

CURBING INCONSISTENCIES IN TRANSLATION: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SELECTED BIBLE VERSES

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Abstract

Translation fundamentally aims to convey the message of a source-language text to a target-language audience in a manner that is both intelligible and contextually appropriate. This objective aligns with the well-established definition proposed by Eugene Nida and Charles Taber, who describe translation as “reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in terms of meaning and second in terms of style.” While it is generally acknowledged that translated texts strive to preserve both semantic content and stylistic features, practical realities reveal noticeable imbalances. Some translations tend to prioritize meaning at the expense of stylistic fidelity, whereas others overemphasize stylistic elegance, occasionally leading to distortion or exaggeration. This study examines the extent to which inadequate handling of lexical and contextual elements - here termed translational inconsistencies - within the King James Version contributes to partial misrepresentation or outright misconception of the intended message. The analysis focuses specifically on

two biblical passages: Isaiah 14:12 and 2 Peter 1:19. Through a critical evaluation of these texts, the paper identifies sources of inconsistency and proposes strategies for minimizing such discrepancies in translation practice.

Keywords: translation, competence, Lucifer, misrepresentation, inconsistency

1. Introduction

Translation, as both a linguistic and cultural activity, occupies a central position in the transmission of knowledge across time and space. According to Ekpenyong and Ekpe (2022), translation refers to a linguistic exercise that involves the transfer of the message from one language, known technically as the source language (SL), into another language, also known technically as the target language (TL). Its importance becomes even more pronounced in the domain of sacred texts, where meaning is not merely informational but doctrinal, interpretative, and often authoritative. The Bible, arguably one of the most translated texts in human history, has undergone centuries of transmission, reinterpretation, and retranslation, each stage leaving traces of linguistic, theological, and ideological mediation. Loba-Mkole (2018) posits that translations shape Scripture interpretations, especially when a given interpretation depends on a particular translation, adding that a particular interpretation can also influence a given translation. He cites Bosch and Sannah as maintaining that the Christian faith as a whole “never exists except as translated into a culture” and argues further that in the missionary expansion of Christianity, Scripture translations, often taken for granted, have served as the main catalyst, although it has not always received the necessary recognition.

The English Bible, particularly the King James Version, which according to Norton (2005), was published in 1611, stands as a monumental achievement in literary history and religious tradition. Its stylistic grandeur and rhetorical force have shaped not only Christian discourse but also the evolution of the English language itself. However, like all translations, it is not immune to inconsistencies. These inconsistencies – be they lexical, semantic, or contextual – have, in certain cases, led to interpretative distortions and doctrinal misconceptions.

Translation is not a neutral act. It involves choices, and such choices are shaped by linguistic competence, historical context, theological orientation, and even political pressures. Ekpe and Salaudeen (2023), who associate competence with a profound knowledge of a given subject or discipline - one that enables the individual to make informed judgments and decisions - further argue that from a linguistic standpoint competence empowers a language user not only to comprehend the codes being conveyed but also to produce with skill and flexibility an unlimited range of statements. When these choices are inadequately informed or excessively constrained, the resulting translation may deviate from the intended meaning of the source text. In biblical translation, such deviations can have, and do have, far-reaching impacts and implications, capable of influencing centuries of belief, preaching, doctrinal development or position.

This study seeks to undertake a critical examination of what may be termed “translational inconsistencies” as drawn from selected biblical passages, with particular emphasis on Isaiah 14:12 and 2 Peter 1:19 in the King James Version (KJV). By situating these passages within their original Hebrew and Greek contexts and tracing their translational history, the study seeks to uncover how certain renderings emerged, why they persisted, and how they may be corrected, curbed or mitigated in modern translation practice.

2. Theoretical framework

This study is anchored in major translation theories that illuminate the nature and challenges of transferring meaning across languages.

2.1 Dynamic equivalence

The concept of dynamic equivalence, developed by Eugene Nida, stresses the reproduction of meaning rather than form. Nida (1964) argues that a translation should evoke in the target audience a response equivalent to that of the original audience. This principle is particularly relevant in biblical translation, where idiomatic expressions and cultural references must be carefully interpreted. As a matter of fact, Taber and Nida’s dynamic and formal equivalence theories developed within the context of biblical translation.

