

## **Is Matthew 23:14 Inspired Scripture or not?**

The Lord Jesus Christ clearly stated “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but MY WORDS shall not pass away.” This is either a true statement or He was lying to us.

Matthew 23:14 records in full the words of the Lord Jesus Christ that are found no where else in the entire Bible. There are a couple of similar passages (See Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47) but nothing that is exactly like Matthew 23:14 where He says: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. “

The evidence for the authenticity of this entire verse is simply overwhelming, and we can even see the stumbling uncertainty of the modern versions by the way they handle this particular verse.

This whole verse has been omitted from many modern versions (but not all of them as we shall soon see) that follow the ever changing Westcott-Hort Critical text theories. Versions that entirely omit this verse first began with the Darby version in 1870. John Darby basically made up his own peculiar text for the New Testament, following neither the Westcott-Hort revised Greek text, nor the Majority nor the Textus Receptus. Darby's was followed by the liberal RSV in 1946 and then by the NRSV 1989, the ESV 2001 and the NIVs of 1973, 1978, 1984 and the latest of 3 revisions the NIV has already undergone in 2011.

Daniel Wallace's NET version (an ongoing train wreck) tells us that the verse is “not in the most important manuscripts...it is almost certainly not original... The present translation follows NA27 in omitting the verse number as well, a procedure also followed by a number of other modern translations.”

And what might these “best manuscripts” be? Well, they are primarily Sinaiticus, Vaticanus and D, all of which wildly differ not only from the Majority of all Greek texts but even from each other. See my article on “the oldest and the best manuscripts?” here:

<http://brandplucked.webs.com/oldestandbestmss.htm>

Isn't it odd that by simply skipping from verse 13 to 15 neither the Nestle-Aland 27 people nor some modern versions appear to be able even count right? “And now let's count class ... ten...eleven... twelve... thirteen...fifteen... sixteen...Ooops. Looks like something is missing, Huh?” Why don't they just be honest and change the verse numbers? Because in spite of themselves, they are bearing reluctant witness to the fact that God has an absolute Standard for His Bible and it's not their own watered down, bogus bible versions.

The history of the dividing the Bible into chapters and verse numbers is very interesting. Tyndale did not have chapter and verse numbers and the order of the books in the N.T. were quite different from the way they now stand today. The Geneva bible was the first English Bible to be divided into chapter and verse numbers. However the King James Bible did not always follow the same verse numbers as the Geneva Bible. Guess which Bible has become the Standard as far as chapter divisions and individual verse numbers all over the world? You got it. It is the Authorized King James Holy Bible.

Versions such as the Revised Version of 1885, the ASV of 1901 and the NASBs from 1960 to 1995 have the whole verse in [brackets] indicating doubt as to whether this verse is true Scripture or not. The Holman Standard of 2003 [does the same]. This means that even they did not have complete confidence in their own every changing Critical Greek texts as to whether this verse should be omitted or not. It's a real faith destroyer to have versions like the NASB or Holman Standard that [bracket] anywhere from 17 to 45 entire verses in the New Testament alone. Guess who wants you to ask yourself "Yea, hath God said...?" (Genesis 3:1) A similar thing is observed in the ever changing Catholic Versions. The earlier Douay-Rheims of 1582 included the entire verse of Matthew 23:14 and not even in brackets. Then the Douay version came out in 1950 and they left the verse in the chapter but this time put it in brackets, indicating doubt. Then the more modern Catholic versions like the 1970 St. Joseph NAB and the 1985 New Jerusalem bible now omit the entire verse. And quite naturally, the Jehovah Witness Watchtower New World Translation entirely omits the whole verse. Oh, but wait! Now the latest Catholic version to come down the pike is what they call The Sacred Bible Catholic Public Domain Version of the Sacred Bible, and it has put the verse back in this time and NOT with brackets. You can see this latest Catholic bible version here

<http://www.sacredbible.org/catholic/index.htm>

There are some versions that primarily follow the Critical Greek text theories and omit thousands of words from the true New Testament who still leave this verse intact. This includes Rotherham's 1902 Emphasized bible and the brand new ISV (International Standard Version) which has gone back to including the entire verse in the text.

The evidence for the inclusion of Matthew 23:14 in the pages of the Holy Scriptures is ancient, massive and widespread. ALL English Bibles before the 1611 King James Bible included this verse. These are the Wycliffe Bible of 1395, Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535, the Bishops' Bible of 1568 and the Geneva Bibles from 1557 to 1602, and even the 1582 Catholic Douay-Rheims version, though the more recent Catholic versions like the St. Joseph New American Bible 1969 and the 1985 New Jerusalem have now omitted the verse. Of course, it is firmly in place in the King James Holy Bible.

