

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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Part One ... File 5 of 7

The King James Version

Now that we have learned something about the **majority** and **minority texts**, let us turn our attention to the history of the **King James Version** (KJV) which is based on Textus Receptus. **The King James Version was translated directly from the original languages:** though it owes its style and biblical language to versions which went before. I now invite you to imitate the believers of Berea mentioned in the book of Acts.

Acts 17:11 *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

Archaic Language

Many maintain that the KJV uses **archaic language**. Is this objection justified? Pause awhile and consider this well known fact: every department of human learning uses language peculiar to that particular discipline: language which novices could easily refer to as being **archaic**. Biology, botany, geology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, music, medicine, law etc., all use strange sounding words, phrases and expressions which a novice will find difficult to understand. The study of the **Word of God** is similar in this respect. It also uses words and expressions which a new believer will find hard to comprehend. Words like **sin, repentance, baptism, atonement, sanctification, justification, resurrection** etc. These words often baffle a new believer: but he/she must learn them in order to progress spiritually; because they are explicit **Biblical terms** which uniquely express vital spiritual concepts and processes. They are not archaic words and we dare not get rid of them or simplify them to

such a degree that the Word of God becomes a paraphrase, a commentary. Can you imagine a novice biology, science or law student objecting to the strange sounding words or old-fashioned expressions in his text books?

In his book **The King James Version Defended** Edward F Hills says this concerning the language of the KJV:

Quote: *"Not only modernists but also many conservatives are now saying that the King James Version ought to be abandoned because it is not contemporary. The Apostles, they insist, used contemporary language in their preaching and writing, and we too must have a Bible in the language of today. **But more and more it is being recognized that the language of the New Testament was biblical rather than contemporary. It was the Greek of the Septuagint, which in its turn was modelled after the Old Testament Hebrew.** Any biblical translator, therefore, who is truly trying to follow in the footsteps of the Apostles and to produce a version which God will bless, must take care to use language which is above the level of daily speech, language which is not only intelligible but also **biblical and venerable.** Hence in language as well as in text the **King James Version** is still by far superior to any other English translation of the Bible."* (Ref:G1)

Thee and Thou

We also hear a lot about the words '**ye**,' '**thee**' and '**thou**' in the King James Version: and that these should all be replaced by the word '**you**'. Everyone knows that the word '**you**' is a uni-plural word like '**sheep**' or '**fish**.' It may refer to one or many depending on the context. Believe it or not the word '**you**' is used **over 950 times** in the KJV New Testament alone - but not exclusively. Why not? The answer is because of the vital difference between '**you**' (plural) and '**thee**' (singular) and there are times when it is necessary to make the difference. The word '**thee**' refers to a single person, church, town or nation: whereas the word '**you**' is the second person plural: it refers to many persons. To understand what I mean we will need to look at a few examples.

Just before the Saviour's crucifixion he warned his disciples - particularly Peter - of Satan's intended plan to test them **all**. These are the Master's words:

Luke 22:31-32 *And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have **you**, that he may sift **you** as wheat: But I have prayed for **thee**, that **thy** faith fail not: and when **thou** art converted, strengthen **thy** brethren.*

In this passage the Saviour used the word '**you**' to mean **all the disciples**. But when he used the words '**thee**' and '**thou**' he meant Simon Peter alone. By replacing the '**thee**' and '**thou**' in this passage with '**you**,' the Saviour's explicit warning to Simon Peter is considerably weakened. As for his warning to all the other disciples, that Satan wanted to sift them **all**, that warning is completely lost. Here are two more

examples where the plural word '**you**' and the singular words '**thee**' or '**thou**' are used.