2.2 Formal vs. communicative translation

Peter Newmark (1988) distinguishes between semantic (formal) and communicative translation. While the former prioritizes fidelity to the structure of the source, the latter places emphasis on clarity and naturalness in the target language. Many inconsistencies in the King James Version can be traced to tensions between these approaches.

2.3 Hermeneutics and biblical translation

According to Thiselton (2009), biblical translation is inseparable from hermeneutics - the theory of interpretation. Translators are interpreters, and their theological assumptions inevitably shape their lexical and syntactic decisions. Ekpenyong and Ekpe (2022) again state categorically that “it is evident ... both from the Old and New Testaments that the idea of translation (involving different languages), interpreting or interpretation (involving the orator and the interpreter), originated from the Bible itself a long time ago,” and that “it is also not surprising that today Bible Translation has become a specialized area to be reckoned with in the domain of translation studies.” In their conclusion, “as a book, the Bible has been translated into hundreds of languages so that people can read it in any language that they can understand. In turn, that has justified the need for Bible-based sermons which are preached in the churches to be interpreted for the comprehension of all who attend church services.”

3. Objectives of study and scope of clarification

It is essential to clearly articulate both the objectives and the scope of this study by explicitly defining what it seeks to address as well as what is not within its purview.

In the first instance, this study seeks to:

- i. examine the nature and sources of translational inconsistencies in selected biblical passages;
- ii. trace the historical evolution of specific problematic renderings;
- iii. analyze the linguistic and theological implications of these inconsistencies;

- iv. compare King James Version renderings with modern translations; and
- v. propose practical strategies for minimizing such inconsistencies.

At a second level, it is important to emphasize that the present study is strictly academic in nature and as such does not:

- i. attempt to preach, moralize, or evangelize;
- ii. seek to challenge or assert doctrinal authority though;
- iii. promote any form of religious ideology or sectarianism; and
- iv. necessarily function as a corrective theological treatise.

It is rather a linguistic and translational inquiry aimed at improving accuracy, consistency and intellectual scrupulousness in approach to translation practice and activity by drawing attention to the dangers of inconsistent handling of texts.

4. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, analytical approach, combining:

- textual analysis of Hebrew and Greek source texts;
- comparative analysis across translations King James Version (KJV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), New International Version (NIV), English Standard Version (ESV), New American Standard Bible (NASB), New King James Version, (NKJV), and others.
- historical analysis of translation traditions;
- secondary research from scholarly literature.

Key lexical items are examined within their semantic fields, historical usage, and translational trajectories.

5. Types of inconsistency

There are multiple identifiable types of inconsistency which are system, concept and discipline related. Zhang and Grégoire (2011), who have identified no fewer than forty-seven types of inconsistency relative to their discipline, remark that inconsistency is an important type of phenomena that exists ubiquitously in human behaviors and in various aspects of real life as

well as in the computing system that they build. In their addition, inconsistent phenomena manifest themselves in data, information, knowledge, meta-knowledge, and expertise, and that inconsistent or conflicting assumptions, beliefs, evidences, or options can serve as important heuristics in the decision-making process of a rational agent. Their take-home message is that inconsistency is ubiquitous, i.e. an all-round phenomenon, and that inconsistency handling is consequential in our day-to-day endeavors.

In this study we will identify just a few most related types as we navigate further.

5.1 Linguistic inconsistency (lexical/grammatical): This results in a situation where the same concept is expressed with different words or grammatical forms without justification. For instance, Rutherford (2000) points out that in the early translations of Don Quixote, the Spanish *caballero* is translated diversely as knight, gentleman and horseman. (The French cognate/equivalent is “chevalier.”) This inconsistency basically shifts nuance and social meaning.

5.2 Semantic inconsistency: It is a type encountered when the same term or phrase carries different meanings across a text. In French translations of *The Social Contract* into English, Bertram (2010) highlights the French “*volonté générale*” as translated sometimes as “general will,” and sometimes interpreted closer to “collective will.” This variation is said to affect political philosophy interpretation.

5.3 Logical inconsistency: occurs when statements within a text contradict each other logically. As explained by Swanton (1996), in historical chronicles, Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle* gives conflicting dates for the same events across manuscripts, which is a display of inconsistency in historical recording and transmission.

5.4 Textual (or editorial) inconsistency: These are the differences arising from editions, copying, or printing processes. Taylor and Wells’ (1987) work reveals a situation where William Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* exists in Quarto 1 (1603), Quarto 2 (1604), and First Folio (1623). Lines are said to differ significantly: “to be, or not to be” appears in different structural contexts, and as such, they constitute editorial inconsistencies across textual witnesses.