It was also in Mace's N.T. 1729, Wesley's N.T. 1755, Webster's 1833, the Douay version 1950, Youngs, and is included in the NKJV 1982, Green's literal, the 21st Century KJV and the Third Millennium Bible 1998.

Matthew 23:14 is found in the vast Majority of all Greek texts, including many uncial copies like E, F, G, H, K, M, O, S, U, V, W, Y Gamma, Delta, Pi, Sigma and Omega. It is found in the Old Latin copies b, c, f, ff2, h, 1, r1, 2. The Old Latin copies bear witness to a N.T. text that existed long before anything we have in the existing Greek copies. It is included in such ancient Bible translations as the Syriac Peshitta, Curetonian, Harkelian, Palestinian, as well as some Coptic Boharic copies, the Armenian and the Ethiopic versions. The Gothic bible is missing the entire chapter, so it is not much help in determining the text at all. The Latin Vulgate texts as well as the Catholic versions that come from them are all mixed up. The 425 A.D. Vulgate omitted it, but the later Clementine Vulgate included it.

Matthew 23:14 is included in the Modern Greek New Testaments used by the Greek Orthodox churches all over the world today. It is also found in all these foreign language Bibles: THE MODERN HEBREW N.T., the Arabic Life Application bible 1998, the Africaans Bible, Armenian, Basque, Bulgarian, Chinese bibles, Check, Dutch Staten Vertaling, Danish, Estonian, Finnish, French Louis Segond 1910, Martin 1744 and French Ostervald 1996; the German Luther 1545 and the more modern Elberfelder, the German Schlachter Bible of 2000, the Modern Greek N.T.; the Hungarin Karoli, Quiché Bible 1997, Italian Diodati 1649, the Riveduta 1927 and the New Diodati 1991, the Italian La Parola é Vita 1997, Icelandic, Japanese bibles, Latvian, Lithuanian, Manx Gaelic, Norwegian Det Norsk Bibelselskap, Portuguese Almeida, Russian Synodal, Victor Zhirumski and the 2000 Russian Slovo Zhizny bible, the Spanish Reina Valeras from 1909, 1960 and 1995; the 1997 La Biblia de las Américas (Lockman Foundation), the Swahili bible, Thai, Tagalog, Turkish, Ukranian and the Vietnamese bibles.

Also to be noted is that the International Bible Society, who puts out the NIV which completely omits Matthew 23:14, is not always consistent when it comes to the foreign language bibles the IBS publishes. Among the modern foreign language versions the IBS publishes that DO contain this verse in their translations are The Arabic Life Application bible 1998, the French La Bible du Semeur 1999, the Italian La Parola e Vita 1997, the Portuguese O Livro 2000, the modern Romanian bible, and the Russian Slovo Zhizny of 2000. While we are in this chapter let's take a look at some other textual variants found here. These textual variants and they way modern "scholars" handle them reveals a great deal about the fundamental unbelief in the inerrancy of The Bible and the farcical nature of what they like to refer to as "the science of textual criticism"

In Matthew 23:4 we read of the Pharisees "for they bind heavy burdens AND GRIEVOUS TO BE BORN, and lay them on men's shoulders." The words translated as "and grievous to be born" - καὶ δυσβάστακτα - are found in the vast Majority of all Greek manuscripts, in numerous Old Latin copies, the Syriac Harkelian, Palestinian, Coptic Sahidic, Armenian, Ehtiopian and Georgian ancient versions. It is ALSO FOUND IN VATICANUS! However Sinaiticus omits it and so do the NASB, NIV 1973, 1978 and 1984 editions. Westcott and Hort originally omitted these words of Scripture from their Greek text and so did the earlier Nestle-Aland editions. I have a Nestle Aland 4th edition of 1934 and the Greek words for "and grievous to be born" are not in the text nor even in the footnotes. However later on their "science" decided to put the words back in their ever changing Greek critical texts but this time [in brackets]. All the Catholic versions DO contain these words and NOW the NIV of 2011 has once again changed their text and in the 3rd revision so far, the NIV now includes the words in their text. The older NIVs read: "They tie up heavy loads and put them on MEN'S shoulders", but the "new" NIV 2011 now reads: "They tie up heavy, CUMBERSOME loads and put them on OTHER PEOPLE'S shoulders." I guess the word "men" was too politically incorrect, so they also changed this to "other people's".

The words "and grievous to be born" have always been in the English Bibles from Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the KJB, Revised Version 1885, ASV of 1901, and are still found today in the RSV, NRSV, ESV, ISV, NET, Holman Standard and now once again in the NIV 2011, but the NASB continues to omit them. Likewise the Jehovah Witness New World Translation also omits these words from their text.

