

# The Text of the Gospels

A blog by James Snapp, Jr. about New Testament textual criticism, especially involving variants in

Wednesday, November 25, 2015

## The Clear Word: Clear, But Far from Pure

(A review of *The Clear Word*, by Jack J. Blanco, Copyright © 2003 by Review and Herald® Publishing Association)

I am not sure what disturbs me more: that the paraphrase-commentary hybrid known as *The Clear Word* could be created by a former dean of a Seventh-day Adventist university, or that Seventh-Day Adventists would welcome it, promote it, and distribute it. Jack J. Blanco's *The Clear Word* is one of the most corrupt forms of the English Bible being sold today. Its author has smuggled thousands of man-made additions into the Biblical text.

I have little doubt that the author's intentions to create a "devotional paraphrase expanded for clarity" were noble. This review is not intended as an evaluation of intentions, but of results. The author of *The Clear Word* has essentially squeezed and molded Scripture into the shape of the teachings of Seventh-Day Adventism.

Several authors have already reviewed some of the renderings in *The Clear Word* that have a distinctly Adventist doctrinal spin. For example, at [the CARM website](#), one can find explanations of how the Scriptural text has been manipulated and changed in *The Clear Word* so as to support [annihilationism](#), and [the belief that Jesus and the archangel Michael are identical](#) (Revelation 12:7b: "God's Son Michael and the loyal angels fought against the dragon and his angels."), and [other unusual beliefs](#).

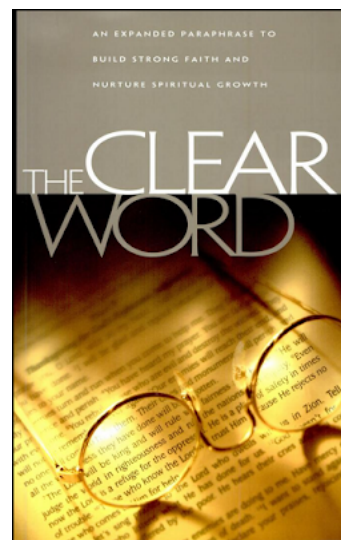
Even if all of those doctrinally driven anomalies were corrected, *The Clear Word* would still be useless for anyone who wants to know what the Bible says, because ***The Clear Word* is full of commentary-material that has been blended into the text.** It is not as if commentary-material is in a side-bar, or in footnotes, as is the case with various Study Bibles. The commentary-material is blended directly into the text. This unfortunate trait contaminates every page of *The Clear Word*. I will supply some samples from Genesis and the Gospels. Comparisons of these passages to translations such as the KJV, NKJV, HCSB, ESV, or NASB will illustrate the same thing: *The Clear Word* is saturated with man-made insertions. In the following six quotations from Genesis in *The Clear Word*, passages that are neither translation, nor paraphrase, but simply insertions, are highlighted and are in bold print:

(1) Genesis 3:6: "As Eve watched the serpent eat the delicious fruit, she suddenly felt a strong urge to taste it too. She **reached out and touched the fruit and nothing happened.** Then she picked it, took a bite **and instantly felt a surge of energy. Excited,** she took more fruit **and ran to find** her husband. **When Adam saw her, he sensed what she had done. But in the blush of her excitement, she looked more beautiful than ever. He couldn't bear the thought of living without her, so** he took the fruit and ate it also."

(2) Genesis 3:21: (KJV: "Unto Adam and also to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.") "**But God didn't carry out their sentence that day. He told them He had a plan to save them. Adam must sacrifice a lamb as a symbol of the One who would come and die in their place.** God then took **the lamb's** skin to cover Adam and Eve's nakedness."

(3) Genesis 6:8: (KJV: "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.") "**So gradually the Lord laid to rest all those who loved Him, except Noah and his family. Finally, they were the only ones left alive who** found grace in God's sight **because they obeyed the Lord and did what was right.**"

(4) Genesis 19:26a: "Lot's wife, **who had begged to live in Sodom,** looked back." The phrase, "who had begged to live in Sodom," is not a paraphrase of anything. It is simply an *insertion*.



Paraphrasing is not  
a license to embellish.



More examinations of *The Clear Word*  
are at [the CARM website](#).  
(This is not an endorsement.)

