

CHAPTER 3

The school halls reverberated with talk after the weekly assembly. Dr. Dennis had just returned from a month in Israel and the principle and teachers had invited him to share his experiences with the students. Hannah especially enjoyed seeing the pictures from the Dead Sea area where ancient copies of Old Testament scripture had been found.



<http://listsoplenty.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Cave-where-the-Dead-Sea-Scrolls-were-discovered-Qumran.jpg>

Dr. Dennis was a fascinating storyteller. He told how one day in 1947 Bedouin boys found treasure while searching the desert area around the Dead Sea for a lost goat. Perhaps being a little bored, one of the boys threw a stone into a cave and was surprised to hear the sound of shattering pottery. Scrambling up the cliff he entered the cave to investigate. When his eyes adjusted to the dimness of the place he was surprised to see not only shards of broken clay pots, but jars still in perfect condition. No doubt feeling like a treasure hunter, he carefully lifted one of the lids and peered in. Imagine his surprise to see a scroll inside. Perhaps a young boy would rather have found an ancient weapon or perhaps gem-studded gold jewelry, but nevertheless he knew he had found something that would interest his parents.

Not realizing the true value of their discovery, the nomadic Bedouins sold seven of the scrolls to a dealer who bought ancient artifacts. In 1949 the dealer sold three scrolls to the Hebrew University and four of the manuscripts to the Metropolitan (or head) of the Syrian Orthodox Church. When others began to hear about these valuable treasures, a race of sorts began between the Bedouin people and archaeologists - each intent on finding more of the precious manuscripts.

Careful exploration was done in the numerous caves around the Dead Sea. Slowly combing through the area, archaeologists found eleven caves containing not only scrolls, but pieces of pottery, cloth and wood, along with sandals and other items that convinced them they had discovered the oldest manuscripts in the world. After thoroughly scouring the area they found approximately 800 pieces of

manuscripts which scholars dated from between 200 BC to 68 BC.

Dr. Dennis passed around a little clay jar similar in shape to the original scrolls. The students carefully lifted the tiny lid to find a small paper scroll inside. Unrolling the scroll, they saw printed in ancient script a copy of one of the manuscripts.



<http://www.yesholyland.com/Oil%20lamps/Comran%20Jar.jpg>



<http://www.johnpratt.com/items/docs/lds/meridian/2003/images/scroll.jpg>

Dr. Dennis explained to the students that in the eleven caves archaeologists had found the entire book of Isaiah along with portions of all the other Old Testament books except for the book of Esther. He showed them pictures of the museum that was constructed in Jerusalem to house the valuable national treasures. The museum is known as *The Shrine of the Book*. From the outside the Shrine looks like the lids of the clay jars many of the scrolls were found in.



http://www.hflight.net/blahdocs/uploads/800pxisrael__jerusalem__shrine_of_the_book1_7611.jpg

The museum's most prized exhibit displays the two oldest copies of the book of Isaiah that are in existence. These scrolls are 1,000 years older than any other known Hebrew Biblical text. The students found it intriguing to imagine Jesus standing up in Nazareth's synagogue and reading from an Isaiah scroll very similar to the one shown by Dr. Dennis. They remembered learning in Bible class how the Jews had become so angry when Jesus had applied Isaiah's prophecy to Himself that they tried to throw Him over a cliff!

“Here is the display case housing the famous Isaiah Scroll,” Dr. Dennis had explained. “Notice the unique shape – it looks just like the end of a biblical scroll, doesn't it?”

“The Isaiah Scroll is housed in this special showcase which protects the leather manuscript by carefully regulating the light, heat and humidity within the display case. Visitors are not allowed to take pictures in the museum and the light is kept very low to avoid further stress to the delicate manuscripts. The parchment is rotated very three to six months and visitors are immediately impressed by the meticulous calligraphy of the long-ago scribes. Scholars who can read the ancient script tell us that in comparing the Isaiah Scroll with the text of the King James Version of the Bible they found them to be almost identical.



