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(Excerpt from pages 8-12)

A Bridge-Building Plot

NOT ALL BRIDGES ARE GOOD. SOME BRIDGES
LEAD US TO EVIL. IT'S BETTER THAT WE
DO NOT CROSS THOSE BRIDGES.

I was excited to meet Dr. Kirk DiVietro. He was in Garland, Texas in the Summer of 2019 when I was speaking on Codex Sinaiticus. Some friends found out that Dr. DiVietro, their beloved preacher friend, would be there. And they really wanted me to meet him.

An independent Baptist pastor and teacher for over 40 years, he is known as a strong advocate of the King James Bible, as well as the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts from which it comes. And it seems he's loved by everybody. If someone could pry him from the King James, he would be very influential to get others to make the switch.

I wanted to hear from his own lips what happened to him in the late 1970s at a meeting introducing the upcoming New King James Bible. Here is his account:

"I started a church in New Jersey in '77... And my dad and I were friends with the owners of the largest Independent Christian Bookstore east of the Mississippi, Hackman's Bible Bookstore. ...they sponsored a conference and they brought in a Vice President of Thomas Nelson, in a pre-publication meeting for the New King James Version. And they showed us a series of film strips and mini-lectures, and ultimately came to this decision.

"(Now it's been 30-40 years. So, I'm paraphrasing, but being as literal as I can.) They said, 'We're educators here. (There were about 300 teachers, pastors, etc.) We're educators, and we would never admit this to our people or congregations: But we all know that the King James Bible is an *inferior translation*, coming from *inferior manuscripts*. But every time we've tried to give your people a better Bible, they've just refused to take it. So what we've done is we've taken the King James Bible, and we've revised it as little as we could, changed it here and there, to give you (and they used this phrase) "*a transitional bridge*," to get your people away from the King James Bible, so that ultimately you can move them to a better, more accurate Bible.'"

Dr. DiVietro looked straight at me, then said emphatically, “And at that point, I’m done with the New King James.” I asked him, “What happened after that? What did the other people do?” He responded:

“They handed out promotional copies and things. Most of them were: ‘No big deal.’ They took it as it was. I don’t know how many were pro-King James people at the meeting.... [T]hey sat me next to John Kohlenberger’s brother, to try to provoke me, provoke an argument between us. And their goal was always to move me to a different Bible.”

I asked, “So, John R. Kohlenberger III—the guy who ... edited the New International Greek-English New Testament, Hebrew-English Old Testament — his name is all over everything?”

“Right. They put me next to his brother and introduced him. I didn’t know who he was at the time, but... [they were] thinking that we’d get into a discussion and they could move me. And ... It just didn’t work, obviously.”

Then his face clouded as he told me this:

“I have in my bedroom my mom’s Bible... The one she used to wave in my face and say, ‘This is the word of God. Don’t you *ever* let anybody tell you it’s not!’ That’s where I stand!”

The best I can figure it, back then he was an up-and-coming preacher, and he evidently got *someone’s* attention. That’s why he was specifically put next to the famous scholar’s brother, in an attempt to sway him.

When I think about this story, I imagine a guy with a rope, lassoing some people. Then I see him pulling them over to a bridge. They really don’t want to cross that bridge. But mysterious forces are compelling them.

They hear these comments, over and over:

“You need to be *scholarly!*”

“You need to be *relevant!*”

“You need to *make it easier!*”

“You need to *reach the youth!*”

“Give them a Bible they can understand!”

“If they don’t get it, it’s all *your* fault for not giving them a Bible they can actually use!”

Have you ever heard these? If you trust the King James, I’ll bet you have. The Devil has quite a busy Public Relations Department.

On that bridge, there are a lot of other Bibles: King James **II**, King James **III**, **Modern** King James, **21st Century** King James, **American** King James, King James **Easy Reading**, and on and on. They look *so similar* to the King James, but they are *not* an actual King James Bible. In fact, publishers had to give them another name in order to obtain a copyright for their modified book. The name I give to these Bibles is “King James lookalikes.”