(5) Genesis 22:9: (KJV: “And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.”) “Finally they reached the top. Together they found some stones, arranged them to build an altar and put the wood on top. **Then Abraham told Isaac what God had said. Though sad, Isaac saw it as a privilege to give up his life for God while he was young.** He let Abraham tie his hands, then he willingly lay down on the altar.” *The two highlighted sentences are fabricated, and the sense of the final sentence is significantly altered.*

(6) Genesis 25:34: (KJV: Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright.”) “Then Jacob gave him as many lentils as he could eat, and Esau ate and drank until he was full. Without even thinking about what he had just given away, Esau said good-bye and left. **But Jacob had run ahead of God’s providence, just as Abraham had in fathering Ishmael.**” The final sentence has no foundation in the Hebrew text; it is commentary-material.

Many more could be listed. Let’s turn to the New Testament and look at some of the insertions in the Gospel of Mark and the Gospel of John.

**Mark 1:13:** (KJV: “And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.”) “He was there for forty days surrounded by wild animals. He was severely tempted by the devil **to use His divine powers to feed Himself.** When it was all over, He was so exhausted that angels from heaven **had to come to revive His dying body.**” Wherever Jack J. Blanco got that part about the angels having to “come and revive His dying body,” it was not from the Greek text of the Gospel of Mark.

**Mark 1:45:** (KJV: “But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.”) “But the man **didn’t listen. He thought that Jesus was just being modest, so he** told everyone he met how Jesus had healed him. **This greatly upset the priests, especially since the man hadn’t yet carried out the prescribed ritual.** So Jesus decided to leave town, **because He knew He would attract other lepers and be accused of breaking down the restrictions of the ritual law.** He decided to carry on His ministry in a more isolated area, **but before long people found Him** and once again huge crowds came to see Him.” Some of the imprecision in this verse could be regarded as paraphrasing – but *about half of it has no basis in the Greek text.*

**Mark 2:14b:** “Matthew got up, **asked his assistant to take over** and followed Jesus.”

**Mark 2:28:** “I am the Lord of the Sabbath. **I know what’s right to do on the Sabbath and what isn’t.**”

**Mark 3:12:** “Jesus commanded the spirits to stop shouting **because this could bring on a public disturbance if the people began to argue over who He was instead of listening to what He had to say.**”

**Mark 4:39a:** “Jesus, **knowing that the demons were causing the fierce wind,** stood and said to the storm, “Peace, be still.””

**Mark 6:22b:** “**Having had too much to drink,** Herod said to the girl, “Ask for anything you want, and I’ll give it to you.””

**Mark 8:33:** “Jesus then turned to His disciples **and rebuked the Satanic influence around them,** saying, “Get behind Me Satan!” Looking straight at Peter, He said, “You’re only thinking about what’s important to man, not what’s important to God.”

**Mark 11:7:** “They led the donkey **to the top of** the Mount of Olives. **Suddenly they realized that what Jesus was about to do had for centuries been a symbolic act of kings prior to their coronation. Joyfully,** they took off their robes and laid them on the young animal. Jesus then mounted the donkey, **and the disciples led Him into Jerusalem.**”

**Mark 11:14:** “Jesus said to the tree, “Never again will you deceive people with your pretense.” **The disciples wondered why He would speak that way to a tree, but later they understood that it was a symbol of Israel.**”

**Mark 12:7:** “**What was God telling Moses? He was telling him that** He was the One **who activated Sarah’s dead womb,** giving **through Abraham** life **to Isaac who, in turn, gave life to Jacob. Therefore, God is** not the end of life **but the Giver of life!** So your

idea that there is no life after death is wrong.” (For comparison: Mark 12:27 in the KJV: “He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; ye therefore do greatly err.”)

**Mark 14:23-24:** “Then He took the cup **of unfermented wine**, gave thanks and passed it to the disciples to drink from, which they each did. Jesus said, “The **pure juice which you just drank** represents my blood that I will shed for **the sins of the world**. This will fulfill the covenant **my Father and I made from the beginning.**”

**Mark 14:28:** “**But I will always love you.** When I rise again, I’ll meet you **by the lake of Galilee where we had such good times together.**”

**Mark 14:72b:** “**Ashamed of what he had just done,** Peter **hurriedly left the courtyard, ran all the way back to Gethsemane and wept bitterly.**”

Now let’s turn to the Gospel of John.

**John 2:4-5:** “Jesus answered, “**Mother, I love you, but** why are you asking me to help them? I can’t work a miracle unless my Father tells me it is time to do it.” Mary **understood His hesitation but** turned to the waiters and said, “Whatever my Son tells you to do, do it.” (For comparison, here’s John 2:4-5 in the KJV: “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”)

**John 3:14:** “**The miracle of the new birth was taught by** Moses **when he** put a brass serpent **on a makeshift cross and** held it up **for people to look at. All those bitten by snakes who looked at it in faith were healed. That power didn’t come from the cross Moses made, but from the Son of God who would come and die on a cross.** He will soon be lifted up **between heaven and earth for all to see.**” (For comparison, here’s John 3:14 in the KJV: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.”)

