

Sunday, May 26, 2019— Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 89 The Two Streams of Bibles Model of Transmission: Its Origins & Accuracy, Part 3
 (Old Latin vs. Latin Vulgate Dichotomy)

Introduction

- Lessons [87](#) and [88](#) were devoted to looking at the origins and accuracy of the “two streams of Bibles” model of transmission. These two Lessons have covered the following points:
 - The “Two Streams of Bibles” View of Transmission
 - Historical Origins of the “Two Streams of Bibles” Paradigm
 - First Questioning of the “Two Streams of Bibles” Paradigm
 - Gothic ([Lesson 87](#))
 - Peshitta ([Lesson 88](#))
- Today, I would like to look at what happened when I went public with my private misgivings regarding the “two streams of Bibles” paradigm. Simply stated, this portion of my research centered around the alleged dichotomous placement of the Old Latin and Latin Vulgate in opposing streams of transmission.
- Given the fact that I am going to be talking about Jerome’s Latin Vulgate in this Lesson, I would like to make the following disclaimers at the outset.
 - I am not a Roman Catholic.
 - I am not advocating for the use of the Latin Vulgate or the Rheims New Testament.
 - I am a King James Bible Believer.

Public Questioning of the “Two Streams of Bibles” Paradigm

- Armed with textual observations gleaned from looking at the Gothic and Peshitta translations, I went public regarding my misgivings on the “two streams of Bibles” paradigm in the late Summer and early Fall of 2018. This took the form of asking some public questions about the model in two Facebook groups that are devoted to discussing issues related to the KJB and the textual debate: 1) King James Bible Debate Group and 2) Pure Bible.
- In the Pure Bible Facebook Group, I was able to interact with researcher Steven Avery. As it turned out, Avery also had misgivings about the “two streams of Bibles” model but for different reasons. Instead of questioning the paradigm via the Gothic and Peshitta translations as I had, Avery’s doubts were primarily centered around what he perceived to be false dichotomy between the Old Latin and Latin Vulgate. Moreover, Avery also expressed misgivings regarding Benjamin Wilkinson, the fountainhead of the “two streams” notion and his ties to 7th Day Adventism. In this Lesson we deal with the dichotomy between the Old Latin and the Vulgate. Next week in Lesson 90 we will address the Adventism of Wilkinson and the paradigm’s origins.

- Please recall the following points from our summary of the “two streams of Bibles” charts in Lesson 87:
 - The Itala (Old Latin), Peshitta, and Gothic translations, among others, are always placed in the pure stream/line, thereby giving the impression that these early translations are in complete agreement with the Textus Receptus (*TR*), the text of the Reformation, and the King James Bible because they are in the same stream/line.
 - In contrast, Jerome’s Latin Vulgate is always placed in the corrupt stream/line emanating from Alexandria, Egypt and culminating in the various editions of the Critical Text and Modern Versions.
 - Therefore, these charts depict the Old Latin (Itala), Peshitta, and Gothic translations as “good” Bibles and the Vulgate as “bad.” More specifically, the Old Latin and Vulgate are pitted against each other as rivals in opposing streams/lines.
- Remember that the notion of placing the Waldensian (Old Latin) Bible in the stream of Received Text Bibles originated with Wilkinson’s 1930 work *Our Authorized Bible Vindicated* (Wilkinson, 30). The following table is presented by Wilkinson on page 30 under the heading “Two Parallel Streams of Bibles.”