<http://media-2.web.britannica.com/eb-media/53/99753-050-CF039379.jpg>

“God always gives us plenty of reason to have faith in Him,” Dr. Dennis had remarked as he closed the assembly with a prayer.

In response to the clanging bell, students quickly disappeared into their respective classrooms. Calling his class to order, Mr. Dell reminded the students about Dr. Dennis' lecture and how God actively preserved His Word for thousands of years. “For our Bible lesson today we will finish the chapter we began yesterday. Today we will discover the importance of Lucian's work as he edited the New Testament books.”

Although the college at Antioch was vital to the growth of the early Christian church, Lucian's greatest gift to Christ's followers was his preservation of the genuine Scriptures. Lucian's translation work was especially important to the young Syrian church because Origen, the distinguished teacher at the Alexandrian college, was making his own editions and commentaries of the New Testament. Origen's text was written in such a way that it allowed many errors to be introduced into Christianity. Satan knew that if he could change the inspired Word of God he could deceive many people into believing error.

Dr. Wilkinson tells us that Lucian translated the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, the “universal” language of his day. Duchesne, a well-known historian stated, “Lucian was really a learned man; his work on the text of the Old Testament, which he corrected from the original Hebrew, soon became famous; he was a Hebrew scholar, and his version was adopted by the greater number of the churches of Syria and Asia Minor. He occupied himself also with the New Testament. His exegesis [interpretation] differs widely from that of Origen. In Antioch allegorical interpretation was not in fashion” (quoted in *Truth Triumphant* 45).

Lucian spent considerable time gathering all known manuscripts and copies of the four gospels and the apostles' letters. He then compiled them into the Greek language. Lucian's completed Greek manuscript became known in the 1500s as the *Textus Receptus*, or Received Text. The Syrian Church, the Waldensian Church of northern Italy, the Gallic Church in southern France, the Celtic Church in Scotland and Ireland, and also the Greek Catholic Church all used the *Textus Receptus* as the basis for their Bibles. Scholars tell us that over 5000 of the Greek manuscripts agree with Lucian's text - that's why it is also known as the Majority Text.

Lucian's Greek New Testament formed the basis for the English, German and Dutch Bibles of the Reformation. Dr. B.G. Wilkinson says, "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" (*Truth Triumphant* 50).

The only Christians who did not acknowledge Lucian's translation were those in the West who accepted the authority of Rome and Alexandria. Lucian's New Testament was free of the Egyptian philosophy and pagan beliefs which were coming from the college in Alexandria. It strongly supported the key doctrines of the Christian faith: the divinity of Jesus Christ, the virgin birth, the Saviour's miracles, His bodily resurrection, His literal return to earth again and the cleansing power of His blood. Today we can be grateful to God's hero, Lucian, for his dedication and careful scholarship in compiling the Greek manuscript which formed the basis of the King James Version of the Bible.

"I've always wondered why there are so many different translations," exclaimed Jeremy. "In our Sabbath School we all use the King James Version of the Bible, but when our family visited my cousin in Greenvalley last week there were lots of different versions in her Sabbath School. You should have heard the class! The teacher asked us to read a verse together, but there were so many different translations being used, we sounded like a bunch of chattering monkeys!"

"Perhaps that was what Babel sounded like," chuckled Mr. Dell.

"In school we all use the New International Version for Bible class," Jay interjected. "I think everyone should use the same version so they are all reading the same thing."

"That certainly helps on one level," responded Mr. Dell. "However, there are some people who feel that certain Bibles don't support important doctrines that we believe."

"Like what?"

"Get out your NIV Bible and I'll get my King James Version," Mr. Dell responded as he took his Bible from the bookshelf beside his desk. "Let's look up some texts together."

While the students were finding their Bibles, their teacher went to the filing cabinet and returned with a sheet of paper. *I'm glad I kept these texts*, mused Mr. Dell as he looked over the verses.

