

Revelation 17:6 "and I wondered with great ADMIRATION."

There are many Bible critics, none of whom believes that ANY Bible in ANY language IS or ever was the complete, inspired and 100% true words of God, who criticize the King James Bible for the way it has translated this verse. They tell us that the word "admiration" has a positive sense and that there is no way John could look upon the Whore of Babylon with "admiration". Thus they accuse the King James Bible of being in error here.

Well, let's take a look at what the word translated as "admiration" means and what the apostle John, who was shown this vision, was wondering at with great admiration. I am aware of two possible ways of understanding the verse, and in both, the King James Bible is right.

Not only does the King James Bible translate this word as "I wondered with great admiration" but so also do the Douay-Rheims bible of 1582, Mace's New Testament of 1729, and Webster's 1833 translation.

Revelation 17:6

ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ 17:6 Greek NT: Textus Receptus (1894)

και ειδον την γυναικα μεθουσαν εκ του αιματος των αγιων και εκ του αιματος των μαρτυρων ιησου και εθαυμασα ιδων αυτην θαυμα μεγα

6 - "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. "

There are several other foreign language bibles that also translate it in this way. Among these are the Portuguese A Biblia Sagrada em Portugues and the Portuguese ALMEIDA CORRIGIDA E FIEL of 1681, and the modern Portuguese Almeida Actualizada- "E, vendo-a eu maravilhei-me com **grande admiração**.", the Latin Vulgate of 382 A.D., and the Clementine Vulgate of 1598 - "et miratus sum cum vidissem illam **admiratione** magna ", the Spanish Reina Valera Antigua and the Spanish Reina Valera of 1858 and the Spanish Reina Valera of 1909 - "y cuando la vi, quedé maravillado de **grande admiración**."

The meaning of the word "admiration" and related words -

Admiration = The feeling aroused by something strange and surprising. Wonder, marvel, amazement, astonishment approval

Astonishment = The feeling that accompanies something extremely surprising, admiration, amazement, approval, adoration

Marvel = Express astonishment or surprise about something marvelous, magnificent, majestic, glorious, wonder.

Wonder = a person, thing or event that causes astonishment and admiration.

The particular Greek words that are used here and translated as "I wondered with great admiration" are both the verb thaumazo = to marvel, wonder or have in admiration (Jude 16) and the noun form.

Divry's Modern Greek-English/ English-Greek Dictionary, which has nothing to do with the Bible but is a purely secular dictionary, tells us on page 19 when you look up the English word "admire"

that the Greek word that expresses this is the same word used here in Revelation 17:6 - *thaumazo*. It is the only definition given. So in modern Greek the word still means "admiration" and "to admire", just as the King James Bible has it.

According to Thayer's Greek English Lexicon, Zondervan 1978 page 284 the noun *thauma* is used in Revelation 17:6 (he cites this verse specifically) and he defines it as "**to admire**, pay regard to."

According to Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon, University of Chicago Press 1957 on page 352-353 they tell us that the word *thauma* means "an object of wonder, a marvel" and that the verb form means "**to admire** or wonder at something".

Kittle's massive Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume 3 tells us that the verb and noun derived from it mean: "to wonder at, to look on with astonishment, to esteem, to honour and **to admire**." He goes on to say that *θαυμα* can mean both "**admiration**" and also "miracle".

Let's take a look at some modern translations of this word.

New International Version 1984 - I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus. When I saw her, I was greatly astonished.

Catholic St. Joseph New American bible 1970 - "And when I saw her I was greatly astonished."

New Living Translation 2007 - I could see that she was drunk--drunk with the blood of God's holy people who were witnesses for Jesus. I stared at her in complete amazement.

English Standard Version 2001 - And I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints, the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. When I saw her, I marveled greatly.

New American Standard Bible 1995 - And I saw the woman drunk with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. When I saw her, I wondered greatly.

Catholic Douay Version 1950 - And when I saw her I wondered with a great wonder.

International Standard Version 2008 - I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. I was very surprised when I saw her.

English Revised Version 1881 - And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I wondered with a great wonder.

Young's Literal Translation - And I saw the woman drunken from the blood of the saints, and from the blood of the witnesses of Jesus, and I did wonder -- having seen her -- with great wonder;

In this list you will notice that all of them seem to be implying that John was in wonder or amazement and marveling at what he saw and this is also the positive force of the English word "admiration". I believe there are two different ways to look at the passage and understand its meaning here. In neither of these two explanations is the King James Bible wrong.

First view - The chapter opens up with verse one telling us: "And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." Then follows a description of this great whore that made the world drunk with her fornication; was drunken with the blood of the saints, and was the great enemy of God. It is at this point that the apostle says: "And when I saw her,

I wondered with great admiration." The question to ask is this: At what was John wondering with great admiration? The first view is that John is wondering with great admiration at the fact that God is going to rightly and severely judge her for her many sins.

The rest of chapter 17 and all of chapter 18 then go into greater detail about the righteous judgments God is going to bring upon this Whore of Babylon - "they shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will" (v. 16-17), "Babylon is fallen, is fallen", "so much torment and sorrow give her", "and she shall be utterly burned with fire; for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her". (Rev. 18:2,7,8) It is then that the saints in heaven join in praise of God for His righteous judgments saying: "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God; For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore..."

Second view - The apostle John was not perfect and neither are we. We can see this fact even in the book of Revelation. The visions the angel had been showing John were so amazing and marvelous, that he was overcome with emotion and in a very real way lost his sense of perspective. In Revelation 19:10 we read: "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of they brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Here the apostle John was wrongly about to worship an angel. The angel stopped him in his tracks and told him to worship God. Not only this, but John did it a second time too! In Revelation 22:8-9 we again read: "And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God." So, with these things in mind, when we go back and look at Revelation 17:6 and when John sees the woman sitting upon a scarlet coloured beast...decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations, he may very well have wondered with great admiration at the imposing wealth, power and influence of this Mother of harlots and abominations of the earth. The next verse seems to bring out this sense too. "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her..." Both ways of looking at the passage can make sense when we read at Revelation 17:6 where John says: "and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration."

There is absolutely nothing wrong with the King James Bible in Revelation 17:6 nor in any other place. It is always right, whether we or the unbelievers in the Infallibility of any Bible understand it or not. It is God's Book and Absolute Standard of written truth to the nations.

All of grace, believing The Book, Will Kinney