<p>Apostles (Original). Received Text (Greek). Waldensian Bible (Italic). Erasmus (Received Text Restored). Luther’s Bible, Dutch, French, Spanish, Italian, French, Italian, etc., Tyndale, (English) 1535 Rheims (English) from (from Received Text). King James, 1611 Oxford Movement. (from Received Text).</p>	<p>Apostates (Corrupted Originals). Sinaiticus and Vaticanus Bible (Greek). Vulgate (Latin). Church of Rome’s Bible. Vaticanus (Greek). Westcott and Hort (B and Aleph). English Revised 1881. Dr. Philip Schaff (B and Aleph). American Revised 1901.</p>
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- Please note that Wilkinson’s table places the Waldensian Italic Bible (Old Latin) and Jerome’s Latin Vulgate in opposing streams. In doing so, Wilkinson is inferring that the Italic Bible is “good” and the Vulgate is “bad” or corrupt.
- This pitting of the Old Latin against Vulgate is an example of the logical fallacy of false dichotomy. Also known as the fallacy of “false dilemma” or “black-or-white”, it presents someone with two alternative states/options as the only possibilities when, in fact, more possibilities exist. This tactic has the appearance of forming a logical argument, but under closer scrutiny it becomes evident that there are more possibilities than the either/or choice that is presented.
 - “. . . we can define false dichotomy as when the author creates an artificial sense that there are only two possible alternatives in a situation. By doing that, the author limits both the reader’s options and imagination.

This fallacy is common when the author has an agenda and wants to give the impression that their view is the only sensible one.” (<https://www.mometrix.com/academy/false-dichotomy/>)

- In short, Wilkinson reasons as follows:
 - Since the Old Latin Bible had some distinctions from the Vulgate and since there were only two lines of Bibles (note the circular nature of this reasoning) thus the Old Latin Bible had to be the Received Text Bible.
- It is important to note that I have searched Wilkinson’s book in vain for a single example of a variant reading between the Old Latin and the Vulgate that would justify the establishment of such a dichotomy. Instead of offering textual evidence to support the alleged dichotomy between the Old Latin (Waldensian Bible) and the Vulgate, Wilkinson offers circumstantial evidence. On pages 28 and 29, just before he presents his chart of “The Two Parallel Streams of Bibles” on page 30, Wilkinson quotes Dr. Frederick Nolan’s 1815 work *An Inquiry into the Integrity of the Greek Vulgate* to buttress his position:
 - “The author perceived, without any labor of inquiry, that it derived its name from that diocese, which has been termed the Italic, as contradistinguished from the Roman. This is a supposition, which receives a sufficient confirmation from the fact, — that the principal copies of that version have been preserved in that diocese, the metropolitan church of which was situated in Milan. The circumstance is at present mentioned, as the author thence formed a hope, that some remains of the primitive Italic version might be found in the early translations made by the Waldenses, who were the lineal descendants of the Italic Church; and who have asserted their independence against the usurpation of the Church of Rome, and have ever enjoyed the free use of the Scriptures. In the search to which these considerations have led the author, his fondest expectations have been fully realized. It has furnished him with abundant proof on that point to which his inquiry was chiefly directed; as it has supplied him with the unequivocal testimony of a truly apostolical branch of the primitive church, that the celebrated text of the heavenly witnesses was adopted in the version which prevailed in the Latin Church, previously to the introduction of the modern Vulgate.” (Wilkinson, 28-29)
- Taken in context, Nolan is not asserting that the Italic Church used the Received Text without qualification. Rather Nolan is simply stating that the three heavenly witnesses of I John 5:7 were in the Old Latin and that there were some points of confluence between the Old Latin and the Received Text. Mark well, however, that Wilkinson is using this citation from the pen of Nolan to establish his “two streams of Bibles” paradigm by pitting the Bible of the Waldensians against the Latin Vulgate.
- Regarding the Old Latin translation, King James advocate Dr. Thomas Holland states the following:
 - “. . . The earliest Old Latin manuscripts in existence today date from the fourth century and onward. However, it is also thought that these later manuscripts strongly reflect the Old Latin New Testament that was in existence in the second and third centuries. . . . Regardless of where the Old Latin originated, it is clear that it is strongly associated with the Syrian text-type, what we have called the Traditional Text.

