The Threat Of Erroneous Versions

Intro: One enters a Bible class and as the class begins, he is instructed to turn to a certain passage, the passage is read aloud, but then one person says, “That is not what my Bible says.” This one reads what his Bible says, and another says the same thing and reads his. We now have a problem: what does the Bible really say.

The Scriptures affirm that God’s Word will endure forever. Mat. 24:35 “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” 1 Pet. 1:25 “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” I believe that one of Satan’s greatest attacks against God’s Word is the multiplicity of versions which are now on the market. If Satan can confuse man as to what the Bible actually says, then he has effectively destroyed what God said in the lives of man today.

I. MANUSCRIPTS
A. Originals
1. We do not possess any of the original autographs.
2. As each letter was received, copies were being made.
3. These copies are termed manuscripts.
B. Manuscripts
1. We have over 5,000 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament.
2. There are variations within them.
3. There are features common to them so they are categorized into four basic groups called text types.
C. Text Types
1. Alexandrian (sometimes called Neutral Text)
2. Byzantine (Majority Text or Textus Receptus)
3. Caesarean
4. Western
D. Variations
1. Some speak of there being 200,000 errors.
2. The majority are simply variations within the text.
   a. Difference in spelling
   b. Difference form of the same word.
   c. For example the pool in John 5:2 has at least seven different spellings.
3. When everything is considered, “the reconstructed text of the New Testament [is] 99.9 percent free from substantial or consequential error” as stated by Geisler and Nix.

II. PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSLATION
A. Since we have God’s Word in the original language, there is the need to translate it to other languages.
B. John Joseph Owens wrote, “Translation is the art of transferring the thought expressed in one language and culture to the syntax, style, and words of a different language and culture.”
C. There are 2 concepts (philosophies) concerning translation (some divide it into 3 and some into 4).
1. Formal Equivalence (also called Modified Literal)
2. Dynamic Equivalence (also called Functional Equivalence)
3. Think of a line and at one end of the line is Formal Equivalence and at the other end is Dynamic Equivalence.
4. All translation (including the Bible) falls somewhere on this line.

D. Formal Equivalence
1. This approach tries to stay as literally close to the original as possible, trying to catch the mood, essence, and flavor of the original language and yet be readable and understandable.
2. The extreme side of formal equivalence would be an interlinear Bible
3. An interlinear does not seek to be readable and understandable as it translates things word for word and keeps the order of the original.

E. Dynamic Equivalence
1. This approach seeks for readability and communication.
   a. This is more paraphrase than a translation.
   b. The advocates of this philosophy discuss the need for “fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers” as is stated in the preface to the New International Version.
   c. Notice that it is the thought not the words.
2. In this approach the translators first interpret what they believe the words of the Bible mean, then they try and convey that meaning to the modern reader.
   a. If the translator’s interpretation is incorrect, that misinterpretation is written into the text of the Bible.
   b. Often a passage of Scripture will have more than one possible interpretation.
   c. All interpretations except the translators one view are thus eliminated.
3. This ends up being more of a commentary under the guise of a Bible than God’s Word.
4. The great majority of modern translations take this Dynamic Equivalence approach.

F. Formal Equivalence Versus Dynamic Equivalence.
1. Formal Equivalence is better if you are seeking God’s Word.
2. The father one moves to Dynamic Equivalence, the more interpretation creeps into translation, thus more a commentary instead of God’s Word.

III. TRANSLATIONS
A. Some differences in translation showing these 2 philosophies.
1. No translation should be the standard by which other translations are judged.
2. The standard to judge a translation is the original (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek).
3. We will try to illustrate the differences by using the 2 most popular versions according to sales with the original: *King James* and *New International*.
   a. The *King James* basically used the approach of Formal Equivalence.
   b. *New International* used Dynamic Equivalence.

B. Romans 1:17
1. The passage
   a. “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (KJV).
   b. “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (NIV).
2. The KJV is a very literal rendering of the Greek.
3. The NIV
   a. “Gospel” is not in the original, nor is “a righteousness that is by.”
   b. Consider especially “faith from first to last.”
      (1) Literally this is “out of faith into faith” or as the KJV has it.
      (2) The NIV did not translate one word correctly.
      (3) They interpreted the passage according to their view of salvation by faith only and wrote that damnable doctrine into their Bible.

C. 1 Cor. 13:9-10
1. Passage
   a. “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (KJV).
   b. “For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears” (NIV).
2. Verse 10 makes a contrast between “perfect” and “part.”
3. Literally it is “when the perfect thing comes, the out of part thing will be done away with.”
   a. The KJV does an excellent job showing the contrast and translating the phrase.
   b. The NIV
      (1) One would never know from the NIV that “in part” (v 9) is the same prepositional phrase as “the imperfect” (v 10).
      (2) “Disappears” leaves room for some mysterious removal of the imperfect.
4. The original has the partial (that which is in part) done away and the source being external (it does not take itself away).
5. What the NIV has done is open the way for the continuation of miraculous powers till the coming of Christ.
D. Romans 7-8

1. The NIV translators held the doctrine of man’s total depravity.
   a. Man is born with a sinful nature.
   b. As such he is totally evil and sinful with no ability to do anything good or pleasing to God.

2. Their translation was influenced by their false doctrine.
   a. The Greek word *sarx*.
   b. They translate it as “sinful nature” in 7:5, 18, 25; 8:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, and 13 (they also do this in other places).
   c. The true meaning of *sarx* is “flesh”
   d. The KJV and ASV used flesh in every instance cited above.

3. The Bible is devoid of such an ungodly doctrine as man’s total depravity.
   a. The NIV translators simply wrote it into their Bible because of their preconceived idea.
   b. They have interpreted the text (in view of their false doctrine) instead of translating it and allowing the reader to do his own study and interpretation.

E. Mat. 19:28

1. Passage
   a. “And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (KJV).
   b. “Jesus said to them, ‘I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel”’ (NIV).

2. There is no textual basis for “the renewal of all things” for the correct rendering of “regeneration” or rebirth.

3. The NIV translators hold the false doctrine of premillennialism and this translation accommodates this teaching.

Conclusion: These are only a few of the multitude of examples which can be shown, they adequately demonstrate the need for an accurate translation of the Scriptures. It should also show that we should avoid those which are interpretative paraphrases under the guise of God’s Word. Translators can write the “doctrines of devils” into these Bibles and destroy God’s Word in the process. Let us be vigilant to fight against Satan and his wicked tactics of perverting God’s Word.