

## **Deuteronomy 33:2 and the Bible Babble Buffet Versions at their best**

All Bible versions say the same thing, but with different words", right? Well, not quite and not in thousands of verses. Here is just one of hundreds of examples.

Deuteronomy 33:2 "The LORD came from Sinai, and ROSE UP from Seir unto THEM; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came WITH ten thousands of saints; FROM HIS RIGHT HAND WENT A FIERY LAW FOR THEM."

The multitude of conflicting, multiple-choice, Let's go to the Original Languages, Do It Yourself Scholars really strut their stuff in this verse.

First of all, the phrase "the LORD...ROSE UP from Seir UNTO THEM" is the reading of the Jewish translations of 1917, 1936, the RV, ASV, Coverdale, Bishops', Geneva, Webster's, Darby, Young's, Hebrew Names Version, Green's Modern KJV, and the Third Millenium Bible.

Beginning with the RSV and now in the NKJV, NIV, NASB, it now reads: "The Lord DAWNED ON them from Seir."

More importantly, the part that reads "FROM HIS RIGHT HAND WENT A FIERY LAW FOR THEM" is found in Tyndale 1630, Coverdale 1535, Bishops' Bible 1568, the Geneva Bible 1599, the Revised Version of 1881, the ASV of 1901, the NKJV 1982, Green's MKJV, Webster's 1833, Third Millenium Bible, the Douay-Rheims 1610, the 1917 JPS (Jewish Publication Society) and 1936 Hebrew Publishing Company translation, the 1998 Complete Jewish Bible, Hebrew Names Version, World English Bible, Darby, the Judaica Press Tanach - "from His right hand was a fiery Law for them", the Spanish Reina Valera 1960 - "Y vino de entre diez millares de santos, Con la ley de fuego a su mano derecha.", the Portuguese Almeida - "ã sua direita havia para eles o fogo da lei.", the French Martin of 1744 and the Louis Segond of 2007 - "de sa main droite, envoyé le feu de la loi."

I was actually quite surprised to see that Dan Wallace's NET version is really quite close to the meaning found in the King James Bible, because usually if there is anything wacky, then Dan Wallace will go with it. But his NET version reads basically the same with: "He appeared in splendor from Mount Paran, and came forth with ten thousand holy ones. With his right hand he gave a fiery law to them."

John Wesley comments: "A fiery law - The law is called fiery, because it is of a fiery nature purging and searching and inflaming, to signify that fiery wrath which it inflicteth upon sinners for the violation of it, and principally because it was delivered out of the midst of the fire."

Compare Deuteronomy 4:11-12 and 5:26. "And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven...and the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice." "For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived?"

Now let's see what the noted scholars of today, all of whom have gone to seminary and consulted "the original languages", have done with this passage.

Instead of "FROM HIS RIGHT HAND WENT A FIERY LAW FOR THEM" we read:

The RSV 1952, and ESV 2001 - "dawned from Seir upon US; he shone forth from Mount Paran, he came FROM the ten thousands of holy ones, WITH FLAMING FIRE AT HIS RIGHT HAND."

In this verse the RSV, NRSV, and ESV all change the Hebrew reading of "unto THEM" to "upon US" and then footnote that the word "us" comes from the Syriac, the LXX and the Vulgate, but that the Hebrew texts read "them".

The 1989 New RSV - "With him were myriads of holy ones; AT HIS RIGHT HAND, A HOST OF HIS OWN."

NIV- "The LORD came from Sinai and DAWNED OVER them from Seir; he shone forth from Mount Paran. He came with myriads of holy ones FROM THE SOUTH, FROM HIS MOUNTAIN SLOPES." (That's right, this is what it says in place of "from his right hand went a fiery law for them".) However the NIV Spanish edition of 1999 (Nueva Versión Internacional) and the NIV Portuguese editions have a completely different meaning even from the NIV English version and it says: "y llegó desde Meribá Cades con rayos de luz en su diestra." which means "He came from Meriba Cades (Say what?) with rays of light in his right hand." Yep, that's pretty close, right?

NASB - "The LORD came from Sinai, and DAWNED ON them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came FROM THE MIDST OF (not with?) ten thousand holy ones, AT HIS RIGHT HAND THERE WAS FLASHING LIGHTNING FOR THEM."

The Bible in Basic English 1960 says: "coming from Meribath Kadesh: from his right hand went flames of fire: HIS WRATH MADE WASTE THE PEOPLES."

This is similar to the Catholic versions that just keep getting weirder and weirder. The older Catholic versions like the Douay-Rheims of 1610 and the Douay of 1950 read like the King James Bible saying: "he hath appeared from mount Pharan, and with him thousands of saints. In his right hand a fiery law." However, believe it or

not, the 1970 St. Joseph New American Bible actually reads: "He shone forth from Mount Paran and advanced from Meribath-kadesh, WHILE AT HIS RIGHT HAND A FIRE BLAZED FORTH AND HIS WRATH DEVASTATED THE NATIONS." Then the 1985 Catholic New Jerusalem came out and it says: "...from Mount Paran came forth, FOR THEM HE CAME, AFTER THE MUSTERING AT KADESH, FROM HIS ZENITH AS FAR AS THE FOOTHILLS." I am not kidding you or making this stuff up. That is actually how these "bibles" read.

The New English Bible 1970 - "He showed himself from Mount Paran, and with him were MYRIADS OF HOLY ONES STREAMING ALONG AT HIS RIGHT HAND."

Common English Bible of 2011. One of the latest critical text versions to come down the pike is what they call The Common English Version of 2011, and so you can see where "the science of textual criticism" is making great strides in our understanding of the Scriptures (NOT), here is how this latest mess reads: "from Paran Mountain he beamed down. Thousands of holy ones were with him, HIS WARRIORS WERE NEXT TO HIM, READY." Pretty close to "from His right hand went a fiery law", huh?

Young's translation - "Jehovah from Sinai hath come, And hath risen from Seir for them; He hath shone from mount Paran, And hath come with myriads of holy ones; At HIS RIGHT HAND ARE SPRINGS FOR THEM."

The Greek Septuagint and the Syriac Peshitta are of no help at all in this verse. They both give conflicting readings as well. The Greek Septuagint reads: "The Lord has hasted out of Mount Pharan with the ten thousands OF CADES, on his right hand WERE HIS ANGELS WITH HIM."

Lamsa's 1933 translation of the Syriac Peshitta has: "he came with ten thousands of saints AT HIS RIGHT HAND. YEA, HE SUPPLIED THEIR NEEDS: he also made them to be beloved BY THE NATIONS."

Was it a "fiery law", "flashing lightning", "he supplied their needs", "his angels with him", "tongues of fire", "streams", "a host of his own", or "from the south"? Who really cares? They all mean the same thing, right? As Professor James White says, "If we compare all the bible versions together, we arrive at a better understanding of what is really being said." Don't you agree?