An example of this may be found in Mark 1:2. The Traditional Text reads, “As it is written in the prophets.” The text of Mark then quotes from two prophets, Malachi (3:1) and Isaiah (40:3). The Alexandrian Text reads, “As it written in the Prophet Isaiah” and then quotes the two prophets. The first reading is found in the King James Version, the New King James Version and the Traditional Greek Text. It is also found in the Peshitta. Among Old Latin manuscripts (which are usually classified with small Roman letters in italics) we find the same reading as in the Traditional Text. The reading is in *a* (fourth century), *aur* (seventh century), *b* (fifth century), *c* (twelfth century), *d* (fifth century), *f* (sixth century), *ff2* (fifth century), and *q* (seventh century).

The same is true for the longer ending of Mark and the story of the woman caught in adultery (known as the *pericope de adultera*). The Alexandrian Text does not contain Mark 16:9-20, though it is found in the majority of Greek manuscripts, the Peshitta, and almost all Old Latin manuscripts. The *pericope de adultera*, found in John 7:52-8:11, is also the reading of the Traditional Greek and found in the majority of Old Latin witnesses.” (Holland, 50-51)

- Unpacking this citation from the pen of Dr. Holland, a couple of summary takeaways are in order. First, as we saw last week when we looked at the Peshitta, the witness of the Old Latin is important to King James advocates because it is viewed as antedating **Æ** and **B**, the two-great uncial MSS of the Alexandrian Text Type. In this way, King James advocates have inadvertently taken up the mantra of their opponents that oldest is best.
- Second, note that Dr. Holland uses Mark 1:2 as a textual example that the Old Latin MSS support the Traditional Text against the Alexandrian. This illustrates a point that I made in Lessons 87 and 88: Mark 1:2 is used by many to quickly gage the textual basis of a given translation. Why is the Old Latin in the pure stream of Bibles? Because the text reads “prophets” in Mark 1:2. Recall, however, from previous lessons that both the extant Gothic and Peshitta translations contain Alexandrian readings in Mark 1:2.

Gothic	swe gameliþ ist in Esaïin [Isaiah] praufetau: sai, ik insandja aggilu meinana faura þus, saei gamanweiþ wig þeinana faura þus.
Peshitta— Lamsa (1933)	As it is written in Isaiah the prophet , Behold I send my messenger before your face, that he may prepare your way, (Etheridge, 1849 & Murdock, 1851 also read some form of “Isaiah the prophet.”)
King James	As it is written in the prophets , Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

- According to what Dr. Holland reports regarding the Old Latin, it disagrees with both the extant Gothic and the Peshitta versions in Mark 1:2. Yet, all three are placed in the same stream of transmission on various “two streams of Bibles” charts and diagrams. Furthermore, note that Dr. Holland said that the Traditional reading of Mark 1:2 (“prophets”) is found in the Peshitta. This conclusion does not match the findings I presented in Lesson 88. So, what does one do when Bibles placed in the same stream of transmission contradict each other in terms of their so-called characteristic readings?
- Thirdly, Dr. Holland offers the extended ending of Mark (16:9-20) and the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) as further textual proof of the Old Latin’s support of the Traditional readings as found in the King James Bible. This analysis leaves out the fact that the Latin Vulgate of Jerome also includes Mark 16:9-20 as well as John 7:53-8:11. Meanwhile, as we saw

in Lesson 87, the Gothic Bible, a presumed emblem of textual purity according to “two streams” advocates, does not contain the woman taken in adultery.

- Please consider the following table comparing the Peshitta, Gothic, Old Latin, and Vulgate readings for three passages discussed by Dr. Holland.