- In this example Festus speaks to king Agrippa and Bernice concerning the Apostle Paul. Here the word '**you**' refers to Agrippa and Bernice: whereas the word '**thee**' specifically addresses king Agrippa. Acts 25:26: *Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before **you**, and specially before **thee**, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.*
- In the following example two towns are initially addressed individually, therefore the word '**thee**' is used. But when referred to together the word '**you**' is used. Luke 10:13: *Woe unto **thee**, Chorazin! woe unto **thee**, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in **you**, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.*

Other examples where '**you**' is plural and '**thou**' or '**thee**' is singular are found in Deut. 4:3; 1 Kings 9:5-6; Matthew 5:39-44; 6:4-7; 11:23-24; 18:9-10; 23:37-38; Mark 14:37-38; Luke 6:30-31; 9:41; 16:25-26; John 1:50-51; James 2:16. These texts, and there are hundreds more, prove that the word '**you**' was well known by the translators of the King James Version. If you consult a concordance you will discover that it was used **over 1800 times** in that version; but not exclusively as in modern translations. In short, when the Saviour addresses a particular individual, church or town he uses the words '**thee**' or '**thou**' simply because these words are more explicit and personal than the uni-plural word '**you**.' The Bible, remember, is the **Word of God**: explicit in every sentence - yea in every word!

Alleged KJV Errors ... Easter/Passover

Many claim that the King James Version has serious '**errors**' in it. The most quoted '**error**' concerns the use of the word **Easter** in Acts 12:1-4. The original word, these believers maintain, should have been translated as **Passover** - not **Easter**! Let us now examine the passage concerned and see if that argument holds water.

Acts 12:1-4 *Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the **days of unleavened bread**.) And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; **intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.***

To properly understand the sequence of events described above I will briefly explain some facts about the sacred calendar.

- The first **Passover** occurred in ancient Egypt when **Jehovah, the God of the Hebrews** spared the lives of Israel's eldest sons and slaughtered the firstborn of Egypt. That event took place on the evening (night) of the 14th Abib (Nisan), the first month in the sacred calendar. The Passover,

which is an event rather than a day, is now commemorated each year on the evening of the same date. The story is well known and is recorded in Exodus chapters 11 and 12.

- **After the Passover came the seven days of Unleavened Bread.** The week of unleavened bread begins on the evening of the 14th Abib and finishes on the evening of the 21st Abib. This whole week is sometimes referred to as the *Passover week*: but, strictly speaking, its proper name is *Week of Unleavened Bread*. When the **Passover** and the **days of unleavened bread** are mentioned in the same passage, as in Acts 12:1-4, we can be certain that the **Passover** refers to the **event** which occurs on the evening of the 14th Abib and the **days of unleavened bread** refer to the week that follows. (i.e. 15-21st Abib or Nisan)

The events recorded in Acts 12:3-4 *occurred during the days of unleavened bread*. In other words, the Passover in that particular year had passed, it was history, it had gone. Why, then, would Herod wait for an **event** which had already passed? Surely Herod knew that the Passover had passed and that the days of unleavened bread were in progress.

What, then, was Herod really waiting for before releasing Peter? The answer is: **Herod was waiting for Easter to come and go - just as the King James Version says.** We can be confident that the translators of the KJV knew full well why in this passage they rendered the word '**Pesah**' as '**Easter**' and not '**Passover**' as at other times. Their combined knowledge of Hebrew and Greek and the vast amount of manuscript evidence before them (thousands of copies, versions, and church-father citations etc.) were all used to arrive at **every word** in the King James Version. Are we, whose knowledge of these languages is microscopic by comparison, to challenge their judgment? The fact is that Herod, **during the days of unleavened bread**, was not waiting for the Passover - which had come and gone; he was waiting for **Easter** just as the KJV says.

The events in our story tell us that:

- The **Passover** in that particular year had passed.
- The **Days of Unleavened Bread** (15th - 21st Abib) were in progress.
- And **Easter** was approaching; after which Herod planned to bring out Peter.

