

Acts 8v37 - Why this SHOULD be in the Bible!

Writer's Note 2016: The following note was sent to church leadership on August 28th 2011 with respect to the validity of Acts 8:37 ***“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God”*** which a visiting speaker to the church had impugned from the church's pulpit. No reply was ever received.

Dear *****

...I am writing briefly to draw attention to a matter that I noted in Mr *****'s message last Sunday, w.r.t. Acts 8:26-40, in particular Acts 8:37.

I appreciate that in a sense, the matter is water under the bridge now but hopefully the brief points that follow will be considered should the above Acts passage, in particular Acts 8:37, be addressed in any future ministry of the church.

Mr ***** made reference to Acts 8:37 as not being in the oldest manuscripts and not part of 'the original' or words to that effect.

Had he limited his comments to the above statement, I would not have raised this matter. Any speaker can give an incorrect report, depending on the sources he consults. It's happened to me. The simple truth is that Acts 8:37 is scripture, with an unbroken testimony to its validity from the 2nd century AD onwards and God's blessing of Reformation and Revival on the Bibles that contain it, e.g. all those of the 16th century English Protestant Reformation. Even the versions that omit it imply the validity of Acts 8:37, because they don't change the verse numbering system, although it would obviously be very easy to do so in this particular instance, if their editors genuinely believed that Acts 8:37 is spurious*.

*Various objections to Acts 8:37 have been raised. I believe that it is possible to answer them all satisfactorily. **2016 update:** [See attached information following this note.](#)

What was real cause for concern to me (and hence this note) was the statement in the message to the effect that the passage loses nothing if Acts 8:37 is cut out because the Ethiopian clearly believed and was saved.

On the contrary, the passage loses everything with respect to Christian salvation if Acts 8:37 is lost.

Significantly, the word "believed" is lost. Without Acts 8:37, it can only be inferred that the individual "believed" anything with respect to salvation (apart from the supposed need for baptism – see comments that follow). It can equally be inferred that belief in the Lord Jesus Christ is not necessary for salvation.

Needless to say, that is a most serious error but it is a possible error if Acts 8:37 is cut out of the account.

Equally significantly, it is known why Acts 8:37 is missing from most Greek manuscripts, including the Catholic manuscripts alluded to but not identified on pages 1024, 1073 of the church bibles. **2016 update:** [1984 NIVs with reference to Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11.](#)

Acts 8:37 was dropped from successive copies of Greek manuscripts by the monkish forbears of those who are now Greek Orthodox priests (as well as by the Catholic forbears), such that it is now omitted by most extant Greek manuscripts, for the majority of which the Greek Orthodox Church is the custodian, notably at St Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

The reason is that the Greek Orthodox Church teaches that only baptism and communion are necessary for salvation, not belief on the Lord Jesus Christ. Omission of Acts 8:37 provides this church with the necessary justification for this false teaching (as with the Catholic Church, its members don't

readily “Search the scriptures” John 5:39). Once this false teaching is established, it becomes straightforward to impose infant baptism.

The Greek Orthodox manner of infant baptism is even more heinous than that of the Catholic Church. I think it amounts to ritualistic satanic child abuse. It is likely that the young women in the church who work with children would be moved to tears if they knew the details.

All of this is written up by Gail Riplinger¹.

I fully appreciate that no-one in the church is likely to be led astray by the false doctrines of infant baptism and baptism as part of salvation but, as indicated, I think that it is useful for the church to be informed of the underlying issues.

Yours in the Lord Jesus Christ

Alan O’R

[2016 Update: The following information on the validity of Acts 8:37 as it stands in the AV1611 has been inserted below².](#)

Acts 8:37

“**And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God**” is omitted by the RV, Ne, NIV, NKJV f.n., JB, NJB, NWT.

Hills³ explains that the verse is absent from most Greek manuscripts because the practice of delaying baptism following profession of faith had become common before the end of the 3rd century. However, the verse is found in uncial E (6th-7th centuries), the Old Latin (2nd century) and the Vulgate (5th century) and is cited by Irenaeus (180 AD) and Cyprian (250 AD). See also Ruckman⁴.

