

“Of The Weight” In Numbers 7:31: Printer’s Error Or Editorial Change?

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Introduction

- Dr. David Reagan’s, *The King James Version of 1611: The Myth of Early Revisions* is often cited as a definitive/authoritative source when discussing the topic of variations in the printed history of the King James text. According to Reagan the only differences between editions of the King James Bible are (Note: the page numbers in the parenthesis below correlate with a PDF copy of the work printed from the internet.):
 - Type Face: Gothic Black Letter to Roman (4)
 - Letter Formation (4)
 - Spelling & Punctuation (4-5)
 - Correction of Printer’s Errors (5-7)
- After discussing these categories of differences, Reagan concluded this section of his essay by stating the following:
 - “The character of the textual changes is that of obvious errors. The frequency of the textual changes is sparse, occurring only once per three chapters. The chronology of the textual changes is early with about three fourths of them occurring within twenty-seven years of the first printing. **All of these details establish the fact that there were no true revisions in the sense of updating the language or correcting translation errors.** There were only editions which corrected early typographical errors. Our source of authority for the exact wording of the 1611 Authorized Version is not in the existing copies of the first printing. Our source of authority for the **exact wording** of our English Bible is in the preserving power of Almighty God. Just as God did not leave us the original autographs to fight and squabble over, so He did not see fit to leave us the proof copy of the translation. Our authority is in the hand of God as always. You can praise the Lord for that!” (Reagan, 7)
- While I agree with Dr. Reagan that the King James translators made no “translation errors” or mistakes in terms of representing the text in English (See the Doctrinal Statement of GLBC & the “What We Believe” section of our book.). I question the veracity of the statement that “there were no true revisions in the sense of updating the language.” The purpose of this video is to investigate the veracity of Reagan’s conclusion by looking at the printed history of Numbers 7:31 as a case study.

- By extension, our investigation will also touch upon the claim that God gave the King James translators between 1604 and 1611 the “exact words” in English He wanted written down.

Numbers 7:31

- The 1762 edition of the KJB edited by F.S. Parris from Cambridge University Press adds three extra words to the text of Numbers 7:31 that were not present in any previous edition of the KJB.
 - 1611— His offering *was* one filuer charger of an hundred and thirtie *fhekels*, one filuer bowle of feuentie *fhekels*, after the *fhek*el of the Sanctuary, both of them full of fine flowre mingled with oyle, for a meat offering:
 - 1762—His offering *was* one filver charger, **of the weight** of an hundred and thirtie *fhekels*, one filver bowl of feventy *fhekels* after the *fhek*el of the fanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:
- Our example begins below with a screenshot from the 1602 Bishops text. Rule 1 stated:
 - “The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit.”
- Rule 14 is also relevant to our investigation.
 - “These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops’ Bible, viz: Tyndale’s, Matthew’s, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s, Geneva.”
- To meet the requirements of Rule 1, Robert Barker the King’s Printer distributed 40 unbound copies of the 1602 Bishops Bible to the various translation companies. Therefore, our example begins by looking at the base text of Numbers 7:31 in the 1602 Bishops.

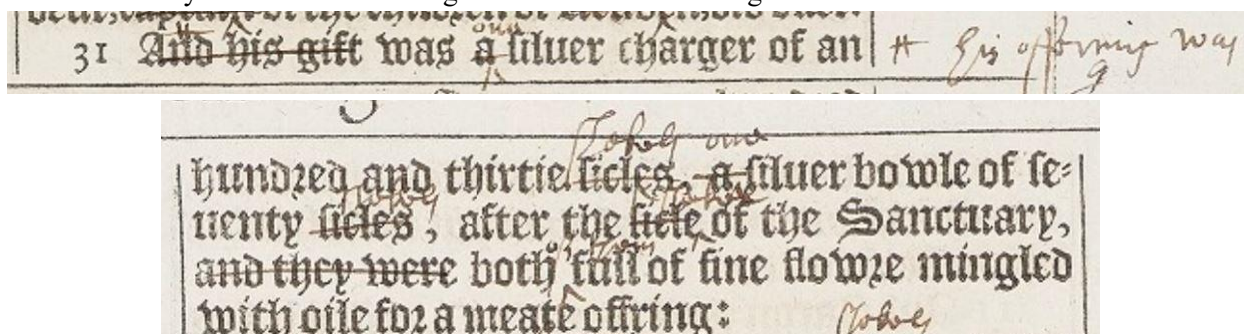
Numbers 7:31 (1602 Bishops)