5.5 Orthographic inconsistency: This is noticeable in terms of variations in spelling, capitalization, or punctuation. It is not uncommon to see in early English printings words appearing as: “publick” vs “public”; “musick” vs. “music,” as seen across 17th-18th century texts, including works printed by Oxford University Press. And it is, of course, a common phenomenon in our popular King James Version (KJV).

5.6 Translational inconsistency: This is the type that directly concerns this work as it touches directly on the failure to translate the same source element consistently across contexts, and in a manner that creates conflicting notions and concepts. Pavear and Volokhonsky (2007) note that in translations of *War and Peace*, the Russian *mir* as “peace” and “world” are both semantically valid, but that inconsistent rendering affects thematic coherence. This level of inconsistency consists in what will later be viewed as an “inconsistent lexical borrowing,” which can equally be termed *selective asymmetrical borrowing*, a key factor in the King James Version of the Bible.

6. Translational inconsistency: concept and implications

It is pertinent to attempt a definition of the term *inconsistency* as we keep navigating the discourse. Merriam-Webster (n.d.) defines it as an instance of being “inconsistent, the quality or state of being inconsistent.” Whereas the adjective *inconsistent* is further defined as lacking in consistency, (a) not compatible with another claim or fact, such as “inconsistent statements;” (b) containing incompatible elements such as “The decision was inconsistent with company policy;” (c) incoherent or illogical in thought or actions : not always acting or happening the same way e.g. “His pitching has been inconsistent this season.”

On the other hand, the Cambridge Dictionary (n.d.) defines inconsistency as “the fact of containing some ideas, statements, arguments, etc., that do not agree with others, or something such as an idea, statement, or argument that has this quality,” e.g. “There are a few inconsistencies in what you’ve written.”

So when we corroborate the term *inconsistency*, words like incompatibility, incoherence, illogicality and incongruity are the various elements that are among others implied in the definition. Principal among the synonyms is “discrepancy.”

Translational inconsistency thus refers to irregular or contextually inappropriate renderings of lexical or semantic units that produce such negative cognitive effects as:

- doctrinal distortion
- semantic ambiguity
- historical miscomprehension and misrepresentation
- interpretative divergence

In his works on the theory of translation, particularly *Approaches to Translation* (1981) and *A Textbook of Translation* (1988), Newmark views translational inconsistency primarily as a technical failure or a failure to properly analyze the text, often resulting from improper application of his defined methods. He strongly advocates for consistency in terminology, especially within technical and informative texts, while acknowledging at the same time that literary translation may allow for more flexibility. He warns against inconsistency caused by the translator switching between formal and colloquial registers randomly, which he calls “translationese,” advising the translator to stick to a consistent register appropriate to the text type.

Failure to stick to a consistent and appropriate register defines the very essence of our study as entrenched in the handling of terms across the King James Version of the Bible as we will see shortly.

7. The King James Bible

The King James Version (KJV) is said to be the tenth version of Bibles in English after the Geneva Bible (1560) and Douay-Rheims (1610). First published in 1611, the King James Bible was officially commissioned by King James I in response to religious tensions within England, particularly between Puritan reformers and the established Church. As noted in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the initiative arose during the Hampton Court Conference of 1604, where the need for a new, standardized English Bible was proposed. A team of approximately fifty scholars organized into several committees, undertook the translation work. Rather than producing an entirely new text, they relied extensively on earlier English translations - especially those influenced by William Tyndale - as well as Hebrew and Greek source texts.

The translators aimed to produce a version that would be both accurate and suitable for public worship, combining fidelity to the original texts with a dignified and accessible style. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the resulting translation achieved remarkable literary quality and became the Authorized Version for use in the Church of England, exerting a profound influence on English language and religious life for centuries.

Renowned authors like Daniel(2003) and Norton (2005) are of the view that what makes the KJV remarkable is not only its attempt at doctrinal neutrality but also its enduring literary elegance as the translators aimed for a balance between accuracy and majestic style, creating a version that would resonate in public worship and private devotion alike.

However, in spite of its purported doctrinal neutrality and literary elegance, the King James Bible is not without its pitfalls.

