

# The Lord's Prayer: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, amen"

You might be familiar with the phrase, "*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.*" This traditional ending is found in the King James Version (KJV) of the Lord's Prayer. However, most modern translations don't include it. For instance, the NASB and HCSB place it in brackets, and it's completely removed in the ESV, NIV, and NLT. Most Bibles have a footnote that says something like, "Some manuscripts add *for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.*" Or "This clause is omitted in the earliest manuscripts." What does that mean?

At Golden Hills we affirm that God infallibly inspired the original biblical writings (see the *GHCC Affirmation of Faith*). But we must remember that real people were involved in the transmission<sup>1</sup> process of the Bible, and people, unfortunately, are fallible. Biblical scholars then have the job of taking thousands of biblical manuscripts<sup>2</sup> to piece together the original.

## The Transmission of the Bible

Matthew wrote his Gospel sometime between 70–90 AD, probably from Antioch, Syria. It was then distributed to local churches in Antioch and copied. Those copies made their way around the world (to Greece, Rome, Jerusalem, Egypt, etc.), and were further copied. This meant that hundreds of copies of Matthew's Gospel would have circulated in a short period of time. Now we live in an age where we have computers and spell-check, but we still manage to make mistakes. The early church, while writing by hand, had similar issues when making copies. This means that most of the surviving manuscripts are not identical to each other.

When we hear something like this, we might freak out and think, "If the copies we have aren't identical, can we trust them?" The answer is, YES! WE CAN TRUST THE BIBLE! The overwhelming majority of inconsistencies are insignificant (like spelling errors or word order). But there are a few times when we have extra material, and that's when we have disagreements if something was in the original text, or was added later (like Matt. 6:13). So, how did these extra words end up in the Bible?

Extra words end up in manuscripts for good reasons. Let's say a pastor in Rome had a copy of Matthew's Gospel. He would read from it and teach his congregation by providing commentary just like pastors do today. These commentaries would often be written into the margins of the book. When scribes copied that book, they weren't always sure what was original or a commentary, so they would keep everything. This means all the copies of that book (in that area) would contain the extra words. This is good news, because it gives us the assurance that verses are never taken *OUT* of the Bible.<sup>3</sup> As one Christian apologist described: it is like having a 100-piece jigsaw puzzle, but you have 110 pieces in the box. Once you start comparing manuscripts, it's going to be obvious which pieces don't fit (meaning, the pieces that aren't original).<sup>4</sup>

## Why Do Modern Translations Differ from the King James Version?

We live in a very exciting time in history, as archeologists continue to find ancient biblical writings. We currently have over 5,800 manuscripts of the Greek Bible. To put this into perspective, when the KJV translators worked on their Bible in the early 1600s, they had about seven complete Greek Bible manuscripts, with the oldest being no earlier than 1000 AD. However, starting in the 19th century, multiple Greek manuscripts were discovered. Suddenly, scholars had access to copies of the Greek Bible that were centuries older than what they previously had (like fragments of John from the 100s AD, or the Codex Sinaiticus from the 300s AD). By using older manuscripts, scholars can construct a Bible that is closer to the original.

Compared to what modern scholars have access to, the KJV translators had an extremely small number of manuscripts to work with—yet, they produced a wonderful translation of the Bible that faithfully served the body of Christ for centuries. Praise God for the KJV!

## The Ending of the Lord's Prayer

But, is the KJV's version of the Lord's Prayer what Matthew originally wrote? Probably not. The exact phrase that the KJV uses is not present in any of the early manuscripts. Some manuscripts do have different versions of this ending, but none read like the KJV. For instance, the Greek *Didache* doesn't include "the kingdom and..." The earliest Syriac version doesn't have "the power and..." Some later manuscripts actually add a trinitarian closing ("for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit forever. Amen").<sup>5</sup>

The KJV closing to the Lord's Prayer is *very good theology*, and so there is nothing wrong with praying it—it's just probably not what Matthew wrote. It probably made its way into later manuscripts as a commentary from the pastor of a local congregation; once copied, it was left in.

## Conclusion

While we adore God's Word, we want to stay committed to the words He inspired, and not the words that we are comfortable with. When we grow up with a wonderful tradition like what the KJV has provided, it's easy to make *that* the standard of truth. But remember, God spoke to His people in Hebrew (some Aramaic) and Greek—not in English. Our translations should reflect what was originally communicated, even when that goes against tradition: this is at the heart of being a *Sola Scriptura* Christian.

