

Sunday, November 19, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*  
 Lesson 217 The AV 1611: Examining The Marginal Notes (Textual Variants/Alternative Textual Readings)

### Introduction

- In [Lesson 215](#) we began looking at the marginalia in the AV of 1611 dealing with textual variants in the source texts utilized by the King James translators. In doing so, we identified 20 marginal notes in the 1611 that explicitly marked variant readings. When a textual variant is being cataloged in the margin, the note takes one of the following five forms:
  - “Some Read”—9 occurrences: Ezra 8:14; Ps. 102:3; Song. 5:4; Matt. 1:11; I Cor. 15:31; Eph. 6:9; I Peter 2:21; II Peter 2:11; 2:18
  - “Some Copies”—4 occurrences: I Chron. 1:6; 1:7; Ezra 2:33; 10:40
  - “Some Copies Read”—4 occurrences: Acts 25:6; James 2:18; II Peter 2:2; II John 1:8
  - “Greek Copies”—2 occurrences: Matt. 26:26; Luke 17:36
  - “Many Ancient Copies”—1 occurrence: Luke 10:22
- More recently, in [Lesson 216](#) we began an analysis of the 20 notes in question. Our analysis was two-fold. First, we quantitatively compared the number of explicitly marked textual notes in the 1611 with the NIV. As the following table demonstrates, the number of text-critical marginal notes in the NIV when compared to the 1611 is 10 times higher. Therefore, there is simply no quantitative comparison between the explicitly marked textual marginalia in the 1611 when compared to Modern Versions.

	verses	NT%	Total%
<b>KJV text-critical indicators</b>	13	0.163%	0.042%
<b>NIV text-critical indicators</b>	133	1.671%	0.428% *

\* 10X Higher

- Next, we qualitatively evaluated the 20 marginal notes listed above to determine their nature and/or type. Our findings were cataloged and categorized in the following table.

	DW	Name	SD	Other	Omissions
<b><i>“Some Read”</i></b>					
Ezra 8:14		1			
Psalms 102:3	1				
Song of Solomon 5:4	1				
Matthew 1:11			1		
I Corinthians 15:31	1				
Ephesians 6:9	1				
I Peter 2:21	1				
II Peter 2:11			1		
II Peter 2:18				1	
<b><i>“Some Copies”</i></b>					
I Chronicles 1:6		1			
I Chronicles 1:7		1			
Ezra 2:33		1			
Ezra 10:40		1			
<b><i>“Some Copies Read”</i></b>					
Acts 25:6			1		
James 2:18	1				
II Peter 2:2	1				
II John 1:8	1				
<b><i>“Greek Copies”</i></b>					
Matthew 26:26	1				
Luke 17:36					1
<b><i>“Ancient Copies”</i></b>					
Luke 10:22				1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>5%</b>

DW = Different Way of Saying the Same Thing

SD = Substantive Difference In Meaning

- Quantitatively, most of the marginalia in the 1611 note variant readings in the source texts utilized by the King James translators dealing with the spelling of proper names and/or constitute different ways of saying the same thing. There are only three substantive differences in meaning between the text and margin in the 1611 (Matt. 1:11; Acts 25:6; I Pet. 2:11), none of which are theologically/doctrinally consequential. Only one, at Luke 17:36, deals with the omission of a whole verse in earlier iterations of the TR.
- The following resumes our analysis from Lesson 216 by picking up where we left off talking about how Critical Text/Modern Version advocates attempt to leverage the AV’s marginal notes to buttress their position.

## Analysis Continued

- Many contemporary advocates of the Critical Text/Modern Versions such as James R. White seek to leverage the type of marginal notes covered in these Lessons against King James Bible defenders. Consider the following example from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of White's *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations*:

- “Modern Bible translations as a matter of standard practice include footnotes to indicate to the reader where the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts contain variants. KJV Only advocates generally dislike such footnotes, feeling that they can confuse the reader that they are in fact faith-destroying. If a version dares to note that a word, phrase, or verse is questionable, it will be accused of attacking the Word of God by those who define the KJV as the Word of God. Unfortunately, many AV defenders seem unaware that, as noted previously, the King James Version contained 8,422 such marginal readings and notes when first published. . .