31 And his gift was a filuer charger of an hundred and thirtie sicles, a filuer bowle of feuenty sicles, after the sicle of the Sanctuary, and they were both full of fine flowre mingled with oile for a meate offering:

And his gift was a filuer charger of a hundred and thirtie sicles, a filuer bowle of feuenty sicles, after the sicle of the Sanctuary, and they were both full of fine flowre mingled with oile for a meate offering:

Numbers 7:31 (Bod. 1602)

Primary Source Work-In-Progress Document Recording the Draft Work of the Translators

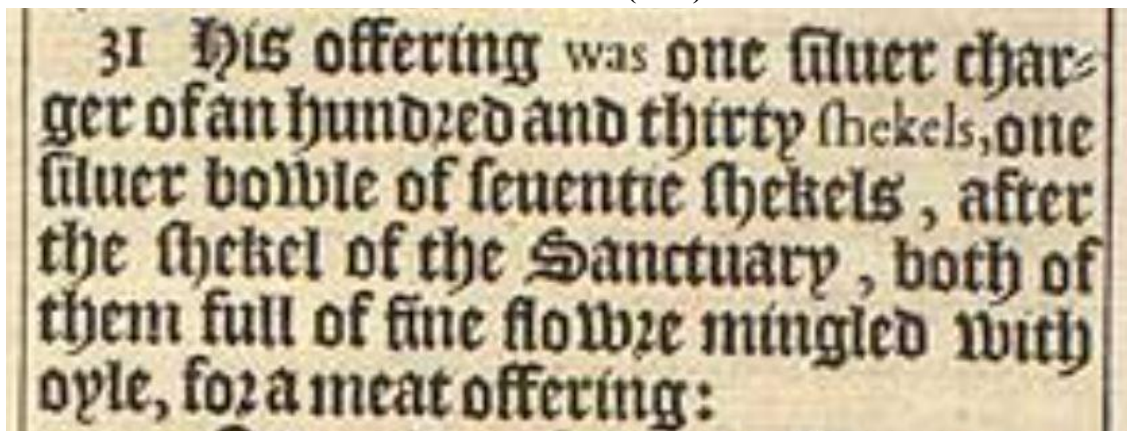


His offering was **one** filuer charger of an hundred and thirtie **fhekels**, **one** filuer bowle of feventy **fhekles**, after the **fhek**el of the Sanctuary, both **of them** full of fine flowre mngled with oile for a meate offering:

- Bod. 1602 a work-in-progress primary source records the following revisions to the 1602 Bishops text.
 - ~~And his gift~~ [**His offering**] was a [**one**] filuer charger of an hundred and thirtie ~~fielles~~ [**fhekels**],
 - ~~And his gift~~ was changed to **His offering**. Note the “g” underneath this change in Bod. 1602. This change coincides with the reading found in the 1560 Geneva Bible. The translators preferred the Geneva reading of “**His offering**” over the Bishops reading of “**And his gift**,” and amended the text accordingly. This is strong evidence that translators looked at the Geneva Bible while working on Numbers 7:31.
 - A filuer charger was changed to **one** filuer charger.
 - ~~Fieles~~ was changed to **fhekels**.
 - A [**one**] filuer bowle of feuenty ~~fielles~~ [**fhekels**],
 - A filuer bowle was changed to **one** filuer bowle.
 - ~~Fieles~~ was changed to **fhekels**.
 - after the ~~fielle~~ [**fhek**el] of the Sanctuary,
 - ~~fielle~~ was changed to **fhek**el.
 - ~~and they were~~ both **of them** full of fine flowre mingled with oile for a meate offering:

- ~~and they were~~ was stricken from the verse.
 - **Of them** was added to the verse.
- At this stage there were no punctuation, or capitalization changes made by the translators.