7.1 Inconsistent lexical borrowing and the “Lucifer” distortion

*How art thou fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! - Isaiah 14:12.*

As we move into this discussion, let us first consider the following definition as presented by Funk & Wagnalls New College Standard Dictionary (1973):

LUCIFER *noun* 1. The morning star; Venus, as the morning star. 2 Satan, the prince of darkness: so called by church fathers, under the impression that the passage (Isa. XIV, 12), “*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!*” had reference to him instead of to the king of Babylon(Nebuchadnezzar).

The term *Lucifer*, a Latin word that literally signifies “light-bearer” or “bright-shining one,” has, for centuries, been almost universally perceived - by both Christians and non-Christians - in a markedly negative light. This enduring perception appears to stem largely from a translational distortion that may be more precisely described as **asymmetrical lexical borrowing** or, in more accessible terms, a “lopsided word borrowing.” The very mention of the

word tends to evoke notions of the strange, the weird, the ominous, and the malevolent. It is however important to clarify that the use of *Lucifer* in the King James Bible constitutes less an outright mistranslation than a form of interpretive distortion arising from inconsistent translation strategy.

The popular assumption of a *Lucifer* being Satan emanated from this translational pole in which the King James Bible translators subtly borrowed the term, or in a rather pejorative parlance smuggled it, into the English Bible from the Latin Vulgate instead of rendering it by an available English equivalent such as “day star” as might be linguistically accessible to native speakers.

Borrowing is a legitimate process in translation, and is considered one of the unavoidable methods of translation - a technique that, according to critics, does not actually translate. It constitutes a vital process through which foreign words find their way into another language. Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) claim that the translator sometimes needs to resort to borrowing to deliberately create stylistic effect or a local color. The primary emphasis here is *need*. Where the need is absent, resorting to borrowing absolutely makes no sense. Such is the case with the KJB translators who chose to operate an indirect borrowing, extracting from the Vulgate instead of directly from the source Hebrew Old Testament text where the word appears as לִלְיָן, (which by transliteration is something like *heylēl*).

The *Lucifer* in Isaiah 14:12 did not originate with the translators of the King James Version. Rather, it represents a long-standing tradition in English Bible translation that predates the Authorized Version of 1611. The term had already appeared in earlier English translations, including John Wycliffe's Bible (1382), Coverdale's Bible (1535), the Great Bible (1539), the Geneva Bible (1560), and the Douay-Rheims Bible (1609–1610), before being retained in the King James Version. Consequently, the KJV translators were not introducing a novel interpretation but were perpetuating an established translational convention inherited from preceding English versions and ultimately influenced by the Latin Vulgate's rendering *lucifer* (Daniell, 2003; Norton, 2011). A popular historical claim is that none of the versions predating the KJV had access to the original Hebrew/Greek texts but that they each translated from the Vulgate, i.e. translated from a translation, which is known

as “daughter translation.” Although the KJV translators purportedly had access to the Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek manuscripts, they still heavily relied on the Vulgate to do their job. We have already indicated that one of the factors that shaped the KJV is its dependence on earlier translations. Other sources have it, on the other hand, that the translators had limited access to most authentic manuscripts.

7.2 The major pitfalls in the KJV rendition

Two major pitfalls are perceptible in KJV’s adoption of the word *Lucifer*.

The first revolves around the fact that in the Latin Vulgate (LV) where the term *Lucifer* occurs not only in the Old Testament but also once in the New Testament, for which reason we are inevitably displaying the two scriptural verses directly from the Latin Vulgate by juxtaposing them with the KJV renderings, at least in brackets.

LV: Isaiah 14:12 “quomodo cecidisti de caelo **lucifer** qui mane oriebaris corruisti in terram qui vulnerabas gentes...”

KJV: “*How art thou fallen from heaven, O **Lucifer**, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*” - Isaiah 14:12.

LV: 2 Peter 1:19 ‘et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem cui benefacitis adtendentes quasi lucernae lucenti in caliginoso loco donec dies inlucescat et **lucifer** oriatur in cordibus vestris.’

KJV: “*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the **daystar** arise in your hearts,*” - 2 Peter 1:19.

