

# Bible Versions

Which is the REAL WORD of God?

Amos 8:11

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God,  
that I will send a famine in the land,  
not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water,  
but of hearing the words of the LORD.

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## Textus Receptus

Before we consider the **King James Version (KJV)** and a few of the modern translations in use today, let us first consider certain Greek texts from which all New Testament translations are derived. Foremost amongst these is the **Traditional Received Text (Textus Receptus)**, also called the **Byzantine Text** or **the Majority Text** because it is based on the **vast majority** of manuscripts still in existence. These extant manuscripts (MSS) were brought together by various editors such as **Lucian** (AD 250-312), **Erasmus**, **Stephanus**, **Beza** and the **Elzevir brothers** to form the text known as **Textus Receptus**, the name given to the Majority Text in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The most notable editor of all was **Desiderius Erasmus** (1466-1536) one of the greatest scholars the world has ever known. When the early Protestant Reformers of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries decided to translate the scriptures directly from Greek into the languages of Europe, they selected **Textus Receptus** as their foundation Greek document. It is vitally important to understand why they did so.

**Wilkinson** writes in his book **Truth Triumphant**:

Quote: *"The Protestant denominations are built upon that manuscript of the **Greek New Testament** sometimes called **Textus Receptus**, or the **Received Text**. It is that **Greek New Testament** from which the writings of the apostles in Greek have been translated into English, German, Dutch and other languages. During the dark ages the **Received Text** was practically unknown outside the Greek Church. It was restored to Christendom by the labours of that great scholar **Erasmus**. **It is altogether too little known that the real editor of the Received Text was Lucian**. None of Lucian's enemies fails to credit him with this work. Neither Lucian nor Erasmus, but rather the apostles, wrote the Greek New Testament. However, Lucian's day was an age of apostasy when a flood of deprivations was systematically attempting to devastate both the Bible manuscripts and Bible theology. **Origen**, of the Alexandrian college, made his editions and commentaries of the Bible a secure retreat for all errors, and deformed them with philosophical speculations introducing casuistry and lying. **Lucian's** unrivalled success in verifying, safeguarding, and transmitting those divine writings left a heritage for which all generations should be thankful."*  
(Ref: J2)

The **King James Bible Old Testament** was translated from the **Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text**; named after Jacob ben Chayyim, under whose editorship it was printed in in 1524-5).

## Two Bibles

In his book **Which Bible?** David Otis Fuller says this about **Textus Receptus**. Carefully note Fuller's first point that all churches (we could now add all Bible students) fall into one of two basic study categories:

- Those who use a variety of Bibles influenced by the **Minority Text** (the Nestle/Aland Text). For 45 years I was in this camp; but I thank God for opening my eyes.
- Those who only study Bibles based on the **Majority Text**, from which came the Received Text - **Textus Receptus**. I have now joined this camp.

**Fuller continues:**

Quote: *"First of all, the **Textus Receptus** was the Bible of early Eastern Christianity. Later it was adopted as the official text of the **Greek Catholic Church**. There were local reasons which contributed to this result. But, probably, far greater reasons will be found in the fact that the Received Text had authority enough to become, either in itself or by its translation, the Bible of the great **Syrian Church**; of the **Waldensian Church** of northern Italy; of the **Gallic Church** in southern France; and of the **Celtic Church** in Scotland and Ireland; as well as the official Bible of the **Greek Catholic Church**. All these churches, some earlier, some later, were in opposition to the Church of Rome and at a time when the Received Text and these Bibles of the Constantine type were rivals. They, as represented in their descendants, are rivals to this day. **The Church of Rome built on the Eusebio-Origen type of Bible; these others built on the Received Text**. Therefore, because they themselves believed that the Received Text was the true apostolic Bible, and further, because the*

*Church of Rome arrogated to itself the power to choose a Bible which bore the marks of systematic depravation, we have the testimony of these five churches to the authenticity and the apostolicity of the Received Text." ( Ref: F1)*

Why did the early churches of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries and all the Protestant Reformers of the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries choose Textus Receptus in preference to the Minority Text?