Now we come to John chapter 8. The embellishments of this passage are particularly strange.

**John 8:1-4:** “**Toward the end of the day** Jesus **left the Temple and** went **out of the city** to **the top of a hill called** the Mount of Olives **to spend some time in prayer.** The following morning, He went back to the Temple and sat down in the courtyard to teach, **even though the week-long festival was over.** Soon a crowd gathered around Him to listen to what He had to say. While He was teaching, the Scribes and Pharisees dragged in **a prostitute whom they had tricked into adultery so they could use her to confront Jesus.** They pushed her toward Him and said,” ....

Jumping ahead to **John 8:8:**

“Then He leaned forward and started writing again. **This time the leaders looked at what He was doing and saw traced before them their own secret sins and their part in trapping the woman.**”

Now, there *is* a sub-branch of the text of the Gospel of John that contains a reading in this verse to the effect that the religious teachers saw their sins written in the earth. But there is nothing in the Greek text of John 8:3 that says that the scribes and Pharisees had tricked the woman into committing adultery, and there is nothing that says that they saw, written down, anything about their part in trapping the woman. All those details are entirely made-up.

Further along, in chapter 11, *The Clear Word* adds another made-up detail:

**John 11:2:** “His sister Mary **was the one who had been caught in adultery, whom the Pharisees wanted to stone but whom Jesus forgave. She** was also the one who later anointed Jesus’ feet with expensive perfume and wiped His feet with her hair **shortly before His death.**” I emphasize: *this new claim that Mary of Bethany was the woman caught in adultery does not come from anywhere in the Greek text of John 11:2.*

Extra details continue to pop up in the text of *The Clear Word*:

**John 12:8:** “You will have plenty of opportunities to feed the poor, but I’m only here once. **After what I’ve been through, it’s refreshing to be appreciated.**”

**John 13:6-8a** in *The Clear Word* contains some insertions and substitutions, too:

“When He came to Peter, Peter said, “Lord, **you’re the Son of God!** You’re not going to lower yourself by washing my feet!” Jesus **looked at him** and said, “Right now you don’t understand why I’m doing this, but after I’m gone, you will.” Peter said, “I am not letting **my God** wash my feet!” This frivolous imprecision risks misleading readers: some are likely to rely on this passage to prove that the Bible teaches the deity of Christ, only to be shown that the words “my God” do not belong in the text.

A little further on in *The Clear Word*, **John 13:10** looks like this: “Jesus said, “When a person has had a bath, he only needs to rinse the dust off his feet. **If a man has been born again and baptized, he doesn’t have to be baptized all over again each time he does something wrong.** All of you are clean, except one.”” An entire sentence, attributed to Jesus, appears out of the blue.

These examples are not exceptional. Similar insertions appear throughout *The Clear Word*. In addition, parallel-passages are frequently altered, removing difficulties at the expense of effectively erasing the text written by the inspired authors. In *The Clear Word*, Mark mentions *both* Gadarene demoniacs, and *both* blind men at Jericho (not just Bartimaeus) – whereas in the original text of the Gospel of Mark, Mark simply does not do so. Acts 1:17-18 is barely recognizable in *The Clear Word*. This sort of alteration does indeed result in a *clear* text, but not a *pure* one.

Without all the baseless embellishments, *The Clear Word* could be a lucid paraphrase of the same base-text upon which the KJV is based. Unfortunately, Jack Blanco has created an adulteration, a hybrid that is partly the Word of God, and partly his own ideas (mostly based on the teachings of Ellen G. White), blended together without distinction. For Christians who want their Bibles to be undiluted, this completely disqualifies *The Clear Word* from being used for any purpose, except as an example of how translation should not be done. I encourage the Review and Herald Publishing Association to stop printing it, and I encourage [Adventist Bible Centers](#) to stop distributing it.

**Every word of God is pure;  
he is a shield to those  
who put their trust in him.  
Do not add to his words,  
lest he rebuke you,  
and you be found a liar.**

**Proverbs 30:5-6**

Posted by [James Snapp Jr](#) at [1:31AM](#)

Labels: [Adventist](#), [Bible](#), [Blanco](#), [Clear Word](#), [Ellen G. White](#), [New Testament](#), [paraphrase](#), [review](#), [The Clear Word](#), [translation](#)

## 10 comments:



**John Podgorney** said...

Great review James. I don't have a copy and don't want one. I never saw it before. Now I know. Thanks for the thorough comments.