The second is that not only is the word dropped in the New Testament verse as witnessed in the forgoing, KJV forcefully capitalizes the first letter of the word – Lucifer – as we still have it in the English language till date. One fact that is abundantly revealing is that St. Jerome, said to have been the translator of the Vulgate, viewed neither the Hebrew לִלְיָן (*heylēl*) nor the Greek φωσφορος (*phōsphoros*) as a proper noun, as did the KJB translators. While the Hebrew alphabets do not distinguish between capital and small letters, the Greek like other Western languages does. So, even in Greek the term in view

does not begin with a capital letter. Quite curiously, though, KJV does not have the English equivalent as *Day star* but *day star*. The logical question that begs for an answer why the Old Testament borrowed phrase should undergo a capitalization.

A good number of other English versions like the American Standard Version (ASV) that came up much later in the years tried to intentionally balance these obvious inconsistencies as we see below:

Isaiah 14:12 *“How art thou fallen from heaven, O day-star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, that didst lay low the nations!”*(ASV)

2 Peter 1:19 *And we have the word of prophecy (made) more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.* (ASV)

7.3 Comparative rendering of the *heylēl* of Isaiah 14:12 and the *phosporos* of 2 Peter 1:19 in select English versions

These comparisons, which corroborate the subjective views and comprehension of the two disputed verses by various translators, are hereby presented in a diagrammatic form to summarize the discourse, and thereby drive home the point.

BIBLE VERSIONS	OLD TESTAMENT Isaiah 14:12 Hebrew: הֵילֵל “<i>heylēl</i>” (= “shining one”)	NEW TESTAMENT 2 Peter 1:19 Greek: Φωσφορος “<i>phosporos</i>” (= “light-bearer”)
King James Version	Lucifer	day star
Amplified Version	light-bringer/day star	morning star
Today’s English Version	“bright” Morning star	morning star
New International Version	morning star	morning star
New American Standard	star of the morning	morning star

New Living Translation	shining star	morning star
English Standard Version	day star	morning star
The Bible in Contemporary Language	Daystar	morning star
Good News Bible	“bright” morning star	morning star
New King James	Lucifer	morning star
Complete Jewish Bible	morning star	morning star
New Century	morning star	morning star
New English Translation	shining one	morning star
God’s Word Translation	morning star	morning star
Revised Standard Version	day star	morning star
The Living Bible	Lucifer	morning star
American Standard Version	day-star	day-star
Darby	Lucifer	morning star
Bible in Basic English	shining one	morning star
World English Bible	day star	day star
Noah Webster	Lucifer	day-star
World English Bible	morning star	morning star
Young’s Literal Translation	shining star	morning star

Most individuals who are drawn into the interpretive errors of assumption and misrepresentation associated with the KJV are often unaware of a crucial fact. First, Book of Isaiah chapters 13 and 14 constitute a continuous stretch of prophetic discourse centred on a single thematic focus, as clearly indicated in

the opening line of 13:1, “*the burden concerning the king of Babylon...*,” and reiterated in 14:4: “*...thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon...*” - a reference that may be reasonably understood as pointing to the Babylonian monarch, Nebuchadnezzar II. Secondly, the very fact that different translations employ varying renderings demonstrates liberally that the underlying Hebrew and Greek terms function as common nouns rather than proper names; consequently, they are translatable and should not be treated as inherently fixed or unalterable forms.

According to Kelly (2006), the identification of Lucifer with Satan is not derived from the original Hebrew text of Isaiah but is the result of later Christian interpretive tradition. He further emphasizes that the application of the name Lucifer to Satan arises from later Christian exegesis, since the Isaiah passage originally referred to an earthly human ruler, as stated above. As can be contextually identified, the said *Lucifer* did not fall from heaven (Hebrew, literally, “*ha-shamayim*” = the heavens) without a reason: “*thou ... didst weaken the nations.*” What majority have always failed to notice is the high-level Hebrew idiom or imagery employed in the text, which precludes every possibility of a literal tumbling down from some invisible outer space.

7.4 Another dimension to the infidelity of inconsistent borrowing

While consistency is the cornerstone of clarity, trust, and professionalism in any textual material, inconsistency is the exact opposite. There is, however, another dimension to this subject that must not be overlooked. Although our primary analytical focus has been on the Book of Isaiah 14:12 and Second Epistle of Peter 1:19, it is necessary to extend the discussion slightly in order to underscore the fact that the first occurrence of the term *lucifer* in the Vulgate does not, in fact, appear in Isaiah. This additional perspective further illustrates the extent of inconsistency exhibited by the translators of the King James Version.

