

# ***IT IS SETTLED!***

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13b)

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## Departures: Bible Versions

One of the most abused and misunderstood topics in the New Testament is "faith." God says it is impossible to please Him without faith (Hebrews 11:6). Recently in this column, we have examined teachings and practices which many religious people accept, but which are not from God. "So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Departures from God's Word did not come from God, and they cannot be of faith.

As the four gospels-Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John-record the events of Jesus' birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection, it is evident they were penned after these occurred. Reading these accounts, faith is produced in us. There has been no record left for us of any word Jesus Himself wrote. The only mention of His writing anything is in John 8:1-11, and what He wrote has not been recorded. Every word of the New Testament was written by men, chosen by God to do so. The writings are now in a format that is easy to read. Rather than reading an ancient language from a scroll, today's New Testament is printed in the language of the reader. It is divided into chapters, paragraphs, and verses. Some Bible printing companies print the words of Jesus in red ink. This choice is made by the printing company and in no way lessens the importance of those words not in red ink. Some use large type for the visually-impaired. The New Testament is available on audio and CD tapes. The color of the ink, the size of the type, whether one may read, or listen to, the words - none of these formats diminish the content. It is vital, however, that those translating the New Testament into today's languages stick exactly to the meaning and context of the original languages. There is no place for any change in the meaning. In this example from the American Bible Society's "Contemporary English Version" (CEV) you can clearly see a change from the meaning of the original languages: In Acts 22, Luke, the writer of the book of Acts, records Saul's conversion. The ancient reading of verse 16: *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."* The CEV's reading: "What are you waiting for? Get up! Be baptized, and wash away your sins by praying to the Lord." However, in the Acts 9 account of Saul's Damascus-road meeting with Jesus, Luke records God's call to Ananias: *"And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth"* (v.11). Readers who study the 3 accounts of Saul's conversion (Acts chapters 9, 22, and 26) know that Saul's behavior before his baptism was not that of a saved man. Read Acts 9:9. No doubt, he had been praying much over those 3 days. However, his prayers did not wash away his sins. He still had them when Ananias came to him. The CEV teaches error when equating the washing away of sins with prayer. Every word God has chosen to record in the New Testament is important and no man dare label as "unimportant" any of them! Choose with care the version you read. Not all versions are accurate, as we have seen.

With a concordance, study all accounts of a Bible event or topic. God has recorded what is needed to produce faith. *"And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"* (John 20:30,31).