The question now arises: Was the pagan festival of **Easter** known at that time? And were the Romans keeping Easter? The answer is - **yes**. The pagan festival of **Easter**, with its hot cross buns and Easter Sunday sunrise services was well known in ancient Babylon and Rome centuries before the events recorded in Acts 12. Let me quote a short passage about **EASTER** from Alexander Hislop's book **The Two Babylons**. (ISBN 0 7136 0470 0)

Quote: "Then look at **Easter**. What means the term **Easter** itself? It is not a Christian name. It bears its Chaldean origin on its forehead. **Easter is nothing else than Astarte, one of the titles of Beltis, the QUEEN OF HEAVEN**, whose name, as pronounced by the people of Nineveh, was evidently identical with that now in common use in this country. That name, as found by Layard on the Assyrian monuments, is **Ishtar**. The worship of Bel and **Astarte** was very early introduced into Britain, along with the Druids, "**the priests of the groves**" (page 103)

No scholar doubts the fact that **Easter** is a pagan festival which came down from ancient times, long before the Christian era. The next question is: **Did some Israelites keep Easter and worship the QUEEN OF HEAVEN?** Did they bake hot cross buns for **Ishtar - Easter?** The answer, surprisingly, is again - **yes!** Ancient Israel worshipped the **Queen of Heaven - ISHTAR** and they paid her homage each year with special cakes (buns) and drink offerings. I quote Scripture:

Jeremiah 7:18 *The children gather wood, and the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead their dough, to **make cakes to the queen of heaven**, and to pour out drink offerings unto other gods, that they may provoke me to anger.*

Jeremiah 44: 18 *But since we left off to burn incense to the **queen of heaven**, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. 19: And when we burned incense to the **queen of heaven**, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her **cakes to worship her**, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?*
20: *Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, 21: The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and came it not into his mind?*
22: *So that the LORD could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day.*
23: ***Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.***
24: *Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt:*
25: *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the **queen of heaven**, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows.*

Oh yes, many ancient Israelites kept **Easter**. Modern Israelis still do. In summary we can say that when

Herod, after the Passover and during the days of unleavened bread, shut up Peter intending to bring him out **after Easter**, Herod meant exactly what the King James Version is saying. He meant **Easter not Passover** which had already come and gone. This means that every translation which uses the word **Passover** in Acts 12:3-4 is, strictly speaking, incorrect. **Easter** is the correct word, and the King James Version uses it.

The Protestant Reformers

When the early Protestant Reformers of Europe (German, Dutch, French and English etc.) began to translate the Old and New Testaments into their native languages, they first had to decide which Hebrew and Greek Text they were going to use.

Hebrew

For the Old Testament, the King James translators used the traditional **Ben Chayyim Masoretic Text**. This text was produced under the strict Masoretic rules mentioned earlier. Besides it was - and still is - the only trustworthy Hebrew Text available. Do not the Scripture teach in:

Romans 3:1 *What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? 2: Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.*

Greek

For the New Testament, the Protestant translators of the King James Bible had a choice between two vastly different Greek texts:

1. The **Received (Majority) Text** favoured by the early churches of Christendom (The Greek, Waldensian, Albegensian, Gauls and Celtic churches).
2. Or the **Minority Text** favoured by the Roman Catholic Church.

Wisely they settled for the **Majority Text**, from which came the Received text - **Textus Receptus**. No doubt the **Spirit of God** was guiding their minds and **providentially preserving His Word**. It is a grave error to think that the early Protestant Reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries were unaware of the Minority Texts produced in the 4th century. They were well aware of them. They had before them copies of the **Majority, Minority and Neutral** texts. In addition they had many **ancient versions** of the Scriptures: the *Peshitta, Old Latin Vulgate, Italic, Waldensian, Albegensian, Gaul and Celtic Bibles*. They also had before them **thousands of scriptural citations of the early Church Fathers**, which date back to the 2nd and 3rd century. They were also well aware of the fact that the Roman Church used a *Eusebio-Origen type of Bible* based on the Minority Text.