In this regard, a social media commentator, Daniel B. Wallace, in a 2010 essay entitled “*Is Lucifer the Devil in Isaiah 14:12? - The KJV Argument against Modern Translations*” argues, first, that the translational decisions of the King James Version contributed to the erroneous identification of Lucifer with Satan. Secondly, beyond emphasizing that *lucifer* is not a proper noun but rather the Latin term for “morning star,” Wallace provides an additional

and significant observation: the term appears four times in the Vulgate - thrice in the Old Testament (Isaiah 14:12; Job 11:17; 38:32) and once in the New Testament (Second Epistle of Peter 1:19). He clarifies that in the book of Job 11:17, for instance, the King James Version renders the Hebrew word בֹּקֶר (*boqer*) as “morning”:

LV: Job 11:17 “*et quasi meridianus fulgor consurget tibi ad vesperam et cum te consumptum putaveris orieris ut lucifer*”

KJV: Job 11:17 “*And thine age shall be clearer than the noonday; thou shalt shine forth, thou shalt be as the morning.*”

While we cannot argue that the KJV is necessarily in error as far as the context of this verse is concerned - as certainly as it is that “morning” is the actual equivalent for the Hebrew *boqer* - the asymmetrical borrowing must certainly not be overlooked, which therefore underscores this focus of translational inconsistency.

Wallace explains further that in Job 38:32, the KJV renders the Hebrew word מַזְרוֹת as Mazzaroth, stating that this is another word that occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible. In his argument, the KJV translators did not know what the original word meant, so they simply transliterated the Hebrew into English characters. He concluded that even though Jerome, translator of the Vulgate, knew Hebrew better than did the King James Version translators, he was not exactly sure what to make of it either; but he at least tried rather than simply leave the word untranslated as the KJV translators did. He translated the word as *lucifer*, or ‘morning star,’ which is quite close to the meaning of the Hebrew מַזְרוֹת (*mazzaroth*):

LV: Job 38:32 *numquid producis luciferum in tempore suo et vesperum super filios terrae consurgere facis*

KJV: Job 38:32 “*Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?*”

8. Did Pope Francis actually eulogize Satan?

Such a provocative and derogatory question may, at first glance, appear entirely irrelevant to the present study; however, its relevance becomes evident upon a careful examination of the ensuing discussion.

During the first quarter of 2014, Pope Francis I became the subject of intense controversy and sustained public criticism following the circulation of several videos on YouTube and other social media platforms. These videos leveled severe accusations against the pontiff, branding him the “False Prophet” and employing other pejorative epithets, based on allegations that certain of his statements and actions amounted to an implicit glorification or endorsement of Satan. According to these merciless critics, this was a Vatican-wide conspiracy to praise Satan during an Easter vigil. It was around April 27, 2014 that a ceremony was held to induct two former popes into sainthood along with other related activities. This event is said to have been broadcast in 3D, HD and 4K so that the whole world would be able to watch the activity exactly as it happened. We are hereby displaying the Mass verbatim as it was then on the web video, first the Latin source language side by side with its translated English version:

Flammas eius Lucifer matutinus inveniatur *The Flame dawning His own creation*

Ille, inguam Lucifer qui nescit *May I say, O Lucifer (Day Star), who knows no setting*

Christus Filius tuus *Christ your Son*

Qui, regressus ab inferis, *Who came back from the netherworld,*

humano generi serenus illuxit, *and shed His peaceful life to the human race*

et vivit et regnat in saecula saecularum. *and lives and reigns forever and ever.*

8.1 Was the Pope in error?

It is beyond reasonable dispute that the greater error - a most grievous one - resides not in Pope Francis, but in those who hastily and uncritically condemned him. These critics, animated more by presumption than by informed judgment, accused him of praising Satan because of his oratorical reference to “Lucifer,” a term which, by widespread but unexamined assumption, has largely been universally equated with Satan. In their estimation, the pontiff had committed nothing less than an act of egregious blasphemy. Such a conclusion, however, rests upon a profound and far-reaching ignorance of critical linguistic, historical, and theological facts - facts that demand sober consideration within the framework of the present inquiry. To this we have the following submissions to make.