The guy with the rope has a goal: to use the New King James and other King James lookalikes, to get the unsuspecting Christian over the bridge to the other side, to “modern” Bibles like these:

ERV (1881)	NAS (1977)	CSB (2001)
DBY (1884)	NIV (1984)	ESV (2001)
DRA (1899)	NJB (1985)	MSG (2002)
ASV (1901)	ICB (1986)	TCW (2003)
RSV (1946)	NCV (1987)	NET (2004)
BBE (1949)	NRS (1989)	NLT (2004)
MOF (1950)	REB (1989)	ISV (2010)
NWT (1950)	GNB (1992)	CEB (2011)
AMP (1954)	NAU (1995)	NIV (2011)
NEB (1961)	NIrV (1995)	TEB (2011)
JB (1967)	GWN (1995)	Voice (2012)
NAB (1970)	CEV (1995)	HNV (2013)
LB (1971)	CJB (1998)	WEB (2013)

Let me say it another way. The New King James is the very essence of a counterfeit. Counterfeit money *looks like* real money, and yet it is *not* real money. But it does not advertise that it is not real money, otherwise everyone would *know* it isn't. They'd know that it was a counterfeit. And that would ruin the whole scheme.

In the following chapters you will see some of the details of this subtle plot. It is not so much to get you to *a particular* Bible, as long as it gets you away from the King James.

I will show you why I believe that they *must* eliminate the King James Version. I will show you how well-meaning Christians were duped to replace the KJV with a “bridge” Bible that only weakens your faith by opening your heart to doubt.

I will also show you what I have discovered of Satan's plan “B” to do what he does best: create DOUBT in the words of God. He started this strategy in Eden with Adam and Eve. And his aim and his methods have not changed very much over the millennia since.

(Excerpt from pages 36-39)

Small Changes that Make a Big Difference

Narrow or Difficult? Matthew 7:14

Did the New King James simply update the original meanings of the King James words? Let's check for ourselves. Let's compare Matthew 7:14:

*"Because strait is the gate, and **narrow** is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* (KJV)

*"Because narrow is the gate and **difficult** is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."* (NKJV)

I've heard it described before that there is a highway to hell, but a turnstile to heaven. Only one person goes to heaven at a time. There is only one way, as the Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). So that is indeed a **narrow** way to heaven.

But "narrow" and "difficult" are not synonyms. They do not mean the same thing. We **can** find something narrow that is difficult, like a narrow, swaying bridge across a deep canyon. But many narrow things are **not** difficult, like a stepping-stone pathway through a garden.

In the same way, just because something is difficult does not mean it has to be narrow. It's difficult to climb Mount K2, because it is so steep and the ice can fall at any moment. Up till 2014, two out of ten failed to reach the summit; and one of those two died trying. But that does not mean the mountain is narrow.

More to the point, this is **salvation** we are talking about: being forgiven of all sins, beginning an eternal life with God as our adoptive Father. God did not make the way "difficult." Salvation is as close as our mouth and our heart!

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Romans 10:8-10)

And if that didn't make it clear enough that salvation is open to all, God had Paul add this:

*“For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. **For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.**” (Romans 10:11-13)*

Does that sound **difficult**? Is it difficult to “call upon the name of the Lord”? More to the point, is God **making** it difficult? No! God put the word —the gospel— so close that it was in their very mouths and hearts to believe in Christ and His payment for their sins and to be forgiven and welcomed into God’s family!

So no, the way is not “difficult” to find or receive true life and forgiveness and a relationship with God. Why then would the translators choose (or the publishers allow) a word like “difficult” to replace the word “narrow” in the King James Bible? It is not biblical to call it difficult.

And yet they are not alone. A number of other Bibles also say, in Matthew 7:14, that it is “difficult” to find salvation:

“Difficult” – Common English Bible (CEB), Holman Christian Standard (CSB), NET Bible (NET), New Living Translation (NLT), Revised Patriarchal Greek Orthodox New Testament (RPTE)

“Hard” – Bible in Basic English (BBE), Complete Jewish Bible (CJB), English Standard (ESV), New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), New Revised Standard (NRS), Revised Standard Version (RSV)

“Full of trouble” – God’s Word to the Nations (GWN)

Changing salvation is a serious problem. But it doesn’t stop here. There’s also this question: does the Bible say we who believe on Jesus are already, or not yet, “saved”?

Saved or Being Saved? 1 Cor. 1:18

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (KJV)

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (NKJV)

One of the major doctrinal changes in the NKJV is the view of salvation. The world’s religions tell us that we can only work toward a hopefully good eternity. We must please the religious leaders.

We can therefore never know whether we are saved or not. All we can know is that “at this moment” we are doing what the religion requires. Is Christianity like the world’s religions? Or is it different? Can you know and be sure you are saved? Or are you just “being saved,” with no such assurance?

