

Response to  
**Additions**  
to the Bible

This document is a reaction to Robert R. Taylor's WBS lesson 3 presentation: Additions to the Bible.

**Psalms 51:5 complaint about the Living Bible rendering: *But I was born a sinner, yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.***

**Contradicts Psalms 139:14 in the same paraphrase: *Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!...***

Indeed, the Living Bible, in Psalms 51:5, leaves open the interpretation supporting Total Depravity. The literal Hebrew rendering of this passage would read "Look, in wrongdoing I was brought forth, and in sin my mother conceived me." The psalmist is using hyperbole to express his own sinfulness – that it seems he has always been a sinner. If we take this passage literally, even in the KJV we would arrive at the doctrine of Original Sin. Psalms are poetical literature and should not be read with the same literal understanding as legal literature such as Leviticus.

Furthermore, there are real problems with reading paraphrase versions of the Bible for doctrinal accuracy. Mr. Taylor is condemning “modern versions of the Bible” in large part due to the weaknesses of the paraphrases. In the case of the Living Bible, Kenneth N. Taylor used the American Standard Version (of 1901) as his base text. That's what a paraphrase does. It takes an English translation of the Bible and paraphrases it in a very loose interpretive way.

I have one more problem with Robert Taylor's argument here. He bases his argument on the perception that one verse in a “version” contradicts a different verse in the same “version.” It is not the task of a translator to make various passages agree. It is the job of a translator to faithfully translate scripture from the original language into a different (usually modern) language. It is the task of the Bible student to determine if two passages really contradict.

**NIV renders Psalms 51:5 to show that the psalmist was a sinner from birth.** I repeat: The psalmist is using hyperbole to express his own sinfulness – that it seems he has always been a sinner. It is again the same argument of internal contradiction.

**“Many of these translations were put out by Calvinistic people.”** Many translators of the King James Version were Calvinists.

**Romans 1:17 rendering in the *Good News for Modern Man*.** This rendering is bad. I agree with Mr. Taylor on this criticism. This version is also known as the *Good News Bible*, the *Good News Translation* and *Today's English Version*. The translation falls just short of being a paraphrase. The “Dynamic Equivalence” translation style is way too interpretive. Very early on this version was rejected by Evangelicals in general. I'll not dignify any further arguments against this translation or any paraphrase.

**NIV Rom 1:17 - “righteousness that is by faith from first to last...” teaches “Faith Only.”**

Although the translation is overly interpretive, it doesn't teach “Faith Only.” When in doubt, compare it

with other translations.

**Rom 11:20 - “stand fast only through faith” (RSV).** What false doctrine is being taught here? If we measure the KJV by the same nit-pickyness we'll write a book.

**1 Cor 14:22 – tongues a sign not for unbelievers but for believers (Phillips).** Yes, this is a bad translation on Phillips' part.

**Matthew 16:18** – I'll just mention that NASB is better here than is KJV in Matthew 16:19.

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth *shall have been* bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth *shall have been* loosed in heaven."

**Isaiah 7:14 (RSV) – was it a “young woman” or a “virgin?”** As this verse is quoted in Matt 1:23 in connection to Jesus' birth the proclivity of Christian translators is to render it the same way out of the Hebrew. Here are notes from bible.org on this passage:

Traditionally, "virgin." Because this verse from Isaiah is quoted in Matt 1:23 in connection with Jesus' birth, the Isaiah passage has been regarded since the earliest Christian times as a prophecy of Christ's virgin birth. Much debate has taken place over the best way to translate this Hebrew term, although ultimately one's view of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is unaffected. Though the Hebrew word used here (הַמָּלְאָה, 'almah) can sometimes refer to a woman who is a virgin (Gen 24:43), it does not carry this meaning inherently. The word is simply the feminine form of the corresponding masculine noun אֶלֶם ('elem, "young man"; cf. 1 Sam 17:56; 20:22). The Aramaic and Ugaritic cognate terms are both used of women who are not virgins. The word seems to pertain to age, not sexual experience, and would normally be translated "young woman." The LXX translator(s) who later translated the Book of Isaiah into Greek sometime between the second and first century b.c., however, rendered the Hebrew term by the more specific Greek word παρθένος (parthenos), which does mean "virgin" in a technical sense. This is the Greek term that also appears in the citation of Isa 7:14 in Matt 1:23. Therefore, regardless of the meaning of the term in the OT context, in the NT Matthew's usage of the Greek term παρθένος clearly indicates that from his perspective a virgin birth has taken place.