In Matthew 23:5 we read: "they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders OF THEIR GARMENTS." The words "of their garments" - τῶν ἱματίων αὐτῶν - again are found in the Majority of all Greek manuscripts as well as several Old Latin copies, the Syriac and Coptic Boharic. The words are NOT in the Westcott-Hort, UBS, Nestle-Aland Critical texts, and versions like Daniel Wallace's NET version, ALL Catholic versions like Douay-Rheims, St. Joseph NAB, New Jerusalem, the RSV, NRSV, ESV and the Holman Standard omit them. The NASBs put the words in italics - "of their garments" but the NIV, and the new ISV (International Standard Version) include them. The words have always been in all Reformation Bible in all languages as well as in Tyndale, Coverdale, Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible and the NKJV.

In Matthew 23:8 we read: "But be ye not called Rabbi; for one is your Master, EVEN CHRIST; and all ye are brethren." Here the word CHRIST is found in the Majority of all remaining Greek manuscripts, yet the UBS text doesn't even footnote that this reading even exists. Sinaiticus and Vaticanus unite in omitting the word "Christ" from this verse, but they don't even agree with each other in this single verse. The word for "master" in the Majority of all texts, the Textus

Receptus AND Sinaiticus is ὁ καθηγητής but the word found in Vaticanus is the completely different word ὁ διδάσκαλος . They have similar meanings, but they are totally different words found in these so called "oldest and best manuscripts" that constantly disagree with each other, and yet are used to omit literally thousands of words from the New Testament of most modern Vatican Versions like the NIV, NASB, ESV, NET and Holman Standard. However both these corrupt manuscripts omit the word "Christ" and so do ALL Catholic bible versions like Douay, St. Joseph NAB and the New Jerusalem, as well as the RV, ASV, NASB, NIV, ESV, RSV, NRSV, NET, Holman and J.W. New World Translation.

Agreeing with the reading found in the King James Bible and the Traditional Greek texts in Matthew 23:8 "For one is your Master, EVEN CHRIST" are Tyndale 1525, Coverdale 1535, Bishops' Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1587, Martin Luther's German Bible of 1545 and the German Schlachter Bible of 2000 - "ist euer Meister, **Christus**", the Spanish Sagradas Escrituras of 1569 and the Reina Valeras of 1909, 1960, 1995 - "uno es vuestro Maestro, **el Cristo**", the Italian Diodati of 1649 and the Nuovo Diodati of 1997 - "uno solo è il vostro maestro: **Il Cristo**", the Portuguese A Biblia Sagrada em Portugues - "porque um só é o vosso Mestre, a saber, **o Cristo**, e todos vós sois irmãos.", the Afrikaans Bible 1953 - "een is julle leermeester: **Christus**", the Modern Greek - "εις ειναι ο καθηγητης σας, ο Χριστος", the French Martin 1744 and Ostervald 1996 - "qu'un Maître, **le Christ**" and the Romanian Cornilescu Bible and the Modern Hebrew New Testament to name but a few.

In Matthew 23:19 we read: "YE FOOLS and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" Here the word FOOLS is again found in the Majority of all remaining Greek manuscripts INCLUDING VATICANUS! But Sinaiticus omits the word. So what do the fake modern versions do this time? Well, for the most part they completely reverse themselves and instead of following Vaticanus and not Sinaiticus, this time they "scientifically" don't ya know, go with the Sinaiticus omission, in spite of the reading being found in some Old Latin copies, the Syriac Peshitta, Harkelian, Palestinian, the Coptic, Armenian, Ethiopian, Georgian and Slavonic ancient versions.

"Ye FOOLS and blind" is found in Tyndale, Coverdale, Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, the NKJV, as well as many foreign language bibles like the Afrikaans bible 1953, the French Martin and Ostervald - "**Fous** et aveugles!", the Dutch Staten Vertaling bible, the Modern Greek bible - "**Μωροί** και τυφλοί", Luther's German Bible - "**Ihr Narren** und Blinden", the Italian Diodati - "**Stolti** e ciechi!", the Spanish Reina Valera - "**¡Insensatos** y ciegos!" and the Russian Synodal Version. But the Catholic versions of the Douay-Rheims, Douay, New Jerusalem, the 2009 Catholic Public Domain Version and the RV, ASV, NASB, NIV, ESV, RSV, NET, Holman Standard and the J.W. New World Translation all omit this word.

As we enter the early 21st century, the ever growing unbelief in the inspiration, inerrancy and infallibility of any Bible in any language is in full swing. The King James Bible believers are the only ones who will not budge on this most vital doctrine. We fully believe that God has indeed preserved His precious and perfect words in “the book of the LORD” (Isaiah 34:16) and that this Book is the Authorized King James Holy Bible - the Standard by which all others are to be measured.

“In God will I praise his word: in the LORD will I praise his word.” Psalm 56:10

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