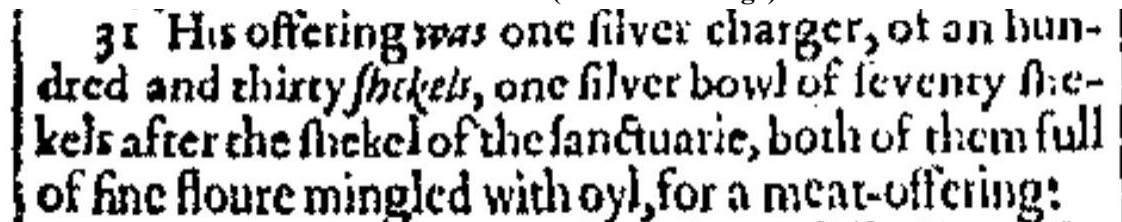
Numbers 7:31 (1611)



His offering *was* one filuer charger of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one filuer bowle of feuentie shekels, after the shekel of the Sanctuary, both of them full of fine flowre mingled with **oyle**, for a meat offering:

- The 1611 accepted all the revisions recorded in Bod. 1602. The only change was in the spelling of the “oyle” in the 1611 instead of “olie” in Bod. 1602.

Numbers 7:31 (1629 Cambridge)



His offering *was* one filver charger, [comma added] of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one filver **bowl** of **feventy** shekels, [comma removed] after the shekel of the **fanctuarie**, both of them full of fine **floure** mingled with **oyl**, for a **meat-offering**:

- The 1629 Cambridge editors made the following changes to the text of Numbers 7:31.
 - Added a comma after “one filver charger.”
 - Changed the spelling of “filuer” to “filver.” Changed the “u” in “filuer” to a “v” in “filver.” This occurred twice in twice in this verse. These changes correspond to Reagan’s letter formation category.
 - Changed the spelling of the word “bowl.”

- Changed the spelling of the word “feventy.”
- Removed a comma after “feuentie shekels.”
- Changed the case and spelling of the word “fanctuarie.”
- Change the spelling of the word “floure.”
- Changed the spelling of “oyl.”
- Hyphenated the word “meat-offering.”

Numbers 7:31 (1638 Cambridge)

offer.

31 His offering *was* one filver charger, of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one filver bowl of feventy shekels after the shekel of the fanctuarie, both of them full of fine floure mingled with oyl, for a meat-offering :

His offering *was* one filver charger, of an hundred and thirty *shekels*, one filver bowl of feventy shekels after the shekel of the fanctuarie, both of them full of fine floure mingled with oyl, for a meat-offering:

- The 1638 Cambridge editors accepted all of the revisions of 1629 without making any further changes.
- Note: this was the last revision for which some of the original translators were still alive to speak for their work. Contemporary accounts report that translators John Bois and Samuel Ward assisted the Cambridge editors with the 1638 edition. Yet, the phrase in question, “**of the weight**” was not added to the text in 1638.

Numbers 7:31 (1762 Parris Edition)

31 His offering was one filver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one filver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

His offering was one filver charger, of **the weight of** an hundred and thirty shekels, one filver bowl of seventy shekels after the shekel of the **fanctuary**, both of them full of fine **flour** mingled with **oil**, for a **meat offering**:

- Parris the chief editor of the 1762 edition made the following changes to Numbers 7:31.
 - Added the phrase “**of the weight**” to the verse. This phrase did not exist in the 1602 Bishops, or in Bod. 1602, and was not included in any KJV edition prior to 1762.
 - Changed the spelling of “**fanctuary**.”
 - Changed the spelling of “**flour**.”
 - Changed the spelling of “**oil**.”
 - Changed the spelling of “**meat offering**” by removing the hyphen.