Starting on the teacher's right, the students took turns reading the texts that their teacher mentioned. Here are some of the texts they looked up:

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| KJV | NIV |
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Exodus 20:10

"But the seventh day is *the* Sabbath of the Lord thy God."

"But the seventh day is *a* Sabbath to the Lord your God."

"There is quite a difference between 'the' Sabbath and 'a' Sabbath," said Mr. Dell. "The

Sabbath' is a specific day (the seventh day) and the other can be any day of the week (like the ceremonial Sabbaths were)," explained their teacher. "All through the history of the Christian church we see Satan trying to change the day of worship from Sabbath to Sunday."

Revelation 22:14

"Blessed are they that *do his commandments*, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." "Blessed are those *who wash their robes*, that they may have the right to The tree of life and may go through the gates into the city."

"I get the difference between those two verses," said Jay. "I know what it means to 'do his commandments' - that means obeying the Ten Commandments. To tell us to wash our robes doesn't tell us very much. To be really silly I could ask: Should we wash them in *Tide* or *Sunlight*?"

"Exactly, Jay," Mr. Dell said as the class snickered. "While the one text is clear, the other has to be interpreted for us – perhaps by a pastor or priest?"

Psalm 77:13

"Thy way, O God, is *in the sanctuary*." "Your ways, O God, *are holy*."

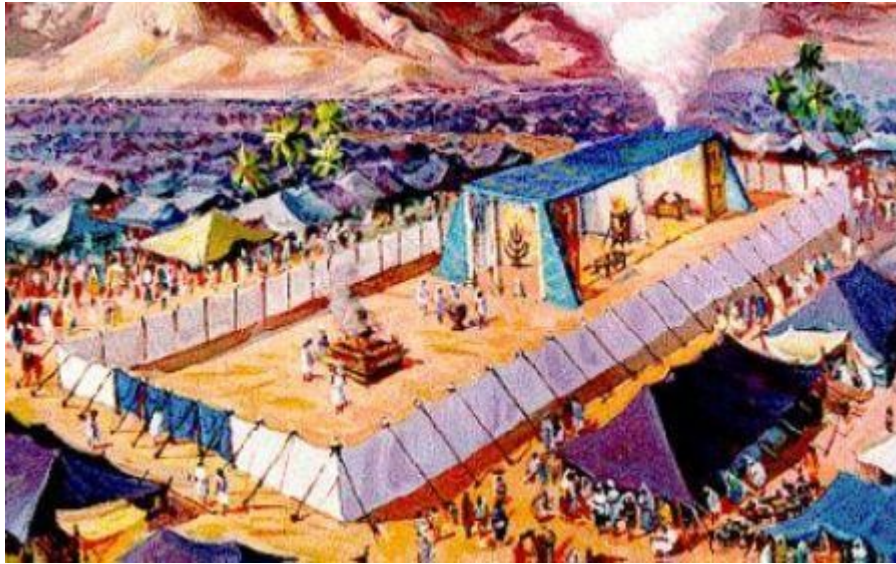
"Did you know that there is only denomination that teaches the sanctuary doctrine?" Mr. Dell asked. "Through studying the Old Testament sanctuary service we learn new insights about the plan of salvation and how God intends to save us. Satan would like to confuse the understanding of that plan by changing or getting rid of the sanctuary message. While it is true that God is holy, His way – His means of saving us from sin – is understood by studying the sanctuary."

Hebrews 9:12

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into *the holy place*, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*." "He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered *the Most Holy Place* once For all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption."

"For many years there have been attacks on the sanctuary message. There are pleasing, charismatic speakers who have tried to convince God's people that when Jesus went back to heaven He went right into the Most Holy Place of the sanctuary (where the Ark of the Covenant is). Yet a careful study of the sanctuary service in the wilderness shows us that after the sacrificial lamb was offered on the brass altar in the courtyard the high priest took the blood into the Holy Place (where we find the candlestick, golden altar, and the table of shewbread). It was only once a year that the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place to cleanse it from the sins of the people.