What did these great men of God do? The answer is: in making their translations they set aside the

Minority Text and chose to produce versions of the Bible which were all based on the **Received Text, Textus Receptus**; the text used by the early Christian Church. The following quotation will help fix this fact in the reader's mind.

Quote: *"Unquestionably, the leaders of the Reformation - German, French, and English - were convinced that the **Received Text** was the genuine New Testament, not only by its own irresistible history and internal evidence, but also because it matched with the **Received Text which in Waldensian form came down from the days of the apostles.**"* (Ref:F6)

The King James Version Translators

When the LORD God of Israel chose the prophets and apostles of old to pen the Scriptures, He made His selection with the utmost care. **Faith, holiness, a love for truth and inherent ability** were the deciding qualities He looked for. In other words the Most High looks within when selecting His servants. That is how He always judges men.

1Samuel 16:7 *But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but **the LORD looketh on the heart.***

The Protestant translators of the King James Version were providentially chosen by God in exactly the same way: firstly for their **faith, holiness and love of truth**, and secondly for their linguistic abilities. In other words, they were **TRUE BELIEVERS**. At their centre some 47 pious scholars were involved. In addition many hundreds of Protestant ministers and believing linguists throughout the UK assisted in the great work. I cannot over stress the importance of that fact: that **FAITH IN GOD** was the first and overriding reason why the Almighty chose the KJV translators for their sacred task. It is totally inconceivable that the Almighty, who initially inspired "*faithful, holy men of God*" to write the Scriptures in the first place, would then - centuries later - hand over the translating of those selfsame Scriptures to **unbelievers and sceptics**. So I repeat: **the translators of the King James Version were MEN OF FAITH, who believed that the text they were translating was, in fact, the WORD OF GOD!**

"Thus started the greatest writing project the world has ever known, and the greatest achievement of the reign of James I - the making of the English Bible which has ever since borne his name." (Ref: L2)

W Scott writes as follows:

Quote: "*King James named 54 pious and scholarly persons - and who were empowered to communicate with 'all our principal learned men within this our kingdom,' so that the scholarship of the country was consecrated to the noblest work which could engage the heart, the mind, and the pen of men - the production of our admirable English Bible. Seven of the number, through death and other causes, were unable to serve, so that the list was reduced to 47.*

*It may be interesting to know how and to whom the work was distributed. There were six committees chosen, two of which sat at Westminster, two at Cambridge, two at Oxford. The whole were presided over by **Bishop Andrews**, who, besides possessing an intimate knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Chaldee, and Syriac, was familiar with 16 other languages.*

*As each set or committee of translators finished the particular part assigned to them, it was then subjected to the criticism of the other five sets in order; so that each part of the Bible came before the whole body of the translators. When the 47 finished their work it was then carefully reviewed by the final committee. **Dr Miles Smith**, Bishop of Gloucester, wrote the preface."*

(Ref:A8)

Always bear in mind the spiritual qualifications of these great men of God. They were

- **Pious Christians who believed that the text they were handling was the very Word of God!**
- They had absolutely no doubt in their minds that the Genesis account of creation was true.
- They never for a moment doubted the miracles of Jesus or that he was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, was crucified for the sins of mankind and that he rose from the dead and ascended to heaven.
- They were **pious Protestants** who saw through the errors of the Roman Catholic Church.
- They were **scholars of the highest order**. Few - if any - of today's scholars come anywhere near them in their understanding of the original languages; let alone their faith, piety and commitment to truth above tradition.

