

THE INTERCONTINENTAL CHURCH OF GOD

SPECIFIC BIBLE STUDIES - JESUS, DEATH BY SPEAR

SUBJECT: Jesus, death by spear using Fenton Translation

QUESTIONS: In Mr. Armstrong's sermon, "[Facts of the Crucifixion](#)", he makes reference to the Fenton Translation of the Bible which shows a verse in Matthew 27 describing Jesus calling out in a loud voice at the moment the spear is thrust into His side and then giving up His spirit. Where can I see this translation and what can you tell me about it?

ANSWER:

We will answer this in four aspects:

1. Show you an on-line source for the Fenton Translation.
2. Show the Fenton Quote of the key verses from Matthew 27
3. Give information about this translation and state conclusions.
4. Commentary and resources regarding Matthew 27 and John 19

Study Sections
Item One: On-line source for the Fenton Translation
Item Two: Quote of the key verses from Matthew 27
Item Three: Information about translation and stated conclusions
-- Description from Fenton Translation of itself
-- External Statements on Fenton Translation
-- External statement #1 on Fenton Translation
-- External statement #2 on Fenton Translation
-- External statement #3 on Fenton Translation
Item Four: Commentary regarding Matthew 27 & John 19
-- Some words about the spear - John 19:31-34
-- Commentary on John 19:34
-- Two key phrases in Matthew 27:50
-- Commentary from article by Philip W. Shields on death by spear
-- King James Translation Errors document on Matthew 27:49
-- The Missing Verse (Matthew 27:49) by Herman L. Hoeh

ITEM ONE: On-line source for the Fenton Translation.

Following is a source for both reading and ordering your own copy of this translation:

<http://ferrarfenton.com/>

[Destiny Publishers Order Form in PDF format](#)

A PDF viewer is available free online at <http://www.adobe.com/>

You will also need the PDF viewer to read the on-line version of the Fenton Translation.

The book of Matthew is available here: <http://www.ferrarfenton.com/pdf/matthew.pdf>

ITEM TWO: Matthew 27:45-50 from the Fenton Translation.

45 Then from mid-day until three o'clock in the afternoon darkness spread over all the land;

46 And about three o'clock Jesus called out with a loud voice, exclaiming, "Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani?" that is, O my God! My God! To what have you forsaken me?"

47 And some of the bystanders, on hearing that, remarked, "He seems to call for Elijah."

48 And at once one from among them ran, and taking a sponge, filled it with sour wine; and placing it upon a cane, gave Him a drink.

49 But the others called out, "Let Him alone! Let us see whether Elijah will come and save Him!"

50 But another taking a spear pierced His side, when blood and water came out. Jesus, however, having again called out with a loud voice, resigned His spirit.

ITEM THREE: Information About this Translation.

First this from the <http://ferrarfenton.com> web site:

FERRAR FENTON TRANSLATION

DESTINY PUBLISHERS is the only source from which to obtain the Complete Bible in Modern English, as translated by Ferrar Fenton. This invaluable edition of the Scriptures has gone through a new printing and we have ample inventory.

This unique version contains the complete Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, translated into English directly from the original Hebrew, Chaldee, and Greek languages, with instructions and critical notes by Ferrar Fenton. Mr. Fenton explained how he came to take up this arduous work: "In the year 1853 there was inspired into my mind, by what appeared a mere accident, a resolve to study the Bible absolutely in its original languages, to ascertain what its writers actually said and taught.... I at once threw myself into the stream of the suggestion and registered a vow that I would never again read the Gospels, or Christian Documents of our faith, in any language but Greek, until I had learned to think in that tongue and it had become as familiar to me as the diction of an English newspaper."

He went on to relate the reasons for his devotion to the laborious task in which he became involved: "I am deeply convinced that, if the Sacred Scriptures are again made clearly intelligible to the whole of our race, by being translated absolutely afresh from the Hebrew and Greek into the same style and diction as our current literature, our people will again see their Divine teachings with the delight and devoted faith their forefathers did in the days of the Tudors, and from that faith, and its inspiration, will spring a harvest of genius like that which ennobled the heroic reign of Elizabeth."