November 25, 2015 at 10:26AM



**William N. Balderrama** said...

Thanks for your tips.

November 23, 2017 at 8:51AM



**Unknown** said...

Awesome writing.

November 29, 2017 at 1:43AM

**Unknown said...**

It is interesting. I am a seven day Adventist, I don't own a copy of the clear word and I never seen one. I am not aware of any one in my church who owns a copy. I use different translations, mainly the kev. I will try and get a copy of the clear word as it sounds interesting, I understand that it is a paraphrase bible and there is many paraphrase bible in the community, I don't own any of them.

August 27, 2021 at 6:54 PM

**Unknown said...**

Thank you so much. I would like to let readers know that a huge portion of commentary inserted into the texts in this "bible" find their origins in EGWhites writings. It is written entirely to blend the teachings of EGW and SDA views into the Bible account. Im able to make this statement having owned a library once filled with 1000s of writings and books. God gave us the Word of God to lead us to life. The Holy Spirit the power to lead us into all truth. The clear word was published by the Review and Herald, an SDA publishing house that only publishes books written by SDAs. They have attempted to distance themselves by claims "they do not produce it". Yet they advertise, print and sell this book and make profits. Its very important for Christians to gain confidence in the scriptures. Trusting Gods word and experiencing Christ as revealed in the Bible he used and the new testament witness will bless you abundantly.

January 28, 2022 at 5:09 PM

**Unknown said...**

The Clear Word is a Paraphrase, not a version of the Bible. It is to be used as a study companion to the Bible. Condemning it as a bad version of the Bible doesn't even make sense as it was not written to be a version of the Bible, but as a study aid, and yes, by an Adventist. It's like going to the store and complaining that the apple you bought isn't an orange. If course it's not. It wasn't marketed or sold as an orange. It's an apple. The Clear Word is not marketed or sold as a Bible. It's not a Bible. It is a Paraphrase and it is very clearly stated as such. Adventists sell it just like any other book store sells books - as a book, not as a Bible. There's no effort to disguise it as a Bible. It is a devotional aid, of which there are thousands from authors of all walks of life and religious backgrounds. It seems that to come out so strongly against this one is because it hit a nerve. Maybe that's what should be more closely explored instead of getting upset because the apple you bought isn't an orange. If you wanted an orange, maybe you should have bought an orange instead of hunting for something to try to condemn because it struck a nerve.

February 26, 2022 at 11:48 PM

**Kendrell said...**

I use The Clear Word to assist me while reading the KJV of the Bible. I do not consider it a version of the bible and anyone who does is misrepresenting it's meaning. I do highly recommend this version to utilize as a help while studying the bible. I would think it would fall under the same category as the NLT or NKJV.

March 3, 2022 at 12:32 AM

**Unknown said...**

Absent in your review is the obvious issue of copywrite. In order to be a valuable paraphrase, much of the original translation should be found in the text. However, there needs to be enough added content or original value to satisfy legal requirements. Though there are added detail not found in the bible, it does not contradict the bible's core message, including the type-of-Jesus imagery of Michael. In any case, thanks for your review, and I'll consider it another devotional or optional companion for study.

October 4, 2022 at 3:32 PM

**Unknown said...**

Amen, I utilized the Clear word Bible myself to help clarify the text and it is a wonderful paraphrase of the bible and a good study guide. I also at time utilizes the NLT and the KIV and all the other paraphrases of the Bile that is written to help me walk this Christian pathway. They are a great help and being a SDA the clear word brings it home for me. Please let us take advantage of the gifts among us that God has given to His people to walk that narrow pathway we are journeying on to the promise land. He promised that He would never leave us alone without any sought of guidance. In the Bible times He sent prophets and kings

patriarch and experts in the book of law to guide His people and He will continue to do so until He comes to gather His people home. God be praise, Hallelujah!

[April 7, 2023 at 5:44AM](#)

 **Jim Miles said...**

No originals manuscripts exist. Many variants of copies of copies of them contradict each other, and the bias of scribes is well understood. Insertions were made by those who copied the Greek manuscripts. The story of the woman caught in adultery in John 8 isn't in the earliest and best manuscripts; the Jack Blanco of the scribes added it in.

[July 12, 2023 at 7:42AM](#)

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