The answer is because:

- **Textus Receptus** is based on the vast majority (90%) of the 5000+ Greek manuscripts in existence. That is why it is also called the **Majority Text**.
- **Textus Receptus** is not mutilated with deletions, additions and amendments, as is the Minority Text.
- **Textus Receptus** agrees with the earliest versions of the Bible: **Peshitta** (AD150) **Old Latin Vulgate** (AD157), the **Italic Bible** (AD157) etc. These Bibles were produced some 200 years before the minority Egyptian codices favoured by the Roman Church. Remember this vital point.
- **Textus Receptus** agrees with the vast majority of the 86,000+ citations from scripture by the early church fathers.
- **Textus Receptus** is untainted with Egyptian philosophy and unbelief.
- **Textus Receptus** strongly upholds the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith: the creation account in Genesis, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, the Saviour's miracles, his bodily resurrection, his literal return and the cleansing power of his blood!
- **Textus Receptus** was - and still is - the enemy of the Roman Church. This is an important fact to bear in mind.

**Reverend Gipp** comments further:

Quote: *"The Majority Text has been known throughout history by several names. It has been known as the Byzantine text, the Imperial Text, the Traditional Text and the Reformation Text as well as the Majority Text. This text culminates in the TEXTUS RECEPTUS or Received Text which is the basis for the King James Bible, which we know also as the Authorized Version.... We describe this text with the term "Universal," because it represents the majority of extant MSS which represent the original autographs. Professor Hodges of Dallas Theological Seminary explains, "The manuscript of an ancient book will, under any but the most exceptional conditions, multiply in a reasonable regular fashion with the result that the copies nearest the autograph will normally have the largest number of descendants." (Ref:B3)*

**Continuing from page 66 in Gipp's book:**

Quote: "*Professor Hodges concludes, 'Thus the Majority text, upon which the King James Version is based, has in reality the strongest claim possible to be regarded as an authentic representation of the original text. This claim is quite independent of any shifting consensus of scholarly judgment about its readings and is based on the objective reality of its dominance in the transmissional history of the New Testament text.'*" (Ref:B4)

In his book **God Wrote Only One Bible**, Jasper J Ray pens the following testimony about **Textus Receptus**:

Quote: "*Wonder of wonders, in the midst of all the present confusion regarding manuscripts, we still have a Bible we can trust. **The writing of the Word of God by inspiration is no greater miracle than the miracle of its preservation in the Textus Receptus. All criticism of this text from which was translated the King James Bible, is based upon an unproved hypothesis: i.e. that there are older and more dependable copies of the original Bible manuscripts. No one in nineteen hundred years, has been able to prove that one jot or tittle has been inserted or taken out.***" (Ref:D3)

In his book **Final Authority**, William P Grady provides further interesting details about **Textus Receptus**, the Received Text:

Quote: "*For instance, over **5,000 Greek manuscripts** of the New Testament exist today ranging from small fragments containing two or three verses to nearly entire Bibles. Their ages vary from the second to the sixteenth century; the manuscripts are ending with the arrival of printing. By comparison, there exist only ten quality manuscripts of Caesar's Gallic War composed between 58-50BC... "Once again, the outstanding features of the **Received Text** is its high percentage of agreement among so many thousands of independent witnesses. This agreement is often placed at about 90 percent; **in other words, 90 percent of all existing manuscripts agree with one another so miraculously that they are able to form their own unique text...***

*If the critic of your King James Bible is correct in his rejection of the underlying **Textus Receptus**, then he is also under the greatest pressure to account for its existence. To complain of fabrication is one thing, but to account for its **universal prevalence** is quite another. Whenever a large body of ancient documents are seen to be in agreement, this inexplicable harmony becomes their greatest evidence for legitimacy. Simple arithmetic confirms that the nearer a particular reading is to the original, the longer the time span will be for descendants to follow. The longer the family is, the older the original source must be.*"(Ref: E1)

**Question:** Where can I obtain a copy of the **Textus Receptus**?

**Answer:** A paperback (800 pages) entitled **The Interlinear Greek-English N.T.** by Berry is obtainable from: **Eye Opener Publications** P.O. Box 7944, Eugene, Oregon 97401 U.S.A. This is the Textus Receptus from which the KJV was translated in 1611. Literal modern English words appear between the

Greek lines and under each word, making it possible for anyone to make an accurate check of all Bibles versions. The KJV appears in the margins. Notice in how many ways modern translations vary from the Greek text.



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