Numbers 7:31 (1769 Blayney Edition)

31 His offering was one filver charger of the weight of an hundred and thirty shekels, one filver bowl of seventy shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering:

His offering *was* one filver charger, [removed comma] of the weight of an hundred and thirty *fhekels*, one filver bowl of feventy *fhekels*, [added comma] after the *fhekel* of the fanctuary; [changed comma to semicolon] both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

- Benjamin Blaney the chief editor of the 1769 edition made the following changes to Numbers 7:31.
 - Removed the comma after “filver charger.”
 - Added a comma after “fevent *fhekels*.”
 - Added a semicolon after “factuary.”
- Before moving on, it is also interesting to note that Blaney, at least in this verse, retained the old spellings (“f” for “s”) of sliver, shekel(s), seventy, and sanctuary. Which means that spelling continued to be updated in British printings after the standardization of the text in 1769.
- Consider the following table comparing the various renderings of Numbers 7:31 parallel columns.

1602	Bod. 1602	1611	1629	1638	1762	1769
And his gift was a filver charger of a hundred and thirtie sicles, a filver bowle of feenty ficles, after the ficle of the Sanctuary, and they were both full of fine flowre mingled with oile for a meate offering:	His offering was one fiuer charger of an hundred and thirtie fhekels, one fiuer bowle of feventy fhekles, after the fhekel of the Sanctuary, both of them full of fine flowre mngled with oile for a meat offering:	His offering <i>was</i> one filver charger of an hundred and thirty <i>fhekels</i> , one filver bowle of feuentie <i>fhekels</i> , after the <i>fhekel</i> of the Sanctuary, both of them full of fine flowre mingled with oyle , for a meat offering:	His offering <i>was</i> one filver charger, of an hundred and thirty <i>fhekels</i> , one filver bowl of feventy <i>fhekels</i> ,- after the <i>fhekel</i> of the fanctuarie , both of them full of fine floure mingled with oyl , for a meat-offering :	His offering <i>was</i> one filver charger, of an hundred and thirty <i>fhekels</i> , one filver bowl of feventy <i>fhekel</i> after the <i>fhekel</i> of the fanctuarie, both of them full of fine floure mingled with oyl, for a meat-offering:	His offering <i>was</i> one filver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty <i>fhekels</i> , one filver bowl of feventy <i>fhekels</i> after the <i>fhekel</i> of the fanctuary , both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil , for a meat offering :	His offering <i>was</i> one filver charger, of the weight of an hundred and thirty <i>fhekels</i> , one filver bowl of feventy <i>fhekels</i> , after the <i>fhekel</i> of the fanctuary; both of them full of fine flour mingled with oil, for a meat offering:

Conclusion

- When we compare the data, beginning with the first printing of the AV in 1611 through to the 1769 edition against the four categories of revisions identified by Reagan for Numbers 7:31 we can observe the following:
 - Type Face: Gothic Black Letter to Roman—1 change
 - Letter Formation—2 changes, the 1629 Cambridge changed the “u” in “filuer” to a “v” in “filver.”
 - Spelling & Punctuation—17 changes
 - Correction of Printer’s Errors—this leaves one revision unaccounted for, the insertion of “**of the weight**” into the text in 1762, after all the translators were deceased. Is the insertion of the phrase into the 1762 text an example of the correction of a printer’s error? Does it meet the definition of a printer’s error?
 - Printer’s Error—“an error introduced into typeset copy by the compositor, so that the printer cannot charge for correcting it.” ([Collins English Dictionary](#))
 - Printing Error— “a misprint or misspelling in a text” ([Collings English Dictionary](#))
 - Compositor—“a person who sets the text or type for printing.” ([WordReference.com](#))
 - By definition, a printer’s error is an error made by the compositor/typesetter in the setting of the type.
- The insertion of the words “**of the weight**” is not a printer’s error but an editorial change made by Parris in 1762. There is no obvious error of the press that went uncorrected for 151 years between 1611 and 1762. Contrary to Reagan’s claims, there are differences of wording between 1611 and 1769 that do not fall into the definition of a printer’s error.
 - First (per Rule 1), there is no evidence in the primary source work-in-progress documents (1602 Bishops Bible or Bod. 1602) that the phrase in question was accidentally left out of the 1611 by the printer. It does not occur in the base text of 1602 and Bod. 1602 provides no evidence that the phrase was discussed during company deliberations as a potential revision/addition.
 - Second (per Rule 14), the evidence furnished by pre-1611 English Bibles is mixed. Tyndale, Matthews, Geneva, and the Douay OT all include the word “weight” in their respective readings. The translators would have known this based upon the evidence furnished above from the work-in-progress document Bod. 1602. Recall from above that the first revision recorded in Bod. 1602 replaced the Bishops reading with the one found