Ruckman⁵ also cites Tertullian (2nd century), Pacian (370 AD), Ambrose and Augustine (4th century) as knowing of the verse.

Even though the verse is not in the Majority Text, Berry’s Greek text supports the AV1611, indicating the familiarity of the 16th century editors with the ancient evidence in support of the verse*²⁰¹².

*²⁰¹²Dr Mrs Riplinger⁶ explains how Acts 8:37 was dropped from successive copies of Greek manuscripts by the monkish forbears of those who are now Greek Orthodox priests (as well as by the Catholic forbears) in order to support their false doctrine of baptismal regeneration, especially with respect to infant baptism.

See also Will Kinney’s detailed article⁷.

The following material is included⁸ to show how “**the scripture of truth**” Daniel 10:21 “**maketh the judges fools**” Job 12:17 with respect to Bible critics with particular application to Acts 8:37.

14.3 Acts 8:37

Our critic’s next attack on the Holy Bible is against Acts 8:37, Section 7.3. He states that “**Uncial E of the 8th Century is the earliest known Greek MS to include this passage. It is basically a Western addition and is omitted from P45 (early 3rd Century) and the earliest uncials. The grammatical construction of the Ethiopian’s confession is quite un-Lukan. There is no reason at all why scribes should have omitted this material if it had stood originally in the text. It possibly began as a marginal gloss.**”

Note that our critic gives no evidence for Acts 8:37 being “a Western addition” or originating “as a marginal gloss.” Neither does he explain why, if the reading was false, the NIV etc. retain the verse numbering sequence of the AV1611. He continues “**Prominent among those early Fathers who quote the verse are those whom you describe as the “Founding Fathers of the Roman Church”...The verse**

is not in the Alexandrian family or even the Byzantine! It found its way into the received text and hence into the KJV via Erasmus who...took the words from the margin of another manuscript.

In answer I shall quote first from Dr Hills⁹ As J. A. Alexander (1857) suggested, this verse, though genuine, was omitted by many scribes, “as unfriendly to the practice of delaying baptism, which had become common, if not prevalent, before the end of the 3rd century.”

Dr Hills has advanced a good reason “why scribes should have omitted this material,” if they were not Bible believers. Our critic has overlooked this. Dr Hills continues:

Hence the verse is absent from the majority of the Greek manuscripts. But it is present in some of them, including E (6th or 7th century). It is cited by Irenaeus (c. 180) and Cyprian (c. 250) and is found in the Old Latin and the Vulgate. In his notes Erasmus says that he took this reading from the margin of 4ap and incorporated it into the Textus Receptus.

Dr Ruckman¹⁰ places E in the 8th century but in the 6th to 7th century in an earlier work. The difference is minor.

Our critic therefore adds little or nothing to the information which I summarised in Section 7.3. The difference is that Dr Hills acknowledges the graciousness of *divine providence* in supplying ALL of the New Testament from several sources, Section 9.6. By contrast, our critic seems ready to reject such providence if it did not see fit to locate a reading in the text with, in his opinion, “better credentials.” See Section 9.3.

As for the lack of the verse in particular “families,” although this classification is often used for convenience¹¹, it is nevertheless a HOAX¹².

In reference to the “*un-Lukan*” grammar of the Ethiopian’s confession, why wouldn’t it be “*un-Lukan*” if indeed it is? The man speaking was an AFRICAN. The man writing the Book of Acts was a JEW! See Romans 3:1-2. Even though our critic is referring specifically to grammar, I am reminded of Dr Hills’s statement¹³.

Arguments from literary style are notoriously weak.

I continue with Dr Ruckman¹⁴.

