

# LAST GENERATION VERSION of the New Testament

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## **Purpose**

This entirely new English translation of the New Testament from the Greek is being produced specifically for the last generation of Christians who will live to see the return of Jesus Christ to earth and face the end-time trial of faith. It is a very accurate representation of the Greek text in current English, although sacrificing some readability for the sake of accuracy. The more rigid style is best for those who wish to do in depth study. It is a work in progress.

## **Greek Text**

In making a translation, there are three families of Greek texts from which to choose. They are the Textus Receptus from which the KJV and NKJV are translated, the Majority (or Byzantine) Text which represents the vast majority of known Greek manuscripts, and the Alexandrian Text which represents a very small number of very ancient Greek manuscripts from Egypt. Each of these text families has its strengths and weaknesses.

The Textus Receptus' strengths are that it usually follows the majority of Greek manuscripts and takes into account patristic quotations and other ancient versions. Its weakness is that it occasionally follows a very obscure reading for which there is scant evidence.

The Majority Text's strength is its numbers, and the very wide geographical area represented by its witnesses. Its weakness is that it often ignores ancient versions and patristic evidence.

The Alexandrian Text's strength is its greater age. Its weaknesses are its extremely small numbers, many internal discrepancies among its few witnesses, and its very limited geographical area. It is the local text of Alexandria, and does not likely represent the

text of other areas, particularly Asia Minor, the cradle of early Christianity where the original autographs were kept by the local churches founded by the Apostles.

The LGV generally follows the Textus Receptus. However, in the rare cases where the Textus Receptus follows an obscure reading, the LGV follows the Majority Text reading under the following circumstances: the Majority and Alexandrian Texts agree together against it and there is no patristic or early version support for the TR reading. Footnotes are provided where important textual variants occur. In one passage in Revelation, the Alexandrian Text is followed because overwhelming internal evidence makes the TR and MT readings theologically impossible.<sup>1</sup>

### **Theological Bias**

Most translations of the Bible are affected by pressure to conform to certain theological traditions. All translations are to some degree influenced by the personal theological biases of the translators. This is true because the text must be understood in order to be translated. And the theological filters and presuppositions in the minds of translators strongly influence their understanding of the text, and consequently their translation. Catholic translations are influenced by Roman Catholic theology. Eastern Orthodox translations are influenced by Orthodox theology. Protestant Bibles are influenced by Reformed theology. Evangelical Bibles are influenced by both Reformed and Dispensational bias. The diligent student of the Scriptures should be aware of this fact, and the particular biases of the translators of any version he chooses to use.

You will not find a Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Reformed, or Dispensational bias in this translation or its notes. You will find a bias that is usually favorable to the writings of the earliest Christian pastors, apologists, and martyrs, and is far less favorable to the interpretations of modern theologians.

### **Theologically Shaded Terms**

There are certain terms in English Bibles that have not been properly translated into English, but instead have been transliterated. Transliteration is the process of conveying the phonetic sound of a Greek word in English rather than conveying its meaning using an English word of the same meaning. The best example is the Greek word “βαπτίζω”

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<sup>1</sup> See notes on Revelation 5:8-10

(baptizo) which has been transliterated “baptize” in English. This is the normal Greek word meaning to submerge in a liquid. It was used for anything from soaking dishes to the sinking of a ship. It was not a theological term at all. A proper translation would be “submerge” or “immerse.” By not actually translating this term, but merely carrying over the phonetic sound into English (creating a new English theological term), various denominations have cover for importing their own theological spin to the term rather than being forced to convey its true meaning. Christian baptism today in various churches means different things, from a purely spiritual experience to making the sign of the cross on the head of an infant with a few drops “holy water.” There are other important theological terms where theological cover is given by not translating the words. For example, rendering “αποστολος” (apostolos) as “apostle” instead translating its true meaning (one sent on a mission with the authority of the sender – an “emissary”), has given cover to Charismatic groups to claim there are Apostles of Christ today (even though they were never commissioned personally by Jesus).

Sometimes an English word used has no resemblance to the Greek word it supposedly translates, either in meaning or phonetic sound. The best example is the English word “church” which is given for the Greek word “εκκλησια” (ekklesia). The Greek word literally means an assembly of people, called together from their homes to gather for a particular purpose. “Congregation,” “assembly,” and “gathering” are the best English equivalents. It refers to the event itself, not to the people. Consequently, when the “εκκλησια” is broken up, it no longer exists until the next “εκκλησια.”<sup>2</sup>

The LGV translates these terms rather than using the traditional transliterations. The exception is proper names. Here we follow the pattern of the Apostles who also transliterated into Greek the proper names from the Old Testament, no doubt following the example of the Septuagint.

### **Book Order**

The earliest manuscripts of the New Testament present a different order of books than the current English Bibles. The late Dr. Ernest L. Martin wrote, “*Truly there is not a Bible on the market today which follows the arrangement of the earliest manuscripts.*”<sup>3</sup> Dr. Scrivener

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 14:27; Acts 19:32,39,41

<sup>3</sup> Ernest L. Martin, *Restoring the Original Bible*, p. 1

surveyed over 4000 ancient manuscripts of the New Testament, He concluded: “Whether copies contain the whole or a part of the sacred volume, the general order of the books is the following: Gospels, Acts, Catholic Epistles, Pauline Epistles, Apocalypse.”<sup>4</sup>

The general consensus of the earliest manuscripts breaks the New Testament books down into the following categories and order:

- Historical: *Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts*
- General Letters: *James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, Jude*
- Pauline Letters: *Rom., 1 Cor., 2 Cor., Gal., Eph., Phil., Col., 1 Thess., 2 Thess., Heb., 1 Tim., 2 Tim., Titus., Philm*
- Prophecy: *Revelation*

Hebrews is among the Letters of Paul, between 2 Thessalonians and 1 Timothy.

The order of the books in English Bibles follows Jerome’s 4<sup>th</sup> century Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church. Apparently, Jerome rearranged the order of the Epistles in order to put the Epistle to Rome first, and the Jewish Epistles (James & 1 Peter) at the end, thus elevating the church of Rome to the highest rank, above the church of Jerusalem.

When the books of the New Testament are read in the original order, the reader gets a better sense of the early development of Christianity. The LGV follows the ancient order, based on the oldest tradition (perhaps from the Apostles), rather than the opinion of one man, Jerome, who was working on behalf of the bishop of Rome.

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<sup>4</sup> Scrivener, Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament, Vol. I, p. 72, quoted from E. L. Martin, Restoring the Original Bible, p. 8.

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