

THE CONCORDANT VERSION

By Gerry Watts

As is abundantly clear, there are numerous translations and revised versions of the Scriptures dating back many centuries, but especially of those published in the 20th Century. This is due to the complexities of translating ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek into Modern English. Also, since the revered King James 'Authorised' Version was published in 1611, the three earliest surviving manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures have been discovered - Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus.

But a major problem has been that of the bias of the various translators influencing their work, not to mention the pressure of 'the church' on the translators to conform to certain doctrines. This inevitably has led to much human interpretation rather than sound, accurate translation. Also, there is the difficulty of 'word metamorphosis', which is when the meaning of certain words change over time due to language deterioration and foreign influence. Therefore, the need has been for a consistent, concordant, literal translation of the Scriptures into English, seeking to avoid in every way possible the bias of the translator. There is such a version - The Concordant Literal New Testament, and also The Concordant Version of the Old Testament, which is being published in separate books, as the CVOT is presently an ongoing project.

The CLNT is the most accurate and consistent translation of the Greek Scriptures that I personally, among numerous others, have discovered. Anyone can take the time to check this out for themselves, as you do not have to be a Greek or Hebrew scholar to discover this, as some would have it (although it helps!). There are numerous study tools available today, like Concordances and Interlinears. At first, the CV can appear strange to our hearing due to its literal approach and its good use of the English language (you may need a dictionary as well!). But for those who don't want their ears tickled, it is a mine of truth. But more importantly, the internal evidence of God's Word speaks for itself when the words are sound and the reader is open to the truth contained within its pages.

The CV does not claim to be the only true version, like some others that could be mentioned, as 100% accuracy is virtually impossible due to the nature of languages. A. E. Knoch was the initiator of the CV. He was a precious and faithful servant of God who, along with many others, worked incredibly hard on a more consistent, concordant translation of the Scriptures. He did not start a religion and he never claimed that the CV was infallible. He always emphasised the fact that, as the apostle Paul says, we should '*have a pattern of sound words*' (2 Tim.1:13) and that this can only be achieved by a concordant translation of the Scriptures. This method alone avoids the interpretations and mistranslations of men. God's words are so accurate, consistent and concordant - it is astounding! And because the Bible is no ordinary book, it needs a solid, unchanging method of translation.

The fundamental difference with the CV is its use of the scientific vocabulary method, which gives clarity of meaning and thought to each individual word as each is used throughout Scripture. This has resulted particularly in the consistent rendering of the Greek words 'aion' and 'aionion' - i.e. eon and eonian, in English. However, there are a few English translations which do come very close to the original, intended meaning - e.g. Young's Literal Translation, Rotherham's Emphasised Bible and Weymouth's Version. This is also true concerning many ancient foreign versions e.g. the Gothic version. The common, incorrect renderings 'eternal', 'everlasting', 'forever and ever' etc, with which we are so familiar, in fact originated in the 4th Century AD from Jerome's Latin Vulgate.

On the whole, Jerome's version, which was a revision of the 'Latin Bible' of that time, was certainly an improvement, but his version introduced Latin words that were to change their meaning in the centuries that followed - 'aeternus' being one! The Vulgate dominated Europe for about a thousand years. But it was through John Wicliffe and William Tyndale that, unwittingly, the Latin words 'aeternus' and also 'seculum' came to mean 'unending', as their translations were based heavily on Jerome's. (For further reading I recommend the booklet entitled 'Whence Eternity' by Alexander Thompson available via The Concordant Bible Society of Great Britain or Concordant Publishing Concern, USA).

Eon and Eonian

Simply stated, an Eon or Age is an indefinite period of time or that which is obscure, which has a beginning and an end. Eonian is that which belongs to an eon. The evidence is in the usage of the words as God has spoken them throughout Scripture. (I have personally checked through virtually all the occurrences of the Hebrew 'olam' and the Greek 'aion'). In some contexts, it refers to a person's life span, which is unknown or obscure. But in many instances, it is referring to the Ages within God's eonian purpose, of which evidently, there are at least five. Two are in the past, the third is the present evil age, which is nearing its end, and there are two yet to come. These Ages are beautifully typified in the layout of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, each step bringing humanity closer to God's presence. (See the book of Exodus for details of the Tabernacle).

1. Outside the Camp
2. Within the Camp
3. Within the Courtyard
4. Within the Holy Place
5. Within the Holy of Holies

Concerning the Tabernacle itself, the Hebrew phrases describing the Holy Places have equivalent phrases in the eons: -

Holy of the Holies - Eon of the Eons (Eph 3: 21)

And

Eon of the Eon (Heb 1: 8)

Holies of the Holies - Eons of the Eons

(Rev 11: 15; Rom 16: 27; Gal 1: 5; Phil 4: 20)

For further study, see my article *How Many Ages Are There?*

The only way to make sure the meaning of these words are kept accurate and consistent throughout Scripture, even allowing for the context to give some indication of their application (i.e. whether it's relating to a person's lifetime or an Age, etc) is to give them their rightful God-given definition of 'an indefinite period of time' - NOT UNENDING. When God means 'unending' it clearly says in the Original 'no end' or 'nevermore' - Luke 1:33 and Revelation 18:21-23.

For further study, here is a selection of scriptures concerning the ages. (For a more detailed study, much is available via The Concordant Publishing Concern - see below).

Before the Eons - 2 Tim 1: 9; Titus 1: 2; 1 Cor 2: 7-8

Eons began in Christ - Heb 1: 1-2; Eph 3: 8-11

Past Eons - Eph 3: 9; Col 1: 26

Present Eon - Gal 1: 4; 1 Tim 6: 17; 2 Tim 4: 10; Titus 2: 12

Future Eons - Eph 2: 7

Coming Eon - Mk 10: 30; Lk 18: 30

Conclusion and

Consummation of the Eons - Heb 9: 26; 1 Cor 10: 11; 15: 24.

In closing, the real issue with studying any version is 'Are we reading what God has really said in the Original?' or put another way, 'Do we have a pattern of sound words?' And only when the answer is 'Yes' can we gain a real knowledge of the truth as God intended. What is meant by the 'Original' is the earliest manuscripts that have been discovered, which have been mentioned above, as these are very close to the original autographs, particularly the Greek Scriptures. It also includes early translations dating from the 2nd Century AD e.g. the Old Syriac (Aramaic) version and the Coptic (Egyptian) version. For the 'Old Testament', there is also the Septuagint - a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures from before the time of Christ. Only minor discrepancies exist.

For more information on the 'three witnesses' - the manuscripts Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus - and the concordant method of translation, see the Introductory Notes to the Concordant Greek Text and the CLNT.

Related Links

How We Got Our Bible by The Concordant Publishing Concern

An Analytical Study of Words by Louis Abbott

Scholars Corner (Tentmaker Ministries)

Time and Eternity by G. T. Stevenson

See also my article *Examples of Olam (Eon or Eonian) Concerning Things that are NOT Everlasting*