in the Geneva Bible. Meanwhile, Coverdale, Great, and Bishops do not contain the word “weight” in their respective texts. Therefore, when the King James translators compared the Bishops text with the Hebrew and other earlier English Bibles (most notably Geneva), they would have encountered mixed evidence regarding how the text should read in English. The evidence suggests that the translators chose not to include the phrase in question in Numbers 7:31.

- Third, the 1611 accepted the revisions recorded in Bod. 1602 with out any alterations save one, the spelling of the word “oyle” instead of “oile” as in the Bishops.
 - Fourth, between 1611 and 1638, 10 revisions were made to the text of Numbers 7:31 without noting a printer’s error or suggesting that “**of the weight**” should be added to the verse. John Bois and Samuel Ward assisted on the 1638 Cambridge edition and did not elect to add the phrase in question to Numbers 7:31.
 - Fifth, the standard reading of Numbers 7:31 in the AV did not contain the words “**of the weight**” for the first 151 years of its history. Parris added the words in 1762 while editing the text for Cambridge University. Parris was probably trying to be more literal with the Hebrew text than the 1611 translators were being.
 - Sixth, Blayney’s Oxford revision in 1769 accepted the addition of the phrase made by Parris and it has become the standard reading.
- The only rational interpretation of the above facts is that Parris made an editorial change/addition to the text of the AV in 1762. This of course means that the following statements penned by David Reagan are incorrect:
 - “Almost all of the alleged changes have been accounted for. We now come to the question of actual textual differences between our present edition and that of 1611. **There are some differences between the two, but they are not the changes of a revision. They are instead the correction of early printing errors.**” (5)
 - “**All of these details establish the fact that there were no true revisions in the sense of updating the language or correcting translation errors.**” (7)
 - There were “true revisions in the sense of updating the language,” as in the case of Numbers 7:31. Readers of the AV today are reading an edited text that does not reflect the original translational decision of the King James translators alone. Later editors impacted the text, this is a historical fact.
 - This also strikes a blow to the idea that God gave the translators the “exact words” he wanted written in English between 1604 and 1611. Those who chose to follow Reagan and demand the “exact English words” as given by inspiration of God are logically boxed into one of the following conclusions:

- The 1611, 1629, & 1638 are not the perfect word of God in English because they lack the “exact words” in question.
- The 1762, 1769 and all subsequent editions are not the perfect word of God in English because they added words to what God inspired in 1611.
- Logically, those that insist on preservation of the “exact words” must answer which specific edition of the KJB contains the “exact words” God inspired in English to the exclusion of all others.
- Alternatively, they could adopt the position set forth in our book *The Myth of Verbatim Identity: How God Actually Preserved His Word* and avoid the factual conundrum altogether. There is a difference between a different way of saying the same thing and a substantive difference in meaning. All editions of the King James have *verbal equivalence* with each other despite not possessing the “exact” same “words.” We believe the scriptures themselves teach that inspiration and preservation does not require *verbatim identity* of wording.
- The same phenomena we observed in this video regarding Numbers 7:31 would apply for Numbers 7:55 as well. Rejecting the conclusions set forth in our book creates a problem for the King James Bible Believer in 2 verses and 6 words. It is incumbent upon those arguing for the “exact wording” to tell us which edition of the AV contains God’s “exact words” in English.