Mr. Taylor is incorrect in his claim that the Hebrew word הַמָּלְאָה ('almah) means “virgin.” His argument centers on the need to translate Is 7:14 to agree with Matthew 1:23 rather than to faithfully translate Is 7:14.

**Amos 7:14-15 (NASB) – (also RSV, NRSV – ns) - “I am no prophet,...” (KJV - “I was no prophet,...”)**

Being the son of a prophet implies that he did not come from a prophetic school. If we are going to insist on “was” for being a prophet then we should insist on “am” for being the son of a prophet (against KJV).

Francis I Anderson and David Noel Freedman point out that the clauses in 7:14 are verbless (*Amos*: an

Anchor Bible Commentary. 1989: Doubleday. 778). In other words, “was” or “am” is supplied by the translators.

Amos' point here is to repudiate

the insinuation that he was in the business of prophesying for the sake of money. He was not a prophet by profession neither had he ever been trained to preach the Law of God as others had (Paul T. Butler. *The Minor Prophets*. 1968: College Press. 350).

Anderson and Freedman further comment:

There can be no question that Amos functioned as a prophet. The Lord told him to prophesy, and he did. Here he disclaims the title [prophet] or even [prophet's son], as a member of a class whose status in society was recognized. ...

The fact that he denies the title [prophet] but asserts the activity of the denominative verb as made in v 14 one of the best-known cruxes in the book. Just what did Amos mean when he said “I am not a prophet,” when he obviously was one? ...

In the immediate context he could be refuting Amaziah's insinuation. “I am not the kind of prophet you think I am.” ...

The parallel [prophet's son] could mean “a member of a prophetic community,” of the kind known from the earlier days of Samuel and Elijah/Elisha but not attested in the eighth century. More likely the term would apply to an apprentice... than a successor in hereditary office. As Amos disowns any such traditional or institutional affiliation, we must assume that that kind of prophet was now in disrepute, at least in Amos' estimation. Perhaps they had degenerated into soothsayers and diviners, prophesying for pay (cf. Mic 3:5-7) (777-778).

I made all these points to say this: Taylor's complaint about whether Amos “was not” a prophet or “am not” a prophet is ridiculous! Even if Amos “was not” a prophet, his point is that he's not trained as a prophet.

**Amplified Bible** needs no defense. It's a poor idea to include clarifying commentary within the text of the Bible.

**RSV- Matthew 5:17 - Think not that I have come to abolish the law...**

contradicts

**RSV- Ephesians 2:15** (Taylor incorrectly cites Ephesians 2:19) - **by abolishing in his flesh the law of commandments and ordinances...**

Again, is it the job of a translator to translate or to make various passages agree?

**destroy** (Mt 5:17 - KJV): Gk καταλύω, kā-tā-lū-ō, to dissolve, disunite. (what has been joined together), to destroy, demolish.

**abolishing** (Eph 2:15): Gk καταργέω, kā-tār-ge'-ō, to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative. to cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish.

Both words are nearly the same Gk word and mean nearly the same thing. What does Taylor believe Jesus did to the Law? In Matthew 5:17, when Jesus says he came to “fulfill” the Law,

what did Jesus come to do to the Law, if not to make it obsolete?

Further, Taylor argues that the problem is with the translators' understanding of the doctrine of two covenants rather than their knowledge of Greek!

He then points out that Col 2:14-17 teaches that Jesus “nailed the Law of Moses to the Cross of Christ.” Wait a minute! Doesn't that statement contradict the KJV rendering of Matthew 5:17, which states that Jesus did NOT come to “destroy the law”?

**Gen 6:2** – Taylor charges that a paraphrase version promotes mythology by calling the “sons of God” beings from the spirit world. The fact of the matter is that the paraphrase is dishonest to the original text. That's the real problem. Taylor's insistence that the problem is with the notion of some mythological spirit being brings into question what the Bible means by the exact same term in Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7, in which, angelic beings are clearly meant.

**Gen 11 in NEB** - “Once upon a time...” ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXNEBXXXXXX~~ No serious student takes NEB seriously; but at one point, Taylor called it “NIB” which in his phonetics sounds like “NIV.” For the record, NIV doesn't say “Once upon a time” in Gen 11. **NEB is actually a very respectable translation and worthy of study.**

**John 5:28-29 (NIV)** - “a time” or “an hour”? If it says “time” it doesn't teach premillennialism. What does “an hour” mean if not “a time”?

**NIV translation of “flesh” as “sinful nature”** - This criticism of NIV is just. Translating the word for “flesh” to “sinful nature” is far too interpretive and is also Calvinistic.

In all sincerity and with love of the Gospel of Christ  
and of the Church of the Firstborn from the Dead,  
Neil Short