	Peshitta	Gothic	Old Latin	Vulgate
Mark 1:2	“Isaiah the prophet”	“Isaiah the prophet”	“prophets”	“Isaiah the prophet”
Mark 16:9-20	Contains passage	Contains passage	Contains passage	Contains passage
John 7:53-8:11	Mixed evidence	Omitted	Contains passage	Contains passage

- In the case of these three readings, when judged in light of the extant evidence, the Old Latin has more in common with the Vulgate than it does with the Peshitta and Gothic versions. Yet, “two streams of Bibles” literature always place the Old Latin in the same transmissional stream as the Peshitta and Gothic against the Vulgate. Is this really an accurate representation of the facts on the ground? Is the Vulgate any more corrupt than either the Peshitta or Gothic in the case of these three readings? The answer is no, all three are emblematic of a mixed text.
- Textually speaking, the Old Latin and Latin Vulgate are sister texts given that the Vulgate was originally an updating of the Old Latin by Jerome. History tells us that Jerome used the Old Latin as his base text in translating the Vulgate along with the assistance of some unidentified Greek MSS. While we cannot know for sure what MSS Jerome used as his textual basis, we can know with some certainty that it was not the so-called Alexandrian Text as typified by Codex B. Extant copies of the Latin Vulgate contain the long ending of Mark (16:9-20), whereas Codex B is one of only two Greek witnesses that omits the text.
- In Lessons 87 and 88 we compared the readings of the following passages in the Gothic and Peshitta versions: Mark 1:2; Colossians 1:14; I Timothy 3:16; Luke 2:33; John 7:53-8:11; Mark 16:9-20; Acts 8:37; I John 5:7. Given that access to the Old Latin online is extremely limited we were not able to make any comparisons beyond the ones mentioned by Dr. Holland above regarding Mark 1:2; 16:9-20; John 7:53-8:11. That being said, we can compare the extant Latin Vulgate with the extant Peshitta and Gothic versions to determine if their placement in opposing streams of transmission is factually accurate.

	Peshitta	Gothic	Vulgate
Luke 2:33	“Joseph and his mother”	“Joseph and his mother”	“father and mother”
Acts 8:37	Mixed Evidence	Not Available	Omitted
Colossians 1:14	Omits “through his blood”	Omits “through his blood”	Omits “through his blood”
I Timothy 3:16	Omits “God”	Omits “God”	Omits “God”
I John 5:7	Mixed Evidence	Not Available	Contains Verse

- Evidence gleaned from the Vulgate for the readings in question reveal that it is a mixed text as are the Peshitta and Gothic Bibles. The textual facts on the ground do not warrant the placement of the Latin Vulgate in an opposing stream of transmission from the Peshitta and Gothic.
- Independent evidence gleaned from Volume LXXII of *Bibliotheca Sacra* published in 1915 suggests that for the book of Acts, the Received Text had more in common with the Vulgate than the Old Latin. In other words, the sweeping dichotomy drawn between the Old Latin and the Vulgate by the “two streams” paradigm breaks down when weighed against the facts.

- “While engaged in copying the Fragments of the Acts from the Fleury Palimpsest [Old Latin MS] in the National Library in Paris in the year 1904, I was struck by the immense disparity between the Old-Latin text and the Vulgate of Jerome. On consulting the Received Greek text I saw that the Vulgate was closely allied to the Greek, and that in all the important variants exhibited by the Palimpsest the Vulgate and the Received Greek text were combined against the Old-Latin.” (Buchanan, 529)
- Moreover, trying to paint the Vulgate as wholly “bad” against the Old Latin does not make sense given the fact that a handful of Received Text readings were preserved in the Latin Vulgate. This point was made by King James defender Dr. Edward F. Hills in his 1956 publication *The King James Version Defended*.
 - “The God who brought the New Testament text safely through the ancient and medieval manuscript period did not fumble when it came time to transfer this text to the modern printed page. This is the conviction which guides the believing Bible student as he considers the relationship between the printed Textus Receptus to the Traditional New Testament text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts.

These two texts are virtually identical. . .

There are, however, a few places in which the Textus Receptus differs from the Traditional text found in the majority of the Greek New Testament manuscripts. The more important of these differences are due to the fact that Erasmus, influenced by the usage of the Latin-speaking Church in which he was reared, sometimes followed the Latin Vulgate rather than the Traditional Greek text.