Here are a few quotes about some of these great men of God from Rev.Gipp's book entitled **An Understandable History of the Bible..**

- **Lancelot Andrews:** "*As a preacher, Bishop Andrews was right famous in his day. He was called the 'star of preachers' Dr Andrews was also known as a great man of prayer...But we are chiefly concerned to know what were his qualifications as a translator of the Bible. He ever bore the character of a 'right godly man,' and a 'prodigious student.'* One competent judge speaks of him as '*that great gulf of learning!*' It was also said, that '*the world wanted learning to know how learned this man was.*'

A brave, old chronicler remarks, that such was his skill in all languages, especially the Oriental, that had he been present at the confusion of tongues at Babel, he might have served as the Interpreter-General! In his funeral sermon by Dr. Buckridge, Bishop of Rochester, it is said that Dr. Andrews was conversant with fifteen languages." (page 186)

- **John Overall:** " He was chosen for his expertise in the writings of the early church fathers. "*Dr. Overall was vital to the translation because of his knowledge of quotations of the early church*

fathers." (page 186-187)

- **Robert Tighe:** "an excellent textuary and profound linguist." (page 189)
- **William Bedwell :** "an eminent Oriental scholar. His epitaph mentions that he was 'for the Eastern tongues, as learned a man as most lived in these modern times.'" (page 189)
- **Edward Lively:** "One of the best linguists in the world...Much dependence was placed on his surpassing skill in Oriental languages."(page 190)
- **Lawrence Chaderton:** "He made himself familiar with the Latin, Greek and Hebrew tongues and was thoroughly skilled in them...Dr Chaderton was a powerful preacher who lived to the age of one hundred and three. A preaching engagement in his later years was described as follows: 'Having addressed his audience for full two hours by the glass, he paused and said, 'I will no longer trespass on your patience.' And now comes the marvel; for the whole congregation cried out with one consent 'For God's sake, go on!' " (page 191)
- **Francis Dillingham :** "was so studied in the original languages that he participated in public debates in Greek." (page 191)
- **Thomas Harrison :** Vice-Master of Trinity College in Cambridge. "On account of his exquisite skill in the Hebrew and Greek idioms, he was one of the chief examiners in the University of those who sought to be professors of these languages." (page 192)
- **John Harding :** "At the time of his appointment to aid in the translation of the Bible, he had been Royal Professor of Hebrew in the University for thirteen years." (page 192)
- **John Reynolds :** "Determined to explore the whole field and make himself master of the subject, he devoted himself to the study of the Scriptures in the original languages, and read all the Greek and Latin fathers, and all the ancient records of the Church." (page 193)
- **Dr. Henry Saville :** "was known for his Greek and mathematical learning. He was so well known for his education, skilled in languages and knowledge of the Word, that he became Greek and mathematical tutor to Queen Elizabeth during the reign of her father, Henry VIII." (page 195)
- **Dr. Miles Smith :** "the man responsible for the preface of the King James Bible. The preface is no longer printed in present copies of the Book. He had a knowledge of Greek and Latin fathers, as well as being an expert in Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic. 'Hebrew he had at his finger's end.' And so was the Ethiopic tongue." (page 195)

"It should be noted that these men were qualified in the readings of the church fathers which prevented them from being 'locked' to the manuscripts, causing earlier readings to be overlooked. This is vastly better than the methods used by modern translators. It should also be recognized that these men did not live in 'ivory towers.' They were men who were just as renowned for their preaching ability as they were for their esteemed education. It is a lesson in humility to see such men of great spiritual stature call themselves 'poor instruments to make God's Holy Truth to be yet more and more known.' " (Ref:B10)

William Grady backs up this evidence:

Quote: *"The men on the translation committee of the King James Bible were, without dispute, the most learned men of their day and vastly qualified for the job which they undertook. They were overall both **academically qualified** by their cumulative knowledge and **spiritually qualified** by their exemplary lives... William John Bois was only five years old, when his father taught him to read Hebrew. By the time he was six, he could not only write the same, but in a fair and elegant character. At age fifteen, he was already a student at St John's College, Cambridge, where he was renowned for corresponding with his superiors in Greek."* (Ref:E7)

Why the King James Version Should Be Retained?

