

Ever Heard of the Wicked Bible?

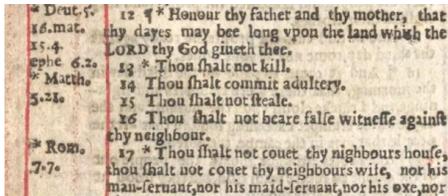
My colleagues with B&H Bibles are sticklers for perfection—and that’s a good thing. Preparing a new release of the CSB Bible calls for meticulous proofreading. It takes careful reading to ensure that the text is printed just as it should be. After all, this is the Word of God!

Careful and meticulous proofreading is important. Just ask King Charles I. In 1631, twenty years after the King James Version of the Bible was released, King Charles I ordered 1,000 new copies. This order was given the Robert Barker.

Printing today is a lot easier than it was in the 17th century for printers like Robert Barker. Today, everything is digital; we can key in text, proofread it, and send it to the printer without ever holding a physical piece of paper. But back in the day (i.e., 1631), printing required careful placing of the type, letter by letter, word by word. Typesetting took work.

Barker completed the task and delivered 1,000 copies of the Bible for public consumption. Imagine the shock (or delight) of someone buying a copy, setting a goal of reading the Bible through in a year, and eventually coming to Exodus 20. Right there in the Ten Commandments stands the Seventh Commandment:

Thou shalt commit adultery.



Oops. The omission of one word—*not*—

completely changed the meaning. It was an accidental omission on the part of the printer, but hoo boy, did it get people’s attention. The king was not happy. Robert Barker lost his license to print and was fined 300 pounds sterling. That’s less than \$400 today, but in 1631, that was a lifetime of wages.

King Charles also ordered that those errant Bibles be destroyed. Nice try, King, to cover an embarrassing mistake, but they weren’t all destroyed. Eleven copies are still known to exist, and one sold in 2018 for \$56,250.

The printing error that earned this Bible the name the Wicked Bible was an unintentional mistake, albeit a big mistake. It was such a blatant mistake that I doubt anyone took it seriously. “Yes, dear, I did have an affair, but the Seventh Commandment told me to.”

Unfortunately, others intentionally change the wording and meaning of Scripture to suit their own purposes. They twist

Scripture to fit what they want to believe or to justify their own behavior.

- Mormons tells us we cannot correctly understand the Bible unless we read it in light of the teachings of *The Book of Mormon*, *The Book of Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*.
- Jehovah’s Witness ignore one definite article in John 1:1, so that Jesus is not *the* God, but *a* God.
- Many want to change the meaning and intent of various biblical passages that prohibit the act of homosexuality.

Cults and splinter groups abound in America. One of the chief marks of a cult is the addition of something to God’s Word (as the Mormons do) or the removal of something from God’s Word (as the Jehovah’s Witnesses do). And others want to interpret the Bible in light of the meaning they choose to give it, not the meaning intended by the original inspired writer.

Yet God’s Word—the 66 books we collectively refer to as the Bible—is sufficient in and of itself.

“Every word of God is pure; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Don’t add to his words, or he will rebuke you, and you will be proved a liar” (Prov. 30:5-6).

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

If you desire to hear from God, start with God’s Word. It is the primary way He speaks. God does speak through other means—such as the nudge of His Holy Spirit on your heart or the words of other believers—but what He speaks will always be in line with what He revealed in Scripture. Always.

“I have treasured your word in my heart so that I may not sin against you” (Ps. 119:11).

You can avoid the sin of misinterpreting or misapplying God’s words by becoming well immersed in the teachings and truth of the Bible. Become an ardent student of God’s Word.

“Be diligent to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who doesn’t need to be ashamed, correctly teaching the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).