Most of these notes gave alternative readings, but some indicated that the KJV translators recognized the existence of textual variants in the Greek and Hebrew texts. One example should suffice [White shows no awareness of how many marginal notes fit this category.] to demonstrate that the dislike for textual notes on the part of AV Only advocates is more than slightly inconsistent. Note the KJV's own marginal reference at Luke 10:22:

Many ancient copies add these words, And turning to his disciples, he said,

If the KJV is not “attacking God's Word” with such marginal notes, why is the NASB or NIV?” (White, 263-264)

- White and his troop are seeking to equate marginal notes like the one found at Luke 10:22 in the 1611 with the scores of text critical notes found in the Critical Text and Modern Versions as though they were the same thing. Note the suspect nature of White's argumentation. First, he mentions that the 1611 contained 8,422 “marginal readings and notes when first published.” That said, only 20 of the AV's marginal notes appear to raise textual issues, the vast majority of which are non-substantive. Then, he cited one example (Luke 10:22), without mentioning how many total notes fit this category, as though it were emblematic of all the marginal notes found in the AV. The marginal notes in the AV dealing with textual variants when compared to the Critical Text and Modern Versions are far fewer in number (quantitative) and less significant in nature (qualitative) in that they are not calling into question the legitimacy of entire verses/passages or changing the meaning of the text.
- As part of my due diligence for this Lesson, I compared the marginal notes in the 1611 against lists of known omissions from the modern Critical Text and Modern Versions. Consider the following portion of a popular social media meme.

## 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


- Only one verse listed in the above meme is noted in the 1611 as possessing a variant reading at a place of known modern omission, Luke 17:36. While the King James translators were no doubt aware of the debate surrounding I John 5:7 for example, they included all the verses listed above in the main body of the text while failing to note related variant readings in the margin. This demonstrates that the source texts utilized by the translators when doing their work possessed the verses in question that are missing from the Critical Text and therefore Modern Versions. Modern attempts to liken the 20 marginal notes covered in these Lessons to modern text-critical practice on the part of the King James translators are misguided and misleading. Noting variant readings in the Reformation Era source texts used to translate the AV is not the same thing as engaging in modern Textual Criticism that disputes hundreds of readings that were not in question during the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when the AV was translated. Modern text-critical thinking and praxis based upon reasoned eclecticism were unknown to the King James translators as they are post-Reformation and post-Enlightenment developments.
- In addition to disputing readings found in the text of the Reformation and arguing that the marginalia found in the 1611 is akin to what is found in Modern Versions, contemporary text critics have literally *invented* readings in their critical editions and resultant Modern Versions that have no Greek support anywhere. In a recent debate (2/18/23) with James R. White, King James Bible Believer Thomas Ross brought up this very point in his opening address. At the 50:20 mark in the debate Ross displayed a PowerPoint slide titled “UBS/NA Text With No MS Support At All” at which time he stated the following.
  - “(50:20) The UBS Nestle-Aland text is full of readings with no manuscript evidence at all. Where readings have been selected and substituted based upon an inadequate representation of evidence and “the reading and their support are often misleading and/or in error.” So, it’s been stated by textual scholars [Reuben Swanson’s *New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variants Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus: Matthew*, iii, xii.] “that there are lines of text in the UBS4 and in the Westcott and Hort that have no manuscript support.” Just in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, there are lots of these, they are well into the triple-digits, there’s way over a hundred instances of where no MS on earth has simple small phrases of words that are in the printed UBS/Nestle-Aland text...

...Now here we are talking about simply individual lines of text, parts of verses, not whole verses even, parts of verses, consisting of handfuls of words. As for whole verses, groups of verses, or larger sections of text, the portion of the UBS/Nestle-Aland text that looks like exactly zero manuscripts on earth grows exponentially. And the TR has manuscript support, by the way, in 100% of these passages where the UBS/NA text has 0 manuscripts supporting its reading (51:38).” ([DEBATE: The LSB is superior to the KJV; James White vs. Thomas Ross](#))

- Ross goes on to cite the following examples of readings in Mathew and Mark that have no textual support in the UBS/NA text.
  - Matthew 17:4; 24, 27; 20:30; 27:17; 40-41; 27:46
  - Mark 1:27; 2:12; 3:35; 4:8; 6:23; 9:12
- Then Ross presented the following slide documenting 41 additional verses in Matthew and Mark for which there is “extremely thin textual support for the UBS/NA text.”

MERE HANDFULS OF WORDS IN MATTHEW & MARK WITH  
 NO TEXTUAL SUPPORT IN THE UBS/NA TEXTUS REJECTUS:

- **More examples:** Matthew 1:5-6 (2x); 5:11; 12:2, 22, 24; 14:5; 17:3; 20:31; 21:15-16; 21:42; 24:39-40; 25:15-16; Mark 3:6, 7, 33-34; 6:14; 8:27; 9:13; 10:2, 47-48 (2x); 11:10; 12:8-9, 36-37, 39; 16:8
- While there are certainly more significant variants than those that distinguish these passages from extant MSS, these **41 examples** illustrate the **extremely thin textual support** for the UBS/NA text.



- Regarding this slide, Ross stated the following:
  - “(52:09) But right here and there’s more on the screen there, there are 41 examples right there just from Matthew and Mark where simple lines of the UBS text have no support from any known manuscript in the world.” ([DEBATE: The LSB is superior to the KJV; James White vs. Thomas Ross](#))
- In addition to the Ross/White debate, this topic has recently been discussed in a couple of other places on YouTube. On September 7, 2023, [Dwayne Green](#) released a video on his YouTube Channel titled “[The Byzantine Text is Better Than The Critical with Adam Boyd.](#)” Around the 6:15 mark Green asked Boyd the following question, “Why do you think the Critical Text is inferior to the Byzantine Text?” The following is a record of Boyd’s answers and the ensuing exchange.

- Boyd—(6:15) “What I find the most convincing is when you string together the variants in the Critical Text, I think it’s fairly well known that there are at least 105 verses in the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament that, when you string together the variants in those verses, you cannot find any manuscript whatsoever that has that exact reading. So, you can look at each variant individually and make an argument, oh, this is the correct variant because of such and such, this is the correct variant because of such and such, you string them all together and now you’ve come up with a reading that you can’t find in any manuscript. And I find that to be quite implausible that the original text of the Greek New Testament would not be preserved in at least one manuscript (6:57). And that it would happen more than 100 times over the course of the Greek New Testament, I don’t believe that.”

Green—(7:02) “Yeah, so the so-called Frankentext. I’ve heard this a number of times. In fact, Steven Hackett just had Maurice Robinson on his channel [see below], and they were talking a little bit about this specific issue where verses in the Critical Text often times can go no more than the length of a single verse where there is some sort of textually, they can’t find that specific thing, that specific verse in a single manuscript (7:30). As you are saying they are piecing together little bits here and there. But where do you find these passages? Do you have any examples of some passages where this is the case.”

Boyd—(7:40) “Yeah, a great example is Matthew 19:29, this is the ESV translation. “And everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive an hundredfold, and will inherit eternal life.” So, there’s two variants here. The first one is “houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands.” The only manuscript that says it that way is Vaticanus, Codex Vaticanus. That is the only one. All of the other manuscripts add in the word wife. They say, “or wife, or children, or lands.” Okay. The other variant is “hundredfold.” A lot of manuscripts that say “hundredfold” but Vaticanus is not one of them. Vaticanus says “manifold.” You see that when you put those two variants together you don’t have any manuscript whatsoever that reads the way this ESV translation reads. So ESV is translating, as you called it, a “Frankentext”. Its not actually translating from any manuscript for the entirety. (8:47).”

Green—(8:48) “So how many did you say there were of these in the Critical Text?”

Boyd—(8:51) “I read an article once that said there were at least 105” . . .

Boyd—(9:16) “I believe these 105 verses were put together from the Nestle-Aland critical notes.” ([The Byzantine text is BETTER THAN the Critical Text with Adam Boyd](#))

- On [August 5, 2023](#), Dr. Maurice Robinson, author of *New Testament Textual Criticism: The Case for Byzantine Priority*, appeared on the YouTube Channel of Steven Hackett titled “[Biblical Studies And Reviews](#)” to discuss his “Byzantine Priority” view of textual criticism. During the interview, the subject of unsubstantiated lines of text in the Critical Text was discussed. Around the 16:10 mark, Hackett launched into a discussion of the matter by stating the following:

- Hackett—(16:10) “The Critical Text like the Nestle-Aland text/UBS text they can really defend, really well, each particular variant but once you put those altogether there are some verses, just one single verse and you point this out in your the Case for Byzantine Text, just in that one single verse, there is no one single manuscript that you can find that verse exactly as it appears in the Critical Text. So what you’re stating there is that somehow that text in its exact form got lost in the transmission and somewhere along the way someone had to piece it all back together. And that was kind of a big
- .piece of this for Clarke. Is that right? (16:50).”

