

The History of the King James Bible – Part 14 – Tischendorf Revives Origen's Influence

1 Thessalonians 2:13 “**For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.**”

The great work of Satan from the beginning. – The Devil could not prevent Adam from having God's word but what he set out to do was to render God's word ineffectual in Adam and Eve's lives. If the Devil could convince Eve that those were words but not God's words he has got her where he wants her.

Today Satan does not care if you find a church that uses the KJV bible, your pastor prefers the KJV and only uses it. He doesn't care if your Sunday literature is KJV-only, nor the school you go to recommends only the KJV. As long as you do not believe that these are God's very words, you can use it every day and he is happy for you to do so because they will not affect your life. God did not give His word so we could memorise it. He gave us His word so we could memorise it to the extent that we obey it. – Not just study it but study it to the end that we obey it. – Not just to preach it but preach it to the end that men may obey it.

If you do not believe these words are the words of God you will be no better after the reading, the study and preaching because when you or others come across a verse of scripture we do not agree with you simply “Greek” it, “better render” it or you “better manuscripts say”, or you “well my denomination believes” the text! – The words will not change you, but you will seek to change them!

If they are the words of God you allow them to alter your course of action and way of thinking.

The overwhelming majority of manuscripts found since 1611AD have supported the KJV.

The small group that do not agree with the KJV

A4 copy of the codex Alexandrinus was given the king of England in 1627AD and the first critical text of the bible was published in 1831AD by Carl Lachmann.

A critical text has notes in the margins or bottom of the page saying things like “1 John 5:7 is not found in the best manuscripts. The Codex Alexandrinus does not have it.”

Their criticisms of the text are based on the manuscripts they have found since 1611AD.

This arrival in England of the first complete copy of the Alexandrinus bible caused a sensation among scholars and got everyone excited about going to the libraries across the world that would supposedly straighten out the authorised version.

The first product of this type of operation was the “Complutensian Polyglot” in the Latin, Hebrew and Greek and the NT in the Latin Vulgate and Greek, followed by the Antwerp Polyglot which added the Syriac version to those listed.

In 1645AD the Paris Polyglot added an Arabic version and the Samaritan Pentateuch.

In 1657AD we had the London Polyglot which added some critical notes by a man called Edmund Castell and included some 9 languages all together.

This all started many works criticizing the bible which included Johann Griesbach of Germany. – He put out 3 additions of a critical received text in 1777, 1801 and 1805AD and was the first one to directly challenge the authority of the *textus receptus* and call into question the validity of the authorised version.

Then it happened. – In 1840AD a man of the same influence of Origen and Jerome came into town by the name of Constantin Tischendorf.

He was a brilliant man who graduated with a degree in theology from Leipzig University and dedicated his life to travelling the world in search of biblical manuscripts and publishing his finds.

His legacy was a vast amount of published material in the form of manuscripts in the Greek texts. – His most notable achievement was the discovery of the “Codex Sinaiticus”. – The Alexandrian and Sinaiticus were the sole basis on which the so-called scholars of the 1800's began their attempt to overthrow the authorised version.

Tischendorf had discovered 18 uncial manuscripts and 6 minuscule manuscripts which he edited, transcribed, and published 8 editions of a Greek NT text and kept changing it every time he found a new manuscript.

He published 4 editions of the Latin text in both the Old Latin and the Vulgate, 4 editions of the Greek OT and published texts of several Apocryphal writings and collections of writings from the church fathers (quotations). – He did a Greek text in 1841, 1842, 1849, 1850, 1854, 1856, 1869AD and here were his methods:-

He sat down with some 40 manuscripts against the 1000s used for the KJV. If the KJV manuscripts had 1000s supporting a text but one of Tischendorf's disagreed, he would put a note in the margin of his Greek text and say “The authorised version is to be questioned here because Codex xxx reads....”

He had a 2-point system in his methodology:-

1. He was a naturalist. – He treated the bible text the same way he treated other Greek classical literature and did not believe the original writings, or the copies thereof were inspired by God but that they were the works of men who believed in God and Christ. – He would consider the works of Homer of the same values as the Greek NT!
2. He accepted the theory of Griesbach that the oldest manuscripts were the best. – When the KJV translators sat down they had manuscripts from 425AD onwards and when Tischendorf sat down he had Codex Alexandrinus from 300s and Sinaiticus supposedly from 300s and said “Well, since they are older they must be better.”

The folly of this thinking is to overlook that the received word has been used greatly through time and so worn out but the printed copies of perversions were rarely used and so obviously in better condition.

Tischendorf was mesmerised by the Sinaiticus manuscripts and his 8th edition of the Greek NT was based almost entirely on this manuscript.