This is so important an issue that I will again quote from Edward F Hills' book **The King James Version Defended** pages 218-219

"But, someone may reply, even if the King James Version needs only a few corrections, why take the trouble to make them? Why keep on with the old King James and its 17th century language, its thee and thou and all the rest? Granted the Textus Receptus is the best text but why not make a new translation of it in the language of today? In answer to these objections there are several facts which must be pointed out.

In the FIRST place , the English of the King James Version is not the English of the early 17th century. To be exact, it is not the type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. **It is biblical English**, which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version. As H Wheeler Robinson (1940) pointed out, one need only compare the preface written by the translators with the text of the their translation to feel the difference in style. And the observations of W A Irwin (1952) are to the same support. The King James Version, he reminds us, owes its merit, not to 17th century English - which was very different - but to its faithful translation of the original. **Its style is that of the Hebrew and of the New Testament Greek**. Even in their use of **thee** and **thou** the translators were not following 17th century English usage but **biblical usage**, for at the time these translators were doing their work these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural **you** in polite conversation.

In the SECOND place , those who talk about translating the Bible into the **language of today** never define what they mean by their expression. What is the language of today? The language of 1881 is not the language of today, nor the language of 1901, nor even the language of 1921. In none of these languages, we are told, can we communicate with today's youth. There are even some who feel that the best way to translate the Bible into the language of today is to convert it into folk songs. Accordingly, in some contemporary youth conferences and even worship services there is little or no Bible reading but only crude kinds of vocal music accompanied by vigorous piano and strumming guitars. But in contrast to these absurdities the language of the King James Version is enduring diction which will remain as long as the English language remains, in other words, throughout the foreseeable future.

In the THIRD place, the current attack on the King James Version and the promotion of modern-speech

versions is discouraging the memorization of the Scriptures, especially by children. Why memorize or require your children to memorize something that is out of date and about to be replaced by something new and better? And why memorize a modern version when there are so many to choose from? Hence even in conservative churches children are growing up densely ignorant of the holy Bible because they are not encouraged to hide its life-giving words in their hearts.

In the FOURTH place, modern-speech Bibles are unhistorical and irreverent. The Bible is not a modern, human book. It is not as new as the morning newspaper, and no translation should suggest this. If the Bible were this new, it would not be the Bible. On the contrary, the Bible is an ancient, divine Book, which nevertheless is always new because in it God reveals Himself. Hence the language of the Bible should be **venerable** as well as **intelligible**, and the King James Version fulfils these two requirements better than any other Bible in English. Hence it is the King James Version which converts sinners soundly and makes of them diligent Bible students.

In the FIFTH place modern-speech Bibles are unscholarly. The language of the Bible has always savoured of the things of heaven rather than the things of earth. It has always been **biblical** rather than **contemporary** and **colloquial**. Fifty years ago this fact was denied by E J Goodspeed and others who were publishing their modern versions. On the basis of the papyrus discoveries which had recently been made in Egypt it was said that the New Testament authors wrote in the everyday Greek of their own times. This claim, however, is now acknowledged to have been an exaggeration. As R M Grant (1963) admits, the New Testament writers were saturated with the Septuagint and most of them were familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. Hence their language was not actually that of the secular papyri of Egypt but **biblical**. Hence New Testament versions must be **biblical** and not contemporary and colloquial like Goodspeed's version.

Finally in the SIXTH place, the King James Version is the historic Bible of English-speaking Protestants. Upon it God, working providentially, has placed the stamp of His approval through the usage of many generations of Bible-believing Christians. **Hence, if we believe in God's providential preservation of the Scriptures, we will retain the King James Version, for in doing so we will be following the clear leading of the Almighty.**" (Ref: G3)



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Author: Elder: David B. Loughran - Stewarton Bible School - Stewarton Scotland

Elders: Max W. Mader & Chris A. Yenni
A Voice In The Wilderness - Toronto Canada - USA
Web-Site - www.avoicethewilderness.org