretic version dating from some nine hundred years after Jesus. But this does not add up, for the Septuagint translation was a Jewish translation based on authentic manuscripts centuries older than those underlying the later Hebrew Massoretic text versions.

Reliance on the Septuagint version of the Old Testament is possible for the Christian church writings outside of Palestine, as the Jewish synagogues in the Diaspora (dispersion), (from which many Christian congregations developed), used the Septuagint more than the Hebrew manuscripts of the Scriptures. But this is an inadequate explanation for Old Testament quotations in our New Testament by Palestinian Jewish Christians. More seriously however, this 'Septuagint-error' explanation actually attacks the New Testament's view of being in itself Holy Scripture, textually inspired of God no less than our original Old Testament text.

Old Testament quotes in the New which do not conform to the Massoretic text but are close to the Septuagint text more logically indicate a common Hebrew source. This is supported by Dead Sea manuscript copies of Old Testament scriptures pre-dating the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD/CE which point to a far older Hebrew text than the Massoretic and one significantly closer to the Septuagint than the Medieval Massoretic text upon which our modern Old Testament translations are principally based.

This becomes very significant when the nature of these differences is compared.

CAUSES

Apart from unintentional errors, three typical causes for **deliberate corruptions** of the original text in the hands of copying scribes should be noted. These are:

- 1. Literary**
- 2. Theological**
- 3. Polemical**

1. Literary Cause

For instance, a comparison of the Dead Sea scroll of Isaiah dating from about 200 years before Christ to the oldest manuscript of the Massoretic text (about a 1000 years later)

shows that, apart from other considerations, the scribes of the Massoretic tradition have sometimes abbreviated the phraseology of the older manuscripts.

Language use changes in any society, and what was correct idiom or grammar in one generation may be perceived as wrong or inferior speech in a subsequent generation. However, as understandable a view as this may be, it gives no copying scribe any authority to be untrue to the original text!

2. Theological Cause

An example of this is the translation of Habbakuk 1:12

"Are You not from everlasting, O LORD my God, my Holy One? We[?] shall not die."

Two modern translations, the 1965 *Bible in Basic English* and Messianic Judaism's 1998 *The Scriptures*, have tried to recapture the original sense by translating "We shall not die" as "for you there is no death" and "You do not die!" respectively.

While the sincerity of the Jewish scribes is not in question in wanting to prohibit even the very thought of God dying from having a place in the holy text, this did not entitle them to change or 'correct' what they perceived as a theological error in the text they were copying. Again, as understandable as this may be, it remains a falsification of the text.

3. Polemical Cause

After Judaism's full rejection of Christianity by the end of the first century AD, Hebrew Scripture texts which appeared to favour Christian understanding of the prophets, or which were being used by Christian evangelists among the Jews, were 'fiddled' to prevent such interpretations. The second century AD Aquila Greek translation of the Hebrew is a classic example of this corrupting sentiment among the rabbis and scribes of the Jewish community at that time.

It is therefore of value to note the textual differences, which appear to be closer to the original Hebrew text reflected in the Septuagint and our New Testament than in the later Hebrew Massoretic version which underlies much of our present day Old Testament translations.

Some Examples of Textual FALSIFICATION by Israel's scribes:

Genesis 18:22 *"So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD."* (all translations, except CEV, GNB) — False

"So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but the LORD stood yet before Abraham." (as the consonantal text reads)

The vowel-pointing emendation of the Jewish scribes changed the meaning to 'protect' God's dignity. Some honest Jewish commentators which help expose this scribal corruption are Rav Rashi, and Rev. Dr. A Cohen, although all known translations still follow the corrupted version. Of the three that had visited Abraham, 'the men'/angels head toward Sodom to warn Lot, while the Lord (YaHWeH) remains with/before Abraham to hear his intercession.

Psalms 22:16 *"...like a lion, they are at my hands and my feet"* (22:17, Jewish Publication Society – JPS) — False

"...they have pierced My hands and feet-- " (LXX v.17, KJV, Literal Translation Version – LITV, RV, YLT, ESV)

The vowel-pointing emendation of the Jewish scribes (after Akiba) changed the meaning so as to avoid any identification with the crucified Jesus.

Isaiah 1:12 "*When ye come to appear before Me, who hath required this at your hand, to trample My courts?*" (most translations) — False

"When you come to see My face, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts?" (as the consonantal text reads)

The vowel-pointing of the scribes changed the meaning apparently to 'protect' God from anthropomorphism.

Isaiah 6:9 "*hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*" (JPS). i.e. God commands both the act ('hear', 'see') and also its negative result.

"seeing they might not see, and hearing, they might not understand." New Testament quote in Lk.8:10; LITV). — False

God commands the act (seeing, hearing) but simply describes its negative result.

In other words, the scribes have made Israel's lack of response (understand not, perceive not) into a command of God, instead of simply God's description of Israel's hard-hearted response: a shift of responsibility.

Isaiah 42:4 "*and the isles shall wait for his teaching.*" (Isa 42:4 Jewish Publication Society). — False

"And the nations [Gentiles] will hope in His name." (New Testament quote in Mat.12:21 Literal Translation Version).

The Gentiles, as favourable followers of a Jewish Messiah, was not part of the scribes' world-view.

Isaiah 52:5 "*...My name continually all day is blasphemed*" (Isa.52:5 Jewish Publication Society) — False

"...because of you [Israel] My name is continually blasphemed among the Gentiles" (Isa.52:5 Jewish Septuagint translation, confirmed by Rom.2:24).

Accusation against Israel was removed by biased copyists.

Habakkuk 1:5 "*Look ye among the nations, and behold, and wonder marvellously; for, behold, a work shall be wrought in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you.*" (Hab 1:5 Jewish Publication Society). — False

"Behold, you despisers, and marvel, and perish, because I work a work in your days, a work which you would in no way believe if anyone declares it to you." (New Testament quote in Act.13:41 Literal Translation Version).

God's rebuke of Israel is changed by the racially biased scribes to become a rebuke of the Gentiles.

Some Examples of Scribal INSERTIONS in Isaiah:

Isaiah 2:9b-10 (9b) *Do not forgive them!*

(10) *Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and the glory of his majesty.* — False

The much older original-language copy of Isaiah among the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QIsa) contains the first part of 2:9 and 2:11 but does not have 2:9b and 10. It is a later addition.

Isaiah 2:22 (22) *Stop regarding man in whose nostrils is breath, for of what account is he?* — False

The Septuagint (ancient Jewish translation into international Greek c.200 BC/BCE) based on a much earlier original language copy does not contain this verse debasing human value.

Isaiah 40:7 (7) *The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.* — False

Both the pre-Christian Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa) and Septuagint translation expose this as a later scribal insertion into the text of Holy Scripture. (It's denigration of humanity does not reflect the attitude of God).

Lastly, one should not forget the very human occurrence of copyist transcription errors.

This is evident in 2 Samuel 21:19 where the record of Goliath's brother being killed is corrupted to –

"...Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, the Bethlehemite, struck down Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam", which should have read –

"...Elhanan the son of Jair struck down Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear was like a weaver's beam"

It may be of interest to some to see what the early manuscripts of Scripture looked like. This resource is useful to show the human side and its difficulties.

This textual corruption is easily explained in that ארגים oregim, which means 'weavers', has slipped out of one line into the other; and that בית הלחמי beith hallachmi, the Beth-lehemite, is corrupted from את לחמי eth Lachmi; for then the reading would have been the same as in First Chronicles 20:5 and it would not have contradicted First Samuel 21:9, etc.