Here is how the Sinai manuscript supposedly came about. – King Fredrick Augustus of Saxony gave Tischendorf much money to ride around and collect manuscripts so that his country would have them in their museum and people with money would travel to see them in their museum etc...Money, money, money!

Then in May 1884AD Tischendorf visited the monastery of St Katherin at the foot of mount Sinai. While he was there he noticed a basket containing old vellum manuscripts. – The monks told him they used this rubbish to kindle their fires for baking bread and that 2-fold baskets had been burnt already. – Certainly, these monks did not consider these manuscripts to be of any value!

Tischendorf took a look in the basket and said “Glory be. In there are 120 leaves of a Greek OT.” – Where would a Greek OT come from? Alexandria and these were put together by Origen and so Tischendorf was going to bring the corrupting bunch back into the picture.

The monks were suspicious at Tischendorf's enthusiasm but did let him have 43 leaves which contained portions of 1 Chronicles, Jeremiah, Nehemiah, Esther, and he asked them not to use the material to start any more fires.

Tischendorf took this discovery to Leipzig and published his leaves in 1846AD under the name “Codex Frederico Augustanus” and was careful not to tell anyone the exact location of his find lest others discover it and display it in their country.

He returned to the monastery in 1853AD (9 years later) and received nothing as the monks were still suspicious.

In 1856AD Tischendorf approached Tsar Alexander II of Russia, the patron and protector of the Orthodox church and Tischendorf received approval to continue his quest and in January 1856AD he returned to the monastery and he cautiously approached a steward on the last week of his stay and showed him a copy of his discovery from 12 years earlier. – With great amazement and joy the monk produced the manuscript wrapped in a red cloth. – Recognising this to be the sought after manuscript Tischendorf received permission to examine it in his room that night. – How did he know it was the one or what he was looking for? He recognised that it was going to impress the Tsar and he was going to keep getting money to publish what he had found and more money to search etc...

He sat up all night making his own copy of the Sinaiticus of the epistle of Barnabas. – Not even the RCC put it in their bible and so therefore Tischendorf had the spiritual discernment of an unsaved 5-year-old.

God allowed this foolishness so that you would know not to listen to him!

His request to purchase the manuscript and take it to Cairo was refused and he left St Katherin's monastery without it.

He next went to Cairo, Egypt and to a small branch monastery of St Katherin's seeking permission from the superior Abbott to have the document brought to Cairo and the Abbott gave permission and Bedouin camel riders transported it with haste.

Tischendorf was trying to reintroduce the darkness and go right back to the Alexandrian business God had delivered them from.

The Abbott allowed Tischendorf access to the manuscripts one section at a time but with the help of 2 assistants he was able to copy it down in 2 months.

Now who do you think would produce the more faithful bible? Something produced by 47 scholars who took 47 years checking and re-checking their translation or something a fella copied down in 2 months with the assistance of 2 others? – This is the difference between the KJV and all other modern versions!

Tischendorf convinced the monastery to donate the corrupt manuscripts to the Russian Tsar as they were in danger and promised favour to their favourite Abbott in return. – Not exactly a spiritual operation. – Politics, money, and rubbish out of a waste basket.

Tischendorf wowed the Tsar and both sides agreed as it would be monetarily advantageous to the Tsar and politically so from the perspective of the Abbott/monastery and so the Codex Sinaiticus was taken to St Petersburg.

At Leipzig Tischendorf oversaw its' printing of 4-volume copies in 1862AD and in 1869AD the Tsar gave him 9000 roubles and bestowed several honours upon him and him a silver shrine.

The manuscript remained in Russia until the Bolshevik revolution in 1917AD and was finally sold to the British government by the Communist government in 1933AD for £100,000.

These supposed “older” manuscripts were not dated at all but simply assigned a date by a “scholar” and this is supposed to uphold the source of the modern versions! The following are following 4 points are to be noted:-

1. All these Alexandrian manuscripts are dated after the Emperor Constantine when the corruption set in.
2. They are all written on vellum parchment which was extremely expensive and out of the reach of ordinary Christians.
3. They are written in literary hand rather than the common cursive hand and the only persons who could have written these manuscripts were scholastic types and not evangelists, pastors, preachers who were commoners dealing with common people.

4. Every one of these fairly complete codices (Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus) contained Apocryphal books, pseudepigraphal books (counterfeit books supposedly written by the Apostles). – If you picked up a book today in technical writing, containing “Paul’s Epistle to Pilot”, Bel and the Dragon and the Epistle to Barnabus and it cost £15,000 you would say “Not sure what this is but it sure isn’t the bible!”

Remember all the modern versions brought to the fore by Westcott and Hort are based off the manuscripts of the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus.