

Sunday, December 17, 2023—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 221 The AV 1611: Examining The Marginal Notes (Modern Leveraging Of The Marginalia)

Introduction

- Since Lesson 212 we have been studying the marginal notes found in the 1611 edition of the AV. All told we have covered the following topics in this mini-series:
 - [Lesson 212](#)—Types Of Notes
 - [Lesson 213](#)—Political & Partisan Notes
 - [Lesson 214](#)—Complete & Partial Verse Rewrites
 - [Lesson 215](#)—Textual Variants/Alternative Textual Readings
 - [Lesson 216](#)—Textual Variants/Alternative Textual Readings, Part 2
 - [Lesson 217](#)—Textual Variants/Alternative Textual Readings, Part 3
 - [Lesson 218](#)—Other Notes Of Interest: LXX, Unicorns, & Ps. 12:7
 - [Lesson 219](#)—Other Notes of Interest: Lucifer
 - [Lesson 220](#)—Apocrypha & Codex Vaticanus
- As thorough as we have tried to be over the last nine Lessons, we have by no means exhausted all that can be said regarding the marginal notes found in the 1611. While I am happy with the collection of material we have been able to assemble on this topic, there is still more work that needs to be done on this subject. It is my prayer that someone else will use the material we have assembled in these Lessons as a starting point for further study.
- There is, however, one last topic that I would like to cover before moving on. That is the subject of how the marginal notes found in the 1611 have been leveraged by Modern Version advocates to advance the supposition that there is no difference between the practices of the King James translators exhibited in the 1611 and modern text critical theory and practice. While we touched upon this topic in Lesson 217 by looking at some comments made by James White in *The King James Only Controversy*, there are still a couple more points I would like to make to conclude our discussion of the AV's marginalia.

Modern Leveraging of the Marginalia: The Example of James White

- On February 18, 2023, James R. White debated Thomas Ross of Bethal Baptist Church on the topic, “[The Legacy Standard Bible, as a representative of modern English translations based upon the UBS/NA text, is superior to the KJV, as a representative of TR-based Bible translations.](#)” After the debate, over the next couple of months Thomas Ross released a series of videos on his YouTube Channel breaking down the contents of his debate with James White.

- On August 2, 2023, Ross released a video titled “[c](#)” in which he reviewed and responded to White’s comments about the marginalia found in the 1611. Ross’ comments covered points White made in their debate as well as in his book *The King James Only Controversy*. Given that Ross’ engagement with White’s assertions is highly relevant to the topic we are discussing, I have elected to use Ross’ comments as a framework for discussing this topic with my own analysis sprinkled in.
- At the 2:04 mark in his video reviewing the debate, Ross mentions what James White said about the AV’s marginal notes during the debate.
 - “Now 14 to 15 minutes into our debate James White used what he called the many many many marginal notes in the King James Bible itself. That the King James translators themselves provided as justification for the marginal notes in modern Bible versions like the Legacy Standard Bible [LSB] and he used those marginal notes in the KJB as an argument against the King James Only position.” (Ross, 2:28)
- After citing White’s statement from their debate regarding the AV’s marginal notes supporting the LSB, Ross turned his attention to White’s comments regarding the 1611’s marginal notes found in *The King James Only Controversy*:
 - “Modern Bible translations as a matter of standard practice include **textual footnotes to indicate to the reader where the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts contains variants**. KJV Only advocates generally dislike such footnotes, feeling that they can confuse the reader and that they are in fact faith-destroying. If a version dares to note that a word, phrase, 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 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)
- In [Lesson 217](#) I commented on this citation from the pen of White as follows:
 - “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.” (Ross, Lesson 217)

- One of the points Thomas Ross makes regarding the citation above from pages 263 and 264 of *The King James Only Controversy* is that White explicitly implied that all “8,422 such marginal readings and notes when first published” are “textual” in nature. As we saw in Lessons [215](#), [216](#), and [217](#), that is just simply not true. Only twenty of the marginal notes in the canonical sections of the 1611 are explicitly textual in nature. Moreover, Ross points out that White’s statements about “many AV defenders” being “unaware” are completely undocumented and unsubstantiated. White claims this statement applies to “many AV defenders” while citing none and providing no sources to substantiate his claims. (Ross, 4:38)
- In context, the citation above from White is discussing the textual variant found at Mark 1:1 in the NIV, for which he presented the following table.

Mark 1:1, NIV
The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ^a
^a Some manuscripts do not have <i>the Son of God</i> . (White, 263)

- The implication is clear to readers of White’s book; the AV does the same thing as Modern Versions with its inclusion of 8,000 plus such “textual” notes. Thomas Ross points out that Modern Versions possess many footnotes of a doctrinal nature that, if true, would call into question fundamental doctrines of the Christian Faith. Please note that, in their debate, White was arguing for the Legacy Standard Bible (LSB) as a modern representative of the Critical Text in English over and against the AV. Therefore, all the following examples are taken from the LSB.
- Thomas Ross uses the following examples to support his main point.

Isaiah 7:14, LSB
“Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the [fn]virgin [fn]will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name [fn]Immanuel.
(7:14) Or <i>maiden</i>

- Changing “virgin” to “maiden” undermines the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ. A hallmark doctrine of the Christian faith if ever there was one.

Matthew 27:49, LSB

But the rest of them were saying, “[fn]Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him[fn].”
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(27:49) Some early mss add <i>And another took a spear and pierced His side, and there came out water and blood, cf. John 19:34</i>

- Regarding the marginal note appended to Matthew 27:49 in the LSB, Thomas Ross stated the following:
 - “Now, here we have poisonous gospel denying heresy that is in the manuscripts Aleph and B . . . That Christ was killed by a spear thrust. Rather than giving up His spirit into the hands of His Father, after he completed his work of suffering on the cross.” (Ross, 8:17)
 - Luke 23:46—And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:** and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.
- Regarding the marginal note at Matthew 27:49 in the LSB Ross stated,
 - “Now there is also tremendous irony that in our debate James White made the highly dubious claim that the KJV contained a mistranslation in Acts 5:3. Which brother James inaccurately claimed taught the heresy that Christ was killed before he was crucified. . . while he's defending the *Textus Receptus* which in its leading Representatives Aleph and B actually unambiguously teaches exactly this heresy in Matthew 27:49. So, we will look at Acts 5:30 in a later review video Lord willing. But if Brother White is consistent and if he believes his argument against the KJV in Acts 5:30 then he must, if he is consistent which is a big if. But if he is consistent, he must reject the leading manuscripts of the Nestle-Aland text, he must reject Aleph and B for unambiguously teaching in Matthew 27:49 what he claims is implied, which really isn't, but what he claims is implied an argument is implied in Acts 5:30 in KJV” (Ross, 9:21)
- Mark 9:44-46 in the LSB is the next example cited by Ross in his video.

Mark 9:44-46, LSB

44) [and where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]
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45) “And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame, than, having your two feet, to be cast into [fn]hell,

46) [and where THEIR WORM DOES NOT DIE, AND THE FIRE IS NOT QUENCHED.]
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vv 44 and 46, which are identical to v 48, are not found in the early mss

- Regarding this example Ross stated the following:
 - “That footnote misrepresents the situation because Mark 9:44 and 46 are not just in the overwhelming majority of manuscripts but they're also in early codices Like A and D so A and D have these verses.” (Ross, 10:20)

- Ross' main point in bringing up LSB's note appended to Mark 9:44-46 is brought home in his comment upon Luke 23:34.

Luke 23:34, LSB
But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." AND THEY CAST LOTS, DIVIDING UP HIS GARMENTS AMONG THEMSELVES.
(23:34) Some early mss omit <i>But Jesus was saying...doing</i>

- The inconsistency of the LSB translators is made manifest when considering their footnotes on Mark 9:44,46 and Luke 23:34. Regarding this, Ross states the following:
 - "The LSB footnote claims some early manuscripts omit this passage and they don't tell the readers that 99.2 percent of these manuscripts have the words... Now ironically to attack Luke 23:34 Codex D is now an "early" manuscript. While to attack Mark 9:44 and 46 apparently, it's not an early manuscript because the LSB claims the early ones omit Mark 9:44,46 but those verses are in Codex D. So, a little bit inconsistent there." (Ross, 11:29)
- One more example from Ross's video will suffice.

Romans 5:1, LSB
Therefore, having been justified by faith, [fn]we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
(5:1) Two early mss <i>let us have</i>

- Ross highlights the doctrinal implications of the LSB's footnote at Romans 5:1 as follows:
 - "The LSB footnote mentions the heretical reading "*let us have* peace with God" so according to Aleph in the footnote someone who is justified by faith already doesn't yet have peace with God and even Paul writing Romans doesn't yet have peace with God [Note that "us" is plural and would include the Apostle Paul in the statement. So the LSB footnote implies that Paul along with the Romans do not presently "have peace with God.]. Peace with God is something that those who are Justified do not yet have so we are justified by faith, but we still need to get peace with God. "Let us have peace with God" is just terrible, a heretical reading." (Ross, 12:11)
- With these observations of the LSB's marginalia in mind, Thomas Ross presents James White with the following questions.
 - "Do the KJV marginal notes justify putting heretical corruptions such as these LSB notes into the hands of God's people in the same book as the holy infallible perfectly true words of God?"
 - Do the KJB marginal notes justify inaccurate statements of manuscript evidence such as those in the LSB notes?
 - Did the KJB marginal notes show the criticism of notes such as the above is in Brother James White's words utterly ahistorical?" (Ross, 15:25)

- Brother Ross addresses the following quote from F.H.A Scrivener’s 1873 book *The Cambridge Paragraph Bible* in which the following was stated about the use of marginal notes in AV.
 - “One of the most judicious of the instructions to the translators laid down for their guidance by King James the first and acted upon by them with strict Fidelity prescribed that “No marginal notes at all be affixed but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words which cannot without some circumlocution so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.” (Scrivener, xxiv)
- Ironically, James White quotes the same book by Scrivener on the very page (122) where he claims that the marginal notes in the KJB make the King James Only position “utterly ahistorical.” (White, 122) Making matters worse, White quotes the section immediately following the quotation above from Scrivener. Moreover, White quotes this very rule noted above by Scrivener on page 116 of *The King James Only Controversy*. Yet, as Ross point out,
 - “Brother White never points out the incredibly significant difference between notes explaining things like Hebrew idioms or pointing out what proper names mean in the 1611 KJB and notes in modern Bible versions attacking Orthodox doctrine or inaccurately slanting the ancient evidence. In other words, the overwhelming majority of the notes in the 1611 KJV are notes such as the following Genesis 11:1 “and the whole earth was of one language and of one speech” marginal note language: “Hebrew, lip.” So, in other words, “of one lip” is how the Hebrews would say “of one language.” Now isn't there the greatest difference between notes telling you that a Hebrew of Genesis 11:1 said the whole earth was “of one lip” and “of one speech” and that “of one lip” is how the Hebrews would say “of one language” and marginal notes and modern versions attacking Orthodox Doctrine. A little bit different aren't they. Shouldn't James White make this difference very clear. There is not one marginal note in the King James Version that does anything like the LSB notes that suggest Christ was killed by spear thrust rather than dying of crucifixion or that attacked the resurrection and the resurrection appearances at the end of Mark's gospel or that suggests you can be justified by faith but not have peace with God yet, like the LSB does. So, there's no attacks on Orthodoxy at all in any of the KJB marginal notes. Around 99.5 percent of the KJV marginal notes are not even arguably related to textual variation in accordance with their rule that “no marginal notes at all [ought] to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew and Greek words, which cannot, without some circumlocutions, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.” (Ross, 18:31)
- Consider a second example from the 2nd Edition of James R. White’s *The King James Only Controversy: Can You Trust Modern Translations*:
 - “One issue arising in the Preface that is very relevant to the KJV Only controversy is the inclusion of alternative translations or marginal readings in the KJV. The translators defended their inclusion of these items, and in so doing they demonstrated that those who would make their translation an inerrant inspired work do so against their own statements:

Some peradventure would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of the Scriptures for deciding of controversies by that show of uncertainty, should somewhat be shaken. But we hold their judgment not to be sound in this point.

Note the emphasized portion of the following quotation closely:

There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once, (having neither brother or neighbor, as the Hebrews speak) so that we cannot be holpen [helped] by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. concerning the Hebrews themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said, as S. Jerome somewhere saith of the Septuagint. Now in such a case, doth not a margin do well to admonish the Reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily? *For as it is a fault of incredulity, to doubt of those things that are evident: so to determine of such things as the Spirit of God hath left (even in the judgment of the judicious) questionable, can be no less than presumption. Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: [S. Aug. 2. de doct. Christian. cap. 14.] so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded (italics added).*

When the very preface to the King James Version says “variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of Scripture,” the KJV Only position thereby is proven utterly ahistorical. That stance requires the translation to be something its own authors never intended it to be.” (White, 121-122)

- Thomas Ross comments on this second quotation from James White in his video.
 - Now on page 123 of White's *King James Only Controversy* provides James's best and strongest examples of the .5 percent of the KJB marginal notes which do reference textual variation with no explanation by Brother White that 99.5 percent of the notes are not even close to what he prints in his book. There's no advocacy of heretical readings of the *Textus Rejectus* in KJV marginal notes and that is why James White does not print any heretical readings from the KJB marginal notes in his book because there aren't any. So, he can't print them. (19:05) . . . There is absolutely no inconsistency at all in agreeing with this rule adopted by the KJV and opposing textual notes like the ones I pointed out in the LSB. James White's claim that the KJB marginalia made the KJV Only position “utterly ahistorical” is another one of the sadly many inaccurate statements in White's book. It is unfortunate these inaccuracies are so numerous, and they have been left in his book for decades unrevised and uncorrected, I think that's a shame. (Ross, 20:24)
- Careful readers will note the gamesmanship that White has engaged in with the above citation. White lifts Myles Smith's statement, “variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of Scripture” out of its content to suggest that the King James translators supported the

general principle of “variety of translations” in the modern sense of multiple Bible versions/translations. In context Smith’s statement refers to a very circumscribed set of circumstances that meet the following criteria.

- Singular Word Occurrences—“There be many words in the Scriptures, never found there but once, (having neither brother or neighbor, as the Hebrews speak) so that we cannot be holpen [helped] by conference of places.”
- Rare Birds & Beasts—“Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. concerning the Hebrews themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment, that they may seem to have defined this or that, rather because they would say something, than because they were sure of that which they said, as S. Jerome somewhere saith of the Septuagint. Now in such a case, doth not a margin do well to admonish the Reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily?”
- Text Is Not Clear—“*Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: [S. Aug. 2. de doct. Christian. cap. 14.] so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded.*”
- James White has taken a very precise statement on the part of Myles Smith where the translators approved of “variety of translations” for the setting forth of “diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear” into a general statement applicable to all translations. He then uses this statement to declare the KJV Only position to be “ahistorical” based upon his mangled reading of the Preface and Myles Smith’s statements on the purpose and function of marginal notes. This is a prime example of modern leveraging of the 1611’s marginal notes to support modern text critical theory and praxis.
- Thoams Ross also comments on how James White mangled Miles Smith’s Preface in *The King James Only Controversy*.
 - “In other words, the KJV translators specifically state that they do not have marginal notes that affect doctrine that attack Orthodoxy that teach salvation that works and so on. They specifically in the very paragraph referenced by James White explain that they will not have marginal notes like those in modern versions where Doctrine is attacked or changed. Their notes will be on things like saying “language” instead of “lip” that’s the paragraph quoted by James White. So, they were speaking of situations where marginal notes were provided for “the explanation of the Hebrew Greek words, which cannot without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.” They were not speaking of one person having an NIV, one having an ESV one having an NRSV, one having a KJV, one having an NWT. One version saying Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Messiah one version of saying she was not a virgin but just a young woman. One person saying Christ died by crucifixion another saying he died with a spear thrust before he was crucified while the preacher quotes 12 different contradictory translations from the pulpit as he looks for one that says what he wants to say. . . regardless of the literal reading of the original text. The King James translators we’re not talking about

that kind of thing they were making their translation for the very purpose that it be the standard church Bible replacing all other English versions for use in public Worship in the English-speaking world of their day. So, they did not change their purpose for making their version in the fragment of a sentence quoted by James White in his *The King James Only Controversy*. What the King James translators were actually saying and the conclusion James White draws from what they say are astonishingly different. While James White concludes that King James Onlyism is “utterly ahistorical” because of his partial sentence pulled from the King James preface it would be better to conclude that brother White's analysis of the translators of the reader is amazingly inaccurate and “utterly ahistorical” (Ross, 24:48)

- In his video Thomas Ross also addresses a second occurrence of a statement about “variety of Translations” found in subsection 12 titled “An Answer to the Imputations of Our Adversaries.” In this case Myles Smith wrote:
 - “Nay, doth not Sixtus Quintus confess, that certain Catholics (he meaneth certain of his own side) were in such an humor of translating the Scriptures into Latin, that Satan taking occasion by them, though they thought of no such matter, did strive what he could, out of so uncertain and manifold a variety of Translations, so to mingle all things, that nothing might seem to be left certain and firm in them, etc.? . . . And yet Clement the Eighth his immediate successor, published another edition of the Bible, containing in it infinite differences from that of Sixtus, (and many of them weighty and material) and yet this must be authentic by all means. What is to have the faith of our glorious Lord JESUS CHRIST with Yea or Nay, if this be not?”
- Regarding this omission on the part of White, Ross stated:
 - “James also either or entirely overlooks or ignores the only other instance of the phrase variety of translations in the KJV preface. So, discussing multiple translations into Latin made by Roman Catholicism the preface notes [quotes the section cited above] so note that the KJB translators and the preface itself warn about variety of translations when they have weighty material differences as in the various editions of the Latin Bible. Saying that this would be something where “Satan taking occasion by them, though they thought of no such matter, did strive what he could, out of so uncertain and manifold a variety of Translations, so to mingle all things, that nothing might seem to be left certain and firm in them.” This is exactly the point made by advocates of perfect preservation and defenders of the KJV when they criticize the multitude of modern versions. Why does James White quote the KJV preface when it uses the phrase “variety of translations” positively about marginal notes explaining Greek and Hebrew words and ignore the KJV preface when it uses the phrase “variety of translations” to speak of a variety of contradictory translations into language. Why does James White ignore what the preface says when it actually addresses a situation comparable to what modern versions do today but quote the preface when it commends marginal notes explaining Greek and Hebrew words misapplying this commendation as if it referred to the confusing mass of Modern English versions from the constantly changing and shifting *Textus Rejectus*. . . 99.5 percent of King James version marginal notes do not deal with textual variation at all and zero percent of King James version marginal notes attack Orthodox doctrines like the

deity of Christ or the inspiration of scripture. The KJB marginal notes are full of valuable information and stand in sharp contrast to textual notes and modern Bible Versions. The reason churches, colleges, and organizations like the Trinitarian Bible Society that stand for the inspiration and preservation descriptors are full of Christians with KJV Bibles that are the 1611 marginal notes is because the KJV marginalia and the discussion of them and the translators to the reader does nothing to undermine King James Onlyism or Confessional Bibliology James White's astonishing claim to the contrary notwithstanding.” (Ross, 31:40)

Conclusion

- Other examples of modern leveraging of the marginalia could no doubt be cited. That said, I am not sure they would yield wholly different observations or conclusions than what we can glean from following the exchange between Thomas Ross and James White. There is simply no comparison between the marginal notes found in Modern Versions and the AV of 1611. Contemporary claims such as White’s that the AV’s marginal note render the King James Only position “utterly ahistorical” are a prime example of leveraging and presentism.
- While we have not looked at each individual marginal note, I am confident that we have surveyed enough of them to adequately understand their nature and character.

Works Cited

Ross, Thomas. [1611 KJV Marginal Notes = Modern Version Textual Footnotes? James White Thomas Ross Debate Review #9](#). YouTube, Aug. 2, 2023.

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