

ABOUT THE PEKING VERSION

The **Peking Version** of the Bible (also called the **Beijing Version**) was translated by a group of five foreign missionaries and their language helpers. These missionaries all lived and ministered in Beijing, and in 1864 they formed into a committee with the intention of translating the Bible into the northern Mandarin dialect of Chinese.

The five American and British missionaries involved in this task were Samuel Schereschewsky, John Burdon, Henry Blodget, Joseph Edkins, and William Martin. The completed NT was published in 1872. The OT was translated single handedly by **Samuel Schereschewsky**, a Christian Jew, directly from Hebrew into Chinese. This OT translation was published in 1874, and the entire Bible was published together in one volume in 1878.

Based on a relatively thorough review of the **Peking Version's NT**, it seems that the version is based largely on the TR Greek text, but does depart from that text in dozens of verses in order to follow some corrupt Greek text (perhaps Griesbach's, Tischendorf's, or some other pre-Westcott and Hort minority Greek text). There are many sample texts that could be provided to show that the **Peking (Beijing) Version** is not entirely based on the Greek Textus Receptus or the English KJV. Listed below are some examples:

In John 13:2 – “supper being ended” is changed to “during supper”

In John 18:36 - “now” is omitted

Luke 21:36 – “that ye may be accounted worthy” is changed to “that you may be able to”

Acts 3:11 – “the lame man which was healed” is omitted

Acts 12:5 – “without ceasing” is changed to “fervently”

Rom. 3:22 – “and upon all them” is omitted

Rom. 15:7 – “us” is changed to “you”

I Cor. 11:29 – “unworthily” is omitted

Heb. 10:12 – “one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down...” is changed to “one sacrifice for sin, for ever sat down” (note change of punctuation and meaning)

I Peter 2:7 – “disobedient” is changed to “disbelieve”

I Peter 3:8 – “courteous” is changed to “humility”

I John 2:23 – “But he that acknowledgeth the son hath the father also” is omitted

Rev. 11:8 – “our Lord” is changed to “my Lord”

Rev. 17:8 – “and yet is” is changed to “and yet will be”

In addition to these problems with the **Peking Version** as it stands, there are also a number of serious translation mistakes within the version. For example:

- II Cor. 5:21, Jesus is said to have been made a SINNER, instead of being made SIN.

- II Cor. 12:9, “my grace is sufficient for thee”, is changed to “I’ve given you enough grace” (i.e. don’t expect any more).
- Other examples include changing “woman” to “mother” in John 2:4 and John 19:26, and translating “faults” as “sins” in James 5:16.

A third problem with the text of the **Peking version** is the version was produced at a time when Mandarin Chinese was not yet the lingua franca of China. In fact in the mid to late 1800s, Mandarin Chinese was a northern Chinese dialect used mostly by officials. It wasn’t until the early 1900s that Mandarin Chinese became far more universally accepted and used throughout northern and southern China. By this time the dialect had undergone significant changes in vocabulary, grammar and structure. Thus, the flow of the **Peking Version** is often awkward or even incorrect by today’s standards.

Finally, the **Peking Version** uses the term 天主 “Lord of Heaven” to refer to God. This term is was a non-Chinese word coined by Roman Catholic missionaries who came to China in the 1700s. Today in China, the term “Lord of Heaven” is used exclusively by Chinese Catholics, but not by any other denomination or group of Christians. In fact, the Catholic faith is called 天主教 “the religion of the Lord of Heaven” in Chinese. All Protestant and Baptist churches in China use either 神 (god/God) or 上帝 (Emperor above”) to refer to God. Of these, 神 (god/God) is definitely preferable, and in my opinion, 天主 cannot be used because:

- 1) It doesn’t mean God, it means literal “Lord of Heaven”
- 2) It’s a coined word (if there were no other word for “God” this wouldn’t be a problem, but there IS a perfectly acceptable word)
- 3) It’s an exclusively Roman Catholic term. Someone who reads a Bible that calls God 天主 (Lord of Heaven), is most likely going to end up going to a Catholic church

In addition to the **Peking Version**, there are many other **pre-Union Versions** Chinese translations, however, few, if any, of these versions were ever widely used, and as a result are extremely hard to find today. One of these was a complete **revision** of the **Peking Version**, produced by one of its translators, Samuel Schereschewsky (published in 1899, and another revision in 1908), and the other was done by a Scotsman named Griffith John (published the NT in 1889).

It’s possible that one or more of these versions may be more in line with the text of the KJV, but without seeing them first hand, that is hard to determine definitively. Also, because these versions came out shortly before the publication of the **Chinese Union Version** (which uses a much better style of Mandarin, and a more literal translation style, but at the same time introduces a large number of Westcott and Hort textual corruptions), they were greatly overshadowed by the Union Version, and quickly

disappeared altogether.