Are the readings which Erasmus thus introduced into the Textus Receptus necessarily erroneous? By no means ought we to infer this. For it is inconceivable that the divine providence which had preserved the New Testament text during the long ages of the manuscript period should blunder when at last this text was committed to the printing press. According to the analogy of faith, then, we conclude that the Textus Receptus was a further step in God’s providential preservation of the New Testament text and that these few Latin Vulgate readings which were incorporated into the Textus Receptus were genuine readings which had been preserved in the usage of the Latin-speaking church. Erasmus, we may well believe, was guided providentially by the common faith to include these readings in his printed Greek New Testament text. In the Textus Receptus God corrected the few mistakes of any consequence which remained in the Traditional New Testament text of the majority of the Greek manuscripts.

The following are some of the most familiar and important of those relatively few Latin Vulgate readings which, though not part of the Traditional Greek text, seem to have been placed into the Textus Receptus by the direction of God’s special providence and therefore are also found in other ancient witnesses, namely, old Greek manuscripts, versions, and Fathers.

- Matt. 10:8—*raise the dead*, is omitted by the majority of the Greek manuscripts. This reading is present, however, in *Aleph*, B, C, D, 1, the Latin Vulgate, and the Textus Receptus.

- Matt. 25:35—*that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.* Present in Eusebius (c. 325), 1 and other “Caesarean” manuscripts, the Harclean Syrian, the Old Latin, the Vulgate, and the Textus Receptus. Omitted by the majority of the Greek manuscripts.
- John 3:25—*Then there arose a questioning between some of John’s disciples and the Jews about purifying.* P⁶⁶, Aleph, 1 and other “Caesarean” manuscripts, the Old Latin, the Vulgate and the Textus Receptus read *the Jews*. P⁷⁵, B, the Peshitta, and the majority of the Greek manuscripts read *a Jew*.
- Acts 8:37—*And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* As J.A. Alexander (1857) suggested, this verse, though genuine, was omitted by many scribes, “as unfriendly to the practice of delaying baptism, which had become common, if not prevalent by the end of the 3rd century. Hence the verse is absent from the majority of the Greek manuscripts. But it is present in some of them, including E (6th or 7th century). It is cited by Irenaeus (c. 180) and Cyprian (c. 250) and is found in the Old Latin and the Vulgate [It is found in the Clementine Vulgate of 1598 but not in Jerome’s original Vulgate of 390]. In his notes Erasmus says that he took this reading from the margin of 4ap and incorporated it into the Textus Receptus.
- Acts 9:5—*it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* This reading is absent here from the Greek manuscripts but is present in Old Latin manuscripts and in the Latin Vulgate known to Erasmus. It is present also at the end of Acts 9:4 in E, 431, the Peshitta, and certain manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate. In Acts 26:14, however, this reading is present in all the Greek manuscripts. In his notes Erasmus indicates that he took this reading from Acts 26:14 and inserted it here.
- Acts 9:6—*And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him,* this reading is found in the Latin Vulgate and in other ancient witnesses. It is absent, however, from the Greek manuscripts, due, according to Lake and Cadbury (1933), “to the paucity of Western Greek texts and the absence of D at this point.” In his notes Erasmus indicates that this reading is a translation made by him from the Vulgate into Greek.
- Acts 20:28—*Church of God.* Here the majority of the Greek manuscripts read, *Church of the Lord and God.* The Latin Vulgate, however, and the Textus Receptus read Church of God, which is also the reading of Aleph, B, and other ancient witnesses.
- Rom. 16:25-26—In the majority of the manuscripts this doxology is placed at the end of chapter 14. In the Latin Vulgate and the Textus Receptus it is placed at the end of chapter 16, and this is also the position it occupies in Aleph, B, C, and D.
- Rev. 22:19—*And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.* According to Hoskier, all the Greek manuscripts, except possibly one or two read, tree of life. The Textus Receptus reads book of life, with the Latin Vulgate (including the

very old Vulgate manuscript F), the Bohairic version, Ambrose (d. 397), and the commentaries of Primasius (6th century) and Haymo (9th century). This is one of the verses which Erasmus is said to have translated from Latin into Greek. . . (Hills, 200-202)