The King James consistently projects one message: You are one or the other, saved or damned. Read it and you will see for yourself! You cannot be partially saved any more than a woman can be partially pregnant.

The Devil wants nothing more than for you to doubt this. He will never change all the verses. He will only change enough to make you confused, to push you to doubt whether God fully saves or not, and to lead you to stop trusting God.

That sounds serious, because it is. All of our eternity is riding on whether we are saved or damned. The King James says saved people are saved. I'm about to show you what I found in some New King James verses.

(Excerpt from pages 101-102)

A Purpose —or a Paycheck?

When we look at the people who made the New King James, what will we find? Are these people completely sold out on the idea that the King James Bible is God's preserved words in English —it's just that the language needed to be updated?

I've already shown you that the publishers openly claimed they were making a "transitional bridge" Bible, to pull people away from the King James and to a modern version. But what about the translators? Were they intentionally making a "transitional bridge" to the new versions? Take a look at these translators:

- Let's start with Dr. Elmer A. Martens, who helped translate the New American Standard Bible, then worked on the NKJV Old Testament. Did he stop there and trust the New King James for the rest of his career? Nope. He worked on the New Living Translation (NLT 1996), using a completely different Greek text and translation strategy.

Here are some other translators and their translating timelines:

- Zane Hodges worked on the NKJV, but he was really a "Majority Text" guy and wanted his own Greek text and translation, different from the Greek behind the King James. But he died before it came to fruition. He is listed on the Holman Christian Standard Bible (CSB 2001) committee, because he said he would lead that if they'd let him make his Majority Text version.
- Dr. Barry J. Beitzel taught Old Testament and Semitic Languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. After he helped with the NKJV Old

Testament (OT), he went on to help translate the NLT.

- Dr. Eugene H. Merrill, a Dallas Theological Seminary professor of Semitics and OT Studies worked on the New King James, but he didn't stop there. Afterward he was on the committees of both the NLT and the CSB.
- Dr. James D. Price was Executive OT Editor of the New King James, then later worked on the CSB.
- Dr. Allan P. Ross, an OT professor at Dallas Seminary, was on the OT Committee for the NKJV, then worked on both the NLT and English Standard Version (ESV 2001).
- Dr. Gary V. Smith, Dean and Chairman of the Department of OT at Winnipeg Theological Seminary, went from the NKJV OT to the NLT to the CSB.
- And Dr. Willem A. VanGemeran, OT professor at Reformed Theological Seminary, took his journey from the NKJV to the NLT to the ESV.

Do you think any of these people *believed* in the Bible he was working on? It looks more like a project and a paycheck than a purpose in life.

(Excerpt from pages 125-133)

Lord Thomson

In the 1990s, when I was a text manager at Rio Hondo College Bookstore, I saw that a number of our college texts were made by ITP, or International Thomson Publishing. One day I was visited by some of their representatives (the men and women who get the professors to buy their texts). I talked with them about ITP's owner, Lord Roy Thomson, British media mogul. They told us with a smile, "Lord Thomson has just one goal: to own all of publishing in the world." It was said that Lord Thomson doesn't sell to anyone, ever. He just buys.

Except once. There was this company of Thomson's that needed some guidance. It had sold millions of dollars' worth of Bibles. But due to mismanagement, it had passed up on an opportunity to maintain itself as the exclusive printer of a certain Bible. And since they fumbled the ball, now all sorts of other companies jumped in and took away their sales.

Sam Moore's Royal Publishing had not only hugely increased in sales, it made more as a fledgling company than this big corporation had in its previous year. Would Sam be willing to run its U.S. operations?

The name of the company was Thomas Nelson Publishers. The Bible was the Revised Standard Version of the National Council of Churches.

Sam had another idea. He said he couldn't forsake his shareholders, leaving his job like this. "Would you be willing to sell?"

His managing director said, "Son, Lord Thomson doesn't sell. He buys."

But Sam knew how to sell an idea, as well as Bibles. "Sir, God made it such that sometimes we all have to sell."

"Sam, do you have the money to buy the Thomas Nelson company? ... It's four million dollars we want, and we must have it in cash."

"Sir, if it's worth four million you'll get it, and you'll get it in cash."

