

What About Mary? Is your bible a Catholic Bible?

Matthew 1:25 “her FIRSTBORN son” & Luke 1:28 “blessed art thou among women” - Is your bible one of the new Vatican Versions?

In Matthew 1:25 we read of the birth of the Saviour Jesus who would save His people from their sins. Here it is recorded that Joseph, the husband of the virgin Mary “knew her not till she had brought forth her FIRSTBORN son: and he called his name JESUS.”

Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born - “she was found with child of the Holy Ghost” (Matthew 1:18)

However after the birth of Jesus, Mary also had other children; at least 7 other children. We see this as recorded in Matthew 13:55-56 when those astonished at His teaching in the synagogue ask: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are then not ALL (not ‘both’) with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?”

However the Catholic church teaches that the virgin Mary was perpetually a virgin. This is called the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The Catholic St. Joseph New American Bible 1970, which also omits the word “firstborn” from Matthew 1:25, has a footnote in reference to the brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus. They tell us: “The question about the brothers of Jesus and his sisters cannot easily be decided on linguistic grounds. Greek-speaking Semites used the terms adelphos and adelphē, not only in the ordinary sense of blood brother or sister, but also for nephew, niece, half-brother, half-sister, and cousin. The question of meaning here would not have arisen but for the faith of the church in Mary’s perpetual virginity.” page 48 St. Joseph NAB.

The textual support for the reading in Matthew 1:25 of “knew her not till she had brought forth her FIRSTBORN son” (τὸν υἱὸν αὐτῆς τὸν πρωτότοκον) is massive and widespread. It is the reading found in the Majority of all remaining Greek manuscripts and many uncial copies (capital letters) including C, D, E, K, L, M, S, U, V, W, Gamma, Delta, Pi, Sigma and Omega.

It is also the reading found in numerous early church Lectionaries, the Old Latin copies of aur, d, f, ff1, g2, q, the Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, Harkelian, Armenian, Slavonic and Ethiopic ancient versions. It is also so quoted by many early church witnesses including the Diatessaron, Cyril of Jerusalem, Didymus, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Proclus, Jerome and Augustine.

However the reading of “THE FIRSTBORN” is omitted in both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and a few others. The modern versions that omit the word “FIRSTBORN” and merely say something like: “But but knew her not until she had given birth to a son.” are the NIV, ESV, RSV, NRSV, NASB, NET, Holman and the Common English Bible - all the new Vatican Versions.

The Catholic bibles are interesting in that they continue to change their underlying texts from one edition to the next. The previous Douay-Rheims of 1582 as well as the Douay version of 1950 both included the phrase, saying: “And he knew her not till she brought forth her FIRSTBORN son: and he

called his name JESUS.”

However the Douay-Rheims gives this lengthy footnote to try to explain away the clear meaning of the verse. They tell us: “[25] Till she brought forth her firstborn son: From these words Helvidius and other heretics most impiously inferred that the blessed Virgin Mary had other children besides Christ; but St. Jerome shews, by divers examples, that this expression of the Evangelist was a manner of speaking usual among the Hebrews, to denote by the word until, only what is done, without any regard to the future...St. Jerome also proves by Scripture examples, that an only begotten son, was also called firstborn, or first begotten: because according to the law, the firstborn males were to be consecrated to God; Sanctify unto me, saith the Lord, every firstborn that openeth the womb among the children of Israel, etc. Ex. 13. 2.”

Well, to get rid of this “problem” and the convoluted, Jesuit reasoning used to try to dismiss what the text clearly says, the more modern Catholic versions like the Jerusalem bible of 1968, the St. Joseph NAB of 1970 and the New Jerusalem bible of 1985 simply omit the word “firstborn” altogether as also do the other Vatican Versions like the NIV, ESV, NASB, ISV, NET, Holman, etc. They now read: “he had not had intercourse with her when she gave birth to a son.” (New Jerusalem bible 1985)

But wait a minute; there’s more. The 2009 The Sacred Bible Catholic Public Domain Version has now put the word back into their text! It now reads: “And he knew her not, yet she bore her son, THE FIRSTBORN. And he called his name JESUS.”

Bibles that agree with the King James Bible reading of “her FIRSTBORN son” are the following: the Latin Vulgate of 382 A.D. - “et non cognoscebat eam donec peperit filium suum primogenitum et vocavit nomen eius Iesum.”, the Anglo-Saxon gospels by Aelfric Manuscript 140 dated to about 1000 A.D. - “hyre frum-cennedan sunu”, Lamsa's translation of the Syriac Peshitta - “And he did not know her until she gave birth to her first-born son; and she called his name Jesus.”, Wycliffe 1395 - “til she hadde borun her firste bigete sone”, Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535, Cranmer's bible 1540, the Bishops' Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1587 - “til she had broght forth her first borne sonne, & he called his name Iesus.”, Mace's N.T. 1729, Wesley's translation 1755, Webster's translation 1833, Darby, Youngs, the NKJV 1982, the Amplified Bible 1997, Hebrew Names Bible, and the Third Millennium Bible 1998.