- Regardless of how one views Hills’ statements regarding providence, noting the following takeaways from this citation is essential. First, of the nine examples of Vulgate readings found in the Received Text and KJB cited by Dr. Hills, the Old Latin translation is mentioned four times (Matthew 25:25; John 3:25; Acts 8:37, 9:5). In these four instances the Vulgate is also explicitly mentioned as agreeing with the Old Latin as to the authenticity of the Received Text reading. This data does not suggest a dichotomous relationship between the Old Latin and Latin Vulgate as “two streams” advocates have suggested. Rather the Vulgate is a descendant of the Old Latin possessing more confluence with its Latin predecessors than with X and B. Yet in “two streams” argumentation the Old Latin and Vulgate are placed in opposite streams of transmission. Such a placement misrepresents the facts which show the Old Latin and Vulgate to be more closely aligned against X and B than against each other.
- Second, how does it make sense to paint the Vulgate as wholly bad/evil/corrupt if it is helpful to establish the authenticity of certain Received Text/King James readings? In this case, it is anti-Catholic bias on the part of fundamentalists that has demonized the Vulgate out of hand rather than looking at its actual readings.
- Thirdly, though not covered by Hills, when judged against the mixed extant witnesses for the Peshitta and Gothic versions, the Vulgate is no less mixed. Why then do the Peshitta and Gothic get placed in the pure stream of transmission while the Vulgate is relegated to the corrupt stream? When judged by the extant evidence, the situation is not so clear cut as the dichotomous reasoning of the “two streams” paradigm would have us believe. The fact is that when the Peshitta, Gothic, and Vulgate are judged against the twin standards of the Received Text in Greek and King James Bible in English all three are mixed texts and the “two streams” of transmission notion thereby dries up.
- Lastly, the Catholic Rheims New Testament of 1582 is always placed in the stream of corrupt Bibles along with Modern Versions such as the NIV, NASV, ESV, and NKJV. The following portion of a meme is very popular on Facebook and other social media websites.

**WHY
KING JAMES BIBLE
ONLY?**

1. Almost all modern versions, including the NIV, remove 16 entire verses from the New Testament:

Matt 17:21	Matt 18:11	Matt 23:14	Mark 7:16
Mark 9:44	Mark 9:46	Mark 11:26	Mark 15:28
Luke 17:36	John 5:4	Acts 8:37	Acts 15:34
Acts 24:7	Acts 28:29	Rom 16:24	1John 5:7

- I downloaded a PDF copy of the original Rheims New Testament and checked to see if the sixteen verses listed on the meme above were omitted. My investigation revealed that all sixteen verses that are missing from modern versions were present in the Rheims New Testament of 1582. Textually, one would be better off reading a Rheims New Testament than they would be using a Modern Version. Yet the Rheims and Modern Versions are listed in the same stream of transmission.

Conclusion

- The “two streams of Bibles” model of transmission is guilty of presenting a false dichotomy that is not supported by the textual facts. This is dangerous because if one bothers to check the facts, they run the risk of having their faith overthrown by information that does not fit the either/or option presented by the dichotomy.
- Bible believers need not fret over the facts on the ground. The Bible does not teach the “two streams” dichotomy. Rather the Bible teaches that God would preserve His word and that Satan would attempt to corrupt it. The dichotomy was developed in the 20th century as a rhetorical device to answer the attacks of modern textual criticism against the Received Text and the King James Bible and stave off the incursion of Modern Versions into the English-speaking church. We are working towards being able to fully articulate an alternative model.
- In the next Lesson we will fix our gaze upon Benjamin Wilkinson, the fountainhead of the “two streams” model.

Works Cited

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