Sam knew both accounting and economics, and he already ran a successful publishing company. When he figured the actual worth of the company, they settled on \$2.64 million. \$2 million in cash. So a brand-new company, Royal Publishing, bought the 170-year-old Thomas Nelson and inherited its entire Bible line. By 1971 Thomas Nelson held the publishing rights to these Bibles:

- 1901 American Standard Version
- 1950 Confraternity Version (by no means exclusive publishing rights)—Catholic (Douay Old Testament, Confraternity New Testament)
- 1961 Confraternity Version (non-exclusive)—Catholic (Douay Old Testament, except Genesis-Ruth, Job-Sirach, Prophetical Books and New Testament)
- 1952 Revised Standard Version
- 1965 Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition
- 1970 New American Bible—Catholic (the whole Bible in the Confraternity Version)
- And the King James Bible edition that was modified and updated with notes by Dr. Manford Gutzke



*Figure 17. Sam Moore (Salim Ziady), CEO of Thomas Nelson Publishers
(Art by Deborah Daniels)*

Sam, Joe, and the Bible

Sam and Peggy Moore had a son, Samuel Joseph, or “Joe,” just three days before I was born, November 2nd, 1962. Fast-forward to 1973. When Joe was 11, he was baptized at the First Baptist Church in Nashville, having made a decision to live for Christ.

The pastor, Dr. H. Franklin Paschall, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, gave a Bible as a gift to young Joe: a 1970 New English Bible.

After this, Joe was placed in a Sunday school class to learn Bible. This class was special: everyone in it memorized verses from the King James Bible!

They knew better than to use any other Bible. But Joe felt like a fish out of water with his NEB.

Joe wanted to have a Bible like the others in his Sunday school class. And his dad had just the thing: a beautiful leather edition with Joe's name embossed in gold on the cover. And then Joe learned the King James Bible verse by verse, and his faith increased exponentially!

Not quite. In fact, quite the opposite happened. A month later (that's 4 Sundays, to think about it another way), Joe appeared at his dad's desk. He laid that beautiful leather King James Bible on the corner and said: "Dad, I like this Bible you gave me. It's pretty. But I don't understand it." He turned to walk away. Then he stopped and turned to his dad and looked him right in the eye. "Dad, with all the Bibles you publish, do you make one I can understand?"

I have to put here what Sam Moore wrote in his autobiography. I want you to think about his words:

"I knew he was right, but his comments still stunned me. It was like a bombshell exploding in my head. I couldn't sleep that night. At two o'clock in the morning I was on my knees praying, 'O God, how many people are there like my son, Joe, who read the Bible but don't understand what it means?'

"I decided then and there to do something about it. That may be 'the way it is,' but it doesn't have to remain that way."

Ouch. What a stinging indictment against the King James Bible! Except, not really. Do you know what went through *my* mind as I read what Sam Moore wrote? (I have notes all over this page in his book.) I'll list them for you, so you can see where I'm going with this.

If Joe had a Bible he *was* acquainted with, then he would have reverted to it when he let go of the King James. He could have said, "Sorry, Dad; I'm going to stick with my *x Bible*." But Joe didn't say that. The story never mentioned the New English Bible again. So the NEB gift Bible doesn't seem at all significant to Joe. When he let go of the King James Bible, he sounded like he abandoned *all Bibles*, and felt nothing after giving back *a personal gift from his father*, without a thought.

That means that 11-year-old Joe was *not* brought up with the Bible in the first place. Nobody read it to him, and he didn't read it himself. Otherwise, he would have sought comfort in the family Bible if nowhere else. And if he had a family Bible that had been read to him, he would have known the words that so daunted him now.

That means no one *brought up Joe with ANY Bible!* What had happened from Joe's birth to age 11? Didn't *anyone* want to share God's holy words with him? Do you see what happens when we abandon the commandment, at least in principle, of Deuteronomy 6:6-7? No one "taught them diligently," and no one "talked of them" with Joe.

I think this means that Joe was “brought up by the church,” which is a poor substitute for a parent bringing up his or her child. I was brought up that way, in Bethel Congregational Church, part of the very “liberal” National Council of Churches.

But this would mean that Sam and Peggy Moore *didn't* train up their child in the way he should go regarding the words of God.

Now my thoughts about what Sam Moore wrote.

It's wonderful that the bombshell went off in his head. It's great that he didn't take it “lying down”—literally.

But look at what Sam said to God: “O God, how many people are there like my son, Joe, who read the Bible but don't understand what it means?”

What I would have hoped he would have said was this: “O God, how I have ignored Your word! I'm so sorry that I let the church do the religious training for me and didn't train him up in reading Your word! Please help me to do right and focus on my son, so that I obey Your commands and teach him as I should have! Please help me, so I don't lose him because of my inattention.”