Among foreign language bibles that read like the King James Bible with “her FIRSTBORN son” are the following: the Chinese Union Traditional bible, the French Martin 1744 and the French Ostervald 1996 - “ce qu'elle eût enfanté son fils premier-né”, Luther's German Bible 1545 and the German Schlachter of 2000 - “erstgeborenen Sohn”, the Italian Diodati 1649 and Nuovo Diodati of 1991 - “il suo figliuol primogenito” the the Dutch Staten Vertaling Bible, the Spanish Sagradas Escrituras of 1569, Spanish Reina Valera of 1909, 1960, 1995 and the 2010 Reina Valera Gómez - “hasta que parió á su hijo primogénito”, the Portuguese Almeida Corregida E Fiel and the Portuguese A Biblia Sagrada deu à luz seu filho, o primogénito”, the Russian Synodal Version and the Modern Greek N.T. as well as the Greek texts used by the Orthodox Churches all over the world today - “εγεννησε τον υιον αυτης τον πρωτοτοκον”.

Luke 1:28 "blessed art thou among women"

Another verse having to do with Mary is Luke 1:28. Here we read the inspired words of the angel Gabriel when he was sent from God to announce that the virgin Mary would soon give birth to the Son of God. "And the angel came in unto her and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN."

Notice it does not say "you are blessed ABOVE all women" or "more than other women" but rather "thou art blessed AMONG women", and indeed she was. But to say that Mary was blessed AMONG women does not give her the high position the Catholic church wants to place her in; so many modern Catholic versions remove these words from their text.

The reading of "blessed art thou among women" again is found in the Majority of all remaining Greek texts as well as A, C, D, E, F, G, H, K, M, S, U, V, X, Gamma, Delta, Theta, Lambda, Pi, the Old Latin a, aur, b, c, d, e, f, ff2, 1, q, r1 and the Latin Vulgate of 382. It is also the reading found in the Syriac Peshitta, Harkelian, some Coptic Boharic mss, the Gothic and Ethiopian ancient versions.

However once again it is primarily Sinaiticus and Vaticanus that omit this entire phrase and a very few others, and so do the modern versions like the ASV, NASB, NIV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NET, ISV and Holman Standard. The ESV omits the phrase and then gives us a deliberately misleading footnote saying: "Some manuscripts add Blessed are you among women." SOME!?! Rather it is the overwhelming Majority of all Greek manuscripts that include this reading and it is only "some" very few that omit it! Their footnote is a deceptive attempt to make us think the opposite.

Once again the Catholic bible versions themselves are in their usual disarray. The older Douay-Rheims of 1582 as well as the 1950 Douay both contained these words, reading: "And the angel being come in, said unto her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN." But then in 1968 in the Jerusalem bible and again in 1985 with the New Jerusalem bible these modern Catholic bible versions omitted this entire phrase and merely read: "He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, so highly favored! The Lord is with you."

But the 1970 St. Joseph New American bible STILL retains the words in their text and reads "Rejoice, O highly favored daughter! The Lord is with you. BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN." And once again we see that the latest Catholic bible version (the 2009 Catholic Public Domain Version) has put these words back into their text too. It now reads: "And upon entering, the Angel said to her: "Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with you. BLESSED ARE YOU AMONG WOMEN."

So, in the Catholic versions this phrase was first in their bibles (1582, 1950), then taken out, (1968) then put back in (1970), then removed (1985) and now in again (2009)! Both the Catholic and their modern day counterparts - the Evangelicals - keep changing the texts of their respective 'bibles' from one edition to the next. No verse is sure or settled and none of them believe that ANY Bible in ANY language is or ever was the complete, inspired and 100% textually pure and true words of the living God.

Bible translations that agree with the Traditional reading of "Blessed art thou among women" in Luke 1:28 are the following: the Latin Vulgate 382 A.D. and 405 A.D. - "benedicta tu in mulieribus", the Anglo-Saxon gospels 1000 A.D. - "þu eart gebletsud on wifum.", Wycliffe 1395 - "Heil, ful of grace; the Lord be with thee; blessid be thou among wymmen.", Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535 - "the LORDE is with the: blessed art thou amonge wemen.", the Bishops' Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1587, Wesley's translation 1755, Darby, Youngs, Lamsa's translation of the Syriac, the Hebrew Names Version, World English Bible, New Life Bible 1969, the Amplified Bible 1987, NKJV 1982 and the Third Millenium Bible 1998.

Other foreign language translations that contain the phrase "Blessed art thou among women" are the Spanish Sagradas Escrituras 1569, the Reina Valeras of 1909, 1960, 1995, and 2010 Reina Valera Gómez Bible - "El Señor es contigo; bendita tú entre las mujeres.", the Italian Diodati of 1649 and 1991, as well as the Nuova Riveduta of 2006 - "il Signore è con te; tu sei benedetta fra le donne", the Russian Synodal Version, Luther's German Bible of 1545 and the German Schlachter of 2000 - "du Gesegnete unter den Frauen!", the French Martin 1744 and Ostervald of 1996 - "le Seigneur est avec toi; tu es bénie entre les femmes.", the Portugues Almeida Corrigida E Fiel and A Sagrada Biblia - "bem-dita és tu entre as mulheres.", the Afrikaans bible 1953 - "Die Here is met jou; geseënd is jy onder die vroue.", the 2009 Romanian Fidela Bible, the Modern Greek and the Greek Orthodox Church's text all over the world - "ευλογημενη συ εν γυναιξιν." as well as the Modern Hebrew New Testament.