## For Resources on this Topic:

### ARTICLES/BOOKS:

**www.Equip.org**, search: "Is your modern translation corrupt?" by James R. White (6/9/09)

"The Five Solas: Sola Scriptura" The 2018 GHCC Campaign (can be found on the [www.goldenhills.org](http://www.goldenhills.org) under media)

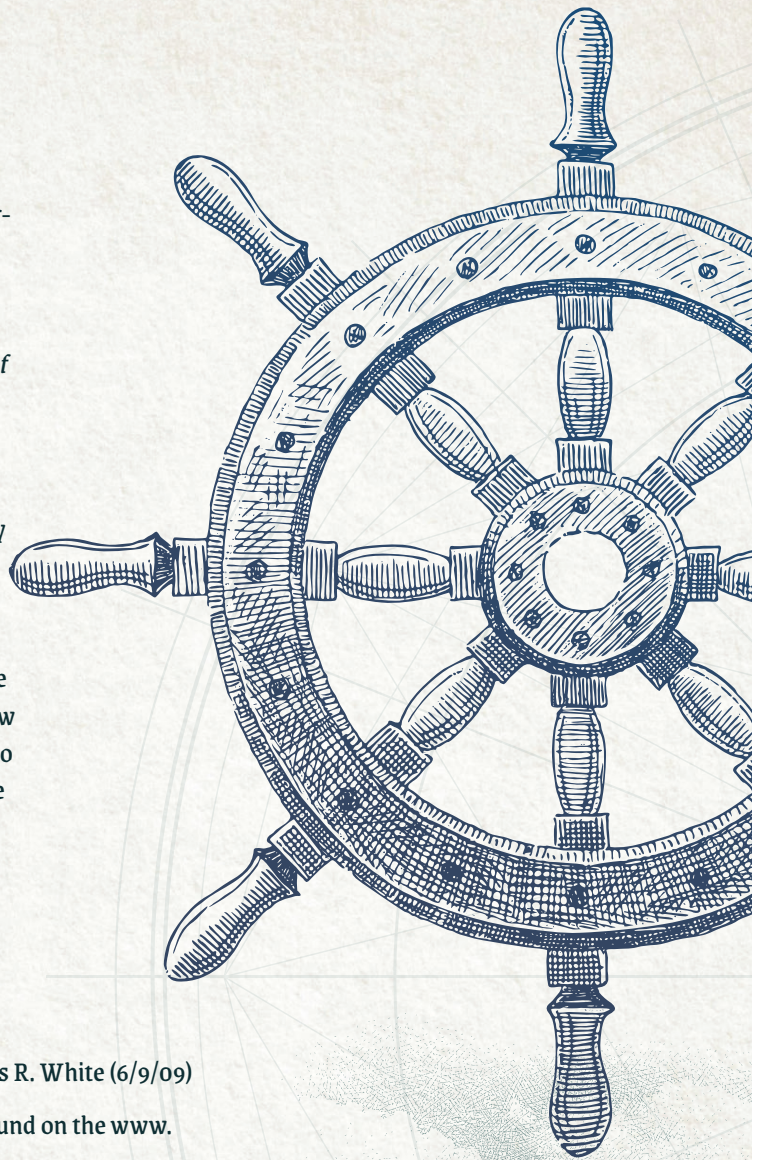
"The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?" by, F.F. Bruce (Eerdmans, 2003)

### MEDIA:

**www.Ligonier.org**, search: "War on the Word: 2002 National Conference, message 10, Questions & Answers #2"

**www.STR.org**, search: "James White - King James Only Controversy" (10/3/10). [interview begins at 1:52:00]

**The Golden Hills Podcast:** *Why We Use the ESV* (season 2, episode 2).



<sup>1</sup> **Transmission:** when an original book of the Bible is copied and passed on, and then that copy is copied and passed on, etc. Every book of the Bible is a product of transmission (we have no original documents).

<sup>2</sup> **Manuscript:** any copy of a book of the Bible. There are thousands of these in existence today.

<sup>3</sup> Always read the footnotes, as modern translations are good about indicating verses in question (like Matt. 6:13).

<sup>4</sup> This is an illustration that was made by apologist James R. White.

<sup>5</sup> Bruce Metzger's "A Textual Commentary on the New Testament" (United Bible Societies: 1975), pp. 16-17.