Those who first threw (Acts 8:37) out were P45 and P74, followed by the Cult (Sinaiticus, Vaticanus, “C”, the Sahidic, and the Bohairic; and then the Harclean and Peshitta Syriac, after Origen messed with them). It is also missing from cursives 049, 056, 0142, 436, 326, 1241, 1505, 2127, 181, 81, 88 and several others.

To offset this vast array of African scholarship produced by half-baked apostates, we have the verse, in whole or in part, in the works of Irenaeus (190 A.D.), Tertullian (200 A.D.), Cyprian (255 A.D.), Pacian (370 A.D.), Ambrose, uncial manuscript E, Old Latin manuscripts, Old Syriac manuscripts, plus the Armenian and Georgian translations. It is also found in cursive 629...(from) the dates of the Church Fathers listed above, we find the verse being quoted 100 to 200 YEARS BEFORE SINAITICUS OR VATICANUS WERE WRITTEN.

So, we quote it 100 years AFTER the REVISED VERSION of Hort fell to pieces with the British Empire. (Why give up a good thing just because a destructive critic doesn’t like it?)

Why indeed? Dr Ruckman¹⁵ states that Acts 8:37 has an unbroken chain of testimony from the Old Latin (second century)...to the present time. That testimony includes the Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale, Great, Matthew, Geneva, Bishops’ Texts. Reviewing the evidence therefore, one finds that Acts 8:37, like 1 John 5:7-8, fulfils at least 5 of Burgon’s 7 tests.

Cursive 629 also has 1 John 5:7-8 in its margin¹⁶...no doubt also by God’s gracious provision. Our critic again resorts to misrepresentation in attacking this verse [Acts 8:37]. He states “**Once again it has to be said that the idea that challenging the authenticity of this verse is to question the importance of personal salvation is utterly ludicrous.**”

I put forth no such “*idea*” at all in Section 7.3. What I said was *Note that Luke 23:42, John 9:35, Acts 8:37 and 9:5, 6 are all passages which deal with INDIVIDUAL SALVATION*. FIVE verses were cited, not ONE. (I could have added a sixth, Acts 16:31, where “**Christ**” is omitted by the DR, RV, NIV, JB, NJB, NWT, Ne thanks as usual to L, T, Tr, A, [Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford] Section 11.4). If our critic had read my statement carefully and LOOKED AT THE VERSES, he would have seen that they deal with THE SALVATION OF INDIVIDUAL SOULS, two of whom were saved by the LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF!

I was not referring to the “*subject*” of “*personal salvation*” in the abstract - of which our critic does not cite even ONE of the “*hundreds of statements*” in the New Testament that he insists deal with it, according to this section of his document. The critics obviously mutilated verses which gave specific examples of SOUL-WINNING. Whatever their “*motives*” in so doing - and these may have been as sincere as Eve’s, Genesis 3:6! - their ACTIONS and the RESULTS of those actions are ABOMINABLE!

Our critic then states “*Incidentally some of the manuscripts which have Acts 8:37 also have in v. 39 “the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the eunuch”*” and poses the question “*Why is this not in the KJV?*”

There are at least three good reasons.

1. The AV1611 translators, being much more scholarly than the modern translators and endowed with much greater spiritual wisdom, Luke 21:15, were able to discern between the authentic reading and the false one. Lacking this discernment, the modern translators rejected BOTH readings.
2. The spurious reading in Acts 8:39 no doubt lacks number, respectability, continuity and variety of witnesses. It may also lack antiquity and the context, as defined by Burgon¹⁷, may be suspect. Typically, our critic does not state which manuscripts contain the spurious addition to Acts 8:39. See **Addendum to Section 14:3 on Acts 8:39**.
3. There are two references in the Book of Acts to the Holy Ghost falling upon individuals, Acts 10:44, 11:15. They deal with incidents in Acts 2:3, 4 and 10:44. In each case there were Jews present and the gift of TONGUES was manifested, magnifying God as a SIGN to these Jews, 1 Corinthians 1:22, Acts 2:5-11, 10:45-46, 11:17-18. In Acts 8:39 NEITHER condition applies and therefore internal considerations mitigate against the reading.