1. While it is commonly acknowledged that the term *Lucifer* is of Latin origin – and as we have clarified above - far fewer are aware that its adoption into the King James Version was mediated through the Vulgate, a classical translation masterpiece traditionally attributed to St. Jerome between the third and fourth centuries, and widely regarded as the earliest complete rendering of both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament texts into Latin.
2. Even among those cognizant of its Latin origin, there remains a notable lack of awareness that the term appears in the Vulgate in lowercase form – *lucifer* - a proof that it is functioning not as a proper noun but as a descriptive appellative. Moreover, it occurs on four distinct occasions: thrice in the Old Testament books of Job 11:17; 38:32; Isaiah 14:12, and once in the second epistle of Peter 1:19 in the New Testament.
3. As previously established, the prophetic discourse spanning Isaiah chapters 13 and 14 is thematically unified and historically grounded in its reference to the king of Babylon -most possibly Nebuchadnezzar II - rather than to any primordial celestial being that inhabited an invisible heavenly realm.
4. The notion of a “fall from heaven” within this passage is best understood as a vivid poetic metaphor - indeed, a hyperbolic image of political downfall - rather than as a literal cosmological event. As a

matter of fact, if a literal descent from heaven were implied, then the succeeding verse would not have indicted him of wanting to “ascend into heaven.”

5. The text itself leaves little room for ambiguity, as it explicitly states in the 16th verse: “*Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms?*” - a rhetorical identification that unequivocally situates the subject within the realm of human agency.
6. It follows inexorably that “Lucifer,” in this context, designates a human figure rather than a spiritual or angelic entity, one whose dominion and destructive influence pertained to earthly kingdoms, not to the invisible order of celestial beings.
7. If, therefore, *lucifer* in Isaiah 14:12 refers contextually to a human entity, then its occurrence in 2 Peter 1:19 within the Vulgate tradition/translation must be understood differently: namely, as a designation of a spiritual reality, most fittingly interpreted as a reference to the glorified Christ, the true “Light-bearer,” (as Lucifer signifies), whose illumination dawns within the heart of the saved humans to whom the scriptural exhortation was originally addressed.
8. When Jerome employed the same Latin term to translate the Hebrew *heylēl* in the Old Testament and the Greek *phōsphoros* in the New Testament, it is highly improbable that he intended any association with Satan the devil; such a conflation appears to be a much later interpretive development.
9. **And finally**, given that the identification of Lucifer with Satan can be traced to later patristic and ecclesiastical interpretations - as reflected, for instance, in footnotes within the St. Joseph Catholic Bible and in traditional lexicographical sources - it is entirely plausible that Pope Francis I, operating within that same ecclesiastical heritage, sought not to endorse but rather to correct this long-standing interpretive distortion - one which has, over time, ascribed to Satan a title that is neither contextually warranted nor theologically appropriate, and which, in the final analysis, is nothing but a misnomer.

Accordingly, when the pontiff intoned the liturgical phrase: “*Flammas eius Lucifer matutinus inveniatur ille inquam Lucifer qui nescit Christus Filius tuus...*”(The Flame dawning His own creation, may I say, O Lucifer (Day Star), who knows no setting, Christ your Son...), he was, with deliberate precision and without ambiguity, echoing the Vulgate’s rendering of 2 Peter 1:19, wherein *lucifer* signifies not a fallen angelic being, but the dawning light of God’s creation, which Christ Himself is.

The Latin maxim *verbum sapienti sat est* - “a word to the wise is sufficient” - fits particularly into in this context. The evidence suggests that the pontiff’s liturgical expression was informed by a far deeper philological and theological awareness than that exhibited by his numerous virulent critics and detractors. This, therefore, is not an exercise in confessional apologetics, but a reasoned affirmation of linguistic precision and theological coherence.

9. Conclusion

We have undertaken this study in order to demonstrate how translational inconsistencies in the King James Version are historically grounded and linguistically explicable, and to what extent they have gone in distorting centuries of concepts, and promoting diverse theological misconceptions and misrepresentations. While the King James Bible remains a translated as well as translational masterpiece, its limitations underscore the necessity of continuous scholarly engagement. Translation must evolve, which must have explained reasons for the emergence of the New King James Bible, apparently to address the observable errors in the original translated work. Only through rigorous methodology and critical awareness can it fulfill its role as a faithful mediator of meaning. It follows, by logical implication, that translators are duty-bound to exercise the utmost precision, attending even to the minutest details, in order to avoid such inconsistencies as highlighted in this study. Theirs is not merely a mechanical task but a solemn intellectual responsibility to guide faithfully rather than to mislead their target audience for which they function as linguistic mediators.

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