Robinson—(16:51) “Not only just Clarke but I wrote a further article on that, Beyond the Case for Byzantine Priority that was dealing with what Aland called his Rule number 9. And it was that only one reading can be right at any point . . . Rule 9 says you need to have some transmissional continuity. And what I did in that article, I showed that not just what I said in the Case for Byzantine Priority, which gave a couple of examples. I showed that the Nestle-Aland text, this was the 27<sup>th</sup> edition at the time, that there were 105 whole verses that as printed in the Nestle-Aland text cannot be found in any single manuscript, any single ancient version, or any single patristic writer. In the 105 verses it can be demonstrated from the Nestle-Aland’s apparatus directly that they don’t have it. . . So you end up printing a text that ends up being a conjectural solution to a problem that shouldn’t have to exist. . . [[Click here](#) to see Dr. Robison’s list of 105 verses.] . . . Setting aside the 105 whole verses that we had, I looked for any two verse segments beyond that where you have two verses, like a verse 17 and 18 together that have multiple variants within those verses, and again by process of elimination that’s where I found another 210 whole verses in the Nestle-Aland edition that in those two verse segments lacked any continuity and could not be found in any existing manuscript. So that’s where the problem lies, and the truth is if you increased it to 3 whole verses or 4 whole verses by the diminishing returns you will end up by the time you get to probably 10 or 15 verses nothing in the Nestle-Aland text probably has actual support. Whereas on the other hand, if you take the overall Byzantine consensus text you always will have a reasonable quantity of Byzantine manuscripts supporting not just 1 verse, 2 verses, 3 verses, but 10 or 15. . . The overall running majority will still retain what is in our Byzantine Text edition. Showing again a general transmissional continuity that you don’t find if you’re looking at an eclectically determined verse variant by variant, eclectic text (20:44).”  
[\(Why this EXPERT changed his mind! Byzantine Priority: Interview with Dr. Maurice Robinson\)](#)

- The promise of Preservation requires that God’s word(s) be available in every generation (Ps.12:6-7). Therefore, since the modern Critical Text was not established until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the textual variants found therein were largely unknown to the King James translators of the Reformation Era, if not overtly invented by text critics in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the Critical Text cannot be the preserved word of God. No such form of text was even known to the body of Christ for the first 1900 years of church history. Therefore, to argue as does James White, that there is no difference between the marginal note at Luke 10:22 in the 1611 and the scores of such marginal notes found in the NIV for example is a disingenuous statement.

- The King James translators clearly engaged in an early form of textual criticism when doing their work. The 20 marginal notes discussed in these Lessons are evidence of this reality. Unlike the practice of modern textual critics, who purport to check their theological presuppositions at the door so they can adopt a stance of so-called neutrality towards the text, the textual criticism engaged in by the King James translators was decidedly undertaken from a position of belief in the inspiration and authority of the text as the words of God. This led them to dismiss most of the variants outside the majority text stream. Moreover, they viewed their text-critical work as completed and not as an activity that was to be engaged in perpetuity.
- The textual criticism engaged in by the King James translators is what Dr. Edward F. Hills called in his book *The King James Version Defended* the “consistently Christian method.”
  - “Thus there are two methods of New Testament textual criticism; the consistently Christian method and the naturalistic method. These two methods deal with the same materials, the same Greek manuscripts, and the same translations and biblical quotations, but they interpret the materials very differently. The consistently Christian method interprets the materials of New Testament textual criticism in accordance with the doctrines of the divine inspiration and providential preservation of the Scriptures. The naturalistic method interprets these same materials in accordance with its own doctrine that the New Testament is nothing more than a human book.” (Hills, 3)
- In the next Lesson we will continue our consideration of the marginal notes found in the 1611 by looking at some other notes of interest.



### Works Cited

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