The reading therefore fails 5 TO 7 of Burgon’s tests and is therefore rightly rejected. See [Moorman¹⁸](#) for detailed listing of the witnesses for Acts 8:37 as it stands in the AV1611.

Addendum to Section 14:3 on Acts 8:39

A Google search has located a site on Miniscule 1739¹⁹, a 10th century ms. The entry states *In Acts 8:39, instead of πνεῦμα κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον ([The] Spirit of [the] Lord caught up Philip)), it has the interesting textual variant πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἐπέπεσεν ἐπὶ τὸν εὐνοῦχον, ἄγγελος δὲ κυρίου ἤρπασεν τὸν Φίλιππον ([the] Holy Spirit fell on the eunuch, and [the] angel of [the] Lord caught up Philip) supported by Codex Alexandrinus and several minuscule manuscripts: 94, 103, 307, 322, 323, 385, 453, 467, 945, 1765, 1891, 2298, 36^a, it^p [Itala Old Latin manuscript p], vg [Vulgate], syr^h [Harclean Syriac].*

See **References** for manuscript abbreviations^{20, 21}.

It should be noted that Mss. 103, 307, 322, 323, 385, 453, 467, 945, 1739, 1765, 1891 listed above also contain the genuine scripture Acts 8:37, along with Mss. E, 4, 36, 88, 97, 104, 242, 257, 429, 464, 629, 630, 913, 1522, 1877 and others. See again Will Kinney's²² detailed vindication of Acts 8:37 as *Inspired Scripture*.

That said, the enemies of **“the book of the LORD”** Isaiah 34:16 **“the scripture of truth”** Daniel 10:21 **“the royal law”** James 2:8 like our critic will clutch at any straw or crumb of chaff to denigrate the 1611 Holy Bible.

The interesting textual variant in Acts 8:39 never entered English texts but because the mss. listed above that contained Acts 8:37 contained the variant reading, our critic by means of guilt by association therefore used the variant to cast doubt, Genesis 3:1, upon the genuineness of Acts 8:37 as it stands in the 1611 Holy Bible.

The truth is as follows. Although Codex Alexandrinus does not contain Acts 8:37 it does contain as listed above the variant reading in Acts 8:39. That is how the variant came into existence, in this early codex of the 5th century.

Stanley N. Helton²³ explains, this writer's emphases, that *While most of the witnesses are late; one is important and early. In Codex Alexandrinus the first hand scribe entered it as a correction ...*

Codex Alexandrinus²⁴ was brought to Britain in 1624. Post-1611 editors of the 1611 Holy Bible²⁵ clearly saw the 'correction' to be a manmade insertion.

Gustavus Paine states *The Puritans fought their way forward. The 1611 Bible by its own worth was making itself welcome throughout the country, for those on both sides needed the best modern texts with which to fight their doctrinal skirmishes. High churchmen in greater numbers began to use the 1611 version, which in centuries to come would be the sole bond uniting the countless English-speaking Protestant sects.*

In 1629 the Bible was again revised, but only in small ways, and once more in minor respects in 1638. The last issue of the Geneva Bible was in 1644. By then the King James Version was ahead of all others, and now the strife over forms and doctrine helped it on.

Thanks to men like Daniel **“Forasmuch as an excellent spirit, and knowledge, and understanding...and shewing of hard sentences, and dissolving of doubts, were found in the same Daniel”** Daniel 5:12 who were of **“...them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil”** Hebrews 5:14 the insertion was rejected and Acts 8:37 vindicated as belonging to **“the book of the LORD”** Isaiah 34:16 **“the scripture of truth”** Daniel 10:21.

Therefore, as the Lord commands through Jeremiah **“...he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the LORD”** Jeremiah 23:28.

References

Web reference and author are given the first time a particular work is cited. Only the work itself is cited in subsequent references. See shop.timefortruth.co.uk/ruckman.html for Dr Ruckman's books.

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