

Variant Readings in Exodus 15:2

The AV1611 reads:

“The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt him”

The NIV reads:

The LORD is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation. He is my God, and I will praise him, my father’s God, and I will exalt him”

The underlined readings from each version clearly differ with respect to the words **“habitation”** in the AV1611 and **“praise”** in the NIV, also found in the NKJV. It is useful to compare the respective origins of these readings.

The AV1611 and the Masoretic Hebrew

The AV1611 Old Testament is translated from the Masoretic Hebrew Text, the pure Hebrew Text preserved from possibly as far back as the 1st Century AD until the advent of printing by Jewish scribes called Masoretes, or Massorettes¹, the name meaning *tradition*. The word for **“habitation”** is *navah* נֹוּה also *naveh* in Exodus 15:13, which has the same Hebrew characters². This word is embedded in the expressions for **“habitation”** in the Hebrew Text for Exodus 15:2, 13³ so the AV1611 has faithfully reproduced the underlying Hebrew term.

Green³ nevertheless inserts the word *“glorify”* in Exodus 15:3, like the NIV’s *“praise.”* However, the Hebrew equivalent *kabed* כָּבֵד of **“glorify,”** which appears in 8 of the 12 occurrences of **“glorify”** in the Hebrew Old Testament, clearly does not resemble *navah* נֹוּה. Neither do the two Hebrew equivalents used in the other 4 occurrences of **“glorify.”** Green’s insertion is therefore not consistent with the underlying Hebrew term.

The NIV, NKJV and the LXX, Greek Septuagint

The Preface to the NIV states p vii that *“the standard Hebrew Text, the Masoretic Text...was used throughout”* but it adds that *“the translators also consulted the more important early versions – the Septuagint etc....Readings from these versions were occasionally followed...”* The Preface to the NKJV p vi states that *“The Septuagint...[was] consulted”* for its Old Testament Text. Exodus 15:2 is a case in point for both the NIV and NKJV and the NKJV translators actually used the LXX in this verse. They did not merely ‘consult’ it.

The NIV, NKJV’s *“praise”* (and Green’s insertion of *“glorify”*) comes directly from the LXX Greek Old Testament, which has *“glorify”* in Exodus 15:2. The Trinitarian Bible Society⁴ notes that the NIV used 333 readings from *“early versions”* and other non-Hebrew sources, of which *“Septuagint readings are followed in 189 places.”* Exodus 15:2 is one*.

The LXX⁵ word for *“glorify”* in Exodus 15:2 is *doxazo* δοξάζω (δοξάζω), the term used for **“glorify”** in the AV1611 New Testament. By inspection, this term is quite different from *kataluma* κατάλυμα, which the LXX uses for *“resting-place”* in Exodus 15:13, equivalent to the AV1611’s **“habitation,”** which the NIV, NKJV readings match in Exodus 15:13.

The word *kataluma* occurs 3 times in the AV1611 New Testament, as **“inn”** in Luke 2:7 and **“guest chamber”** in Mark 14:14, Luke 22:11. It could never be rendered *“glorify”* and neither could the Hebrew words *navah* or *naveh*. Nor could *doxazo* ever be translated as **“habitation.”** The LXX, followed by the NIV, NKJV, has therefore introduced a new reading into Exodus 15:2, entirely unsupported by the pure traditional Hebrew Text.

*Note that the NIV’s *“is highly exalted”* in Exodus 15:1 in place of the AV1611’s **“hath triumphed gloriously”** is also an LXX reading, namely *“is very greatly glorified.”*

A Note on the LXX, Greek Septuagint

Brenton, like most commentators, including Watts from the TBS, insists that the LXX was completed in the 3rd Century BC at Alexandria, Egypt. Yet he also states that his edition is based on the 4th Century AD manuscript Codex Vaticanus, with readings obtained from the 5th Century AD manuscript Codex Alexandrinus, where Vaticanus is non-extant.

The truth is that the LXX as it stands today was compiled in Alexandria but in about 220-240 AD, not BC, by a North African philosopher named Adamantius Origen, 184-254 AD. Origen's LXX was the 5th (!) column of his Hexapala, a 6-column parallel Old Testament with both Hebrew and Greek versions. The Hexapala no longer exists and as indicated, today's LXX is essentially the 4th and 5th Century Codices Vaticanus and Alexandrinus. Origen created the LXX because he worshipped "***philosophy and vain deceit***" Colossians 2:8. He believed that the Hebrew Scriptures should therefore be recast in Greek, which, although the original language of the New Testament, was also the language of the philosophers; Socrates, Plato, Aristotle etc. Origen believed further that the Hebrew Old Testament should be amended as necessary, by both alteration of Biblical passages e.g. Exodus 15:2 and by insertion of the 7 Apocryphal books, included in Codex Vaticanus and found in Catholic bibles, e.g. the Douay-Rheims and Jerusalem Bibles.

Origen may have altered "***I will prepare him an habitation***" to "***I will glorify (praise) him***" because he assumed that the former reading conflicted with 1 Kings 8:27 "***But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?***" If so, Origen was wrong because Moses does prepare a habitation for God, Exodus 25-40, at the Lord's behest, Exodus 25:9, 26:1.

The first part of Deuteronomy 4:2 states "***Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.***" Origen did both by his alteration of Exodus 15:2, thereby violating the second part of Deuteronomy 4:2, "***that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.***"

The sources listed below^{6, 7, 8, 9} will provide more detailed information on Origen's LXX.

References

¹ *The Lord Gave The Word* Malcolm H. Watts, The Trinitarian Bible Society, pp 10-11, 27

² *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible* Robert Young, United Society For Christian Literature, Lutterworth Press, 8th Edition, London 1973

³ *Interlinear Hebrew/English Old Testament* 3 Volumes Jay P. Green (Edit.), The Eye Opener Publishers, 1983, Volume 1

⁴ *The Holy Bible New International Version* Article 19 (out of print) Trinitarian Bible Society, p 5

⁵ *The Septuagint With Apocrypha: Greek And English* Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, Regency Reference Library, Zondervan, originally published by Samuel Bagster & Sons, London, 1851

⁶ *Did The Catholic Church Give Us The Bible?* David W. Daniels, Chick Publications, 2005, p 32ff, www.chick.com/default.asp

⁷ *Manuscript Evidence* Dr Peter S. Ruckman, Bible Believers Press, 1970, Chapters 4, 5, www.kjv1611.org/

⁸ *The Mythological Septuagint* Dr Peter S. Ruckman, Bible Believers Press, 1996

⁹ www.avpublications.com/avnew/downloads/PDF/q10.pdf