Mr. Dell flashed on the screen an artist's conception of what the wilderness sanctuary might have looked like. He stressed that the sanctuary was made exactly like the blueprints that God had given Moses up on Mount Sinai.



Google Images: www.oneyearbibleimages.com

“I have an interesting DVD entitled 'Messiah's Mansion'. Some high school students came up with the idea of building a life-size sanctuary that would be used to teach the sanctuary message. After setting up this rather large structure in a town, the students invite the residents to take a tour where they explain the meaning of the sanctuary service to them. When the presenter is done explaining the various ceremonies, the listener really understands why God says in Psalm 77:13, 'Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary.' We would be safe from false doctrines if we really understood the sanctuary as we should,” said Mr. Dell.

“I will leave two copies of 'Messiah's Mansion' on the back counter for those who would like to view it. But for right now let's continue with our next text.”

2 Peter 2:9

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of punishment *to be punished.*”

“If this is so then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of Judgment, *while continuing their punishment.*”

“That's weird,” commented Hannah. “In the King James Version it sounds like the unjust are 'reserved' (I think that means 'set aside till later') for 'the day of punishment' (which will happen in the future). In the New International Version it sounds like the wicked are being punished right now – until the Day of Judgment.”

“Right,” Mr. Dell agreed. “Nowhere in the King James Bible can we find that hell fire is burning now – yet this is what many religions believe and teach. The wording of this text helps teach the pagan belief of a eternally-burning hell which is taking place right now.”

Mark 7:19

“Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats.”

“For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his Body. (*In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean.'*)”

“Remember we were talking yesterday about the teachings of Clement and Origen that opened the way for people to ignore the health laws given in Leviticus 11?” questioned the teacher. “Here is a good example of the New International Version doing that. They actually added in the words, ‘In saying this, Jesus declared all foods 'clean.'’ But all Jesus was actually saying (if we continue reading up to verses 21-23) is that what’s in our heart - evil motives, angry feelings, impure thoughts - is what makes a person corrupt. If we eat something – even if it is bad - it goes through the body and is gone, while our thoughts and feelings come out through our words and actions. We are told that our thoughts and feelings make up our moral character – and that is what we will be judged on when Jesus comes. That is what will decide our eternal destiny – not the food that is put into our mouths. God says He does not change. If He knows that swine, rabbits, snakes etc. aren’t good for our body, then He doesn’t want us eating them. He wouldn’t suddenly change His mind and say they were fine for food.”

“That's for sure!” Ashley was grossed out at the thought of eating snakes or rabbits. “I think I understand a little better why we need to be careful which translation of the Bible we use. I would like to be able to prove our doctrines out of the Bible I'm studying from.”

“Perhaps some of the more blatant changes, however,” Mr. Dell explained, “are the deletions that are found in some of the Bibles.”

“Like what?” questioned Carrie.

“Well look up 1 Timothy 3:16,” Mr. Dell countered. “Aaron, please read that for us.”

Aaron turned some pages, then turned a couple more. “I can't find it, Mr. Dell.”

“It's not here,” agreed Cory. Others nodded their heads as they confirmed that they couldn't find the verse.

“That's because it isn't there,” their teacher said. “Neither will you find Matthew 17:21, Luke 9:56, Acts 8:37, Romans 16:24 or Revelation 1:11. They have been removed from the Bible. With those texts removed it is difficult to prove some of our most basic doctrines. I think we've made the point that it is important which Bible we use when we are studying.”

“No kidding!” agreed the class.

B.G. Wilkinson, *Truth Triumphant: The Church in the Wilderness* (Teach Services, Brushton, New York, 1994) Chapter 5

H.H. Meyers, *Battle of the Bible* (New Millennium Publications, Morisset, N.S.W, 1993)

Gail Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (A. V. Publications, Ararat, Virginia, 1993)

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Lawrence Nelson, *The Sanctuary Made Simple* (CHJ Publishing, Middleton, Idaho, 1996)

Messiah's Mansion: “www.messiahsmansion.com”