We believe that Ferrar Fenton attained his objective, bringing out a translation that is a completely accurate rendering of the Scriptures into our modern English language. As he himself said, he was extremely careful in editing to maintain the spirit and sense of the original text. Thus, we have an edition of the Bible that is of inestimable value to the sincere student engaged in Scriptural research, who desires to come into a deeper understanding of the great truths of the Holy Writ.

---End quote---

External Statements on Fenton Translation

What other Internet sources (which compare translations and/or sell various translations) had to say about the Fenton translation.

[1]

The Holy Bible in Modern English, containing the complete sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, translated into English direct from the original Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek (1903)

This is a private translation made by Ferrar Fenton, in 1903. Fenton was a businessman, apparently sincere, but lacking in scholarship. His translation was popular because of his sincerity.

Source: http://www.bustersoft.com/JRCM/Bibles/Chapter_1.htm

[2]

THE BIBLE IN MODERN ENGLISH by Ferrar Fenton

Fenton, in this 19th century translation, is eccentric to the extreme. His eccentricities, however, reveal much that may not otherwise be seen.

Source: http://www.godsplanforall.org/bible_translations.cfm

[3]

Ferrar Fenton Translation The Holy Bible in Modern English. Contains the complete sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments translated into English direct from the original Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek languages with instructions and critical notes by Ferrar Fenton. He was extremely careful in editing to maintain the spirit and sense of the original text. This edition of the Bible is of inestimable value to the sincere student engaged in Scriptural research, who desires to come into deeper understanding of the great truths of Holy Writ.

Contains the complete sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments translated into English direct from the original Hebrew, Chaldee and Greek. Mr. Fenton explained how he came to take up this arduous work: *"In the year 1853 there was inspired in my mind, by what appeared to be a mere accident, a resolve to study the Bible absolutely in its original languages, to ascertain what its writers actually said and taught. ... I at once threw myself into the stream of the suggestion and registered a vow that I would never again read the Gospels or Christian Documents of our Faith, in any language but Greek, until I had learned to think in that tongue and it had become as familiar to me as the diction of an English newspaper."*

In the Book's Dedication he further states: *"I dedicate this complete translation of the Holy Scriptures of the Hebrew and Christian Faith to ALL THOSE NATIONS WHO HAVE SPRUNG FROM THE RACE OF THE BRITISH ISLES, and to whom the English language, in its developed power, is the mother tongue; and with them to all the inhabitants of the world to whom English has become, or may become, the language of thought, in hope that a clear presentment of the laws of creation and human existence will restore them from the mental distress of atheistic doubt, to a firm reliance upon God, their creator, and the practice of his revealed laws of life, bodily and spiritual."*

Source: http://www.artisanpublishers.com/bk_ferrar_fenton_bible.html

ITEM FOUR: Commentary Regarding Matthew 27 & John 19

SOME WORDS ABOUT THE SPEAR -- John 19:31-34

The spear thrust is mentioned in John...

John 19:31-34

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

KJV

This is the only account which adds the description of the legs being broken and Jesus being thrust through with a spear. The other accounts are of the same overall event. Clearly, the thrusting of the spear into His side must overlap in the other account. That is, as you read the other accounts, of the same event, the soldier must have thrust the spear into Jesus at some point during that account. Fenton is placing that spear thrust at the moment Jesus cries out for the last time, which is understandable. He then gives His life freely as the sacrifice for sins.

Notice a commentary on John 19:34 that establishes death by spear:

John 19:34

[With a spear] The common spear which soldiers used in war. There can be no doubt that such a stroke from the strong arm of a Roman soldier would have caused death, if he had not been already dead; and it was, doubtless, to furnish this conclusive proof that he was actually dead, and that an atonement had thus been made for mankind, that John mentions so particularly this fact. Let the following circumstances be remembered, showing that death must have ensued from such a wound:

- (1) The Saviour was elevated but a little from the ground, so as to be easily reached by the spear of a soldier.
- (2) The wound must have been transversely upward, so as to have penetrated into the body, as he could not have stood directly under him.
- (3) It was probably made with a strong arm and with violence.
- (4) The spear of the Roman soldier was a lance which tapered very gently to a point, and would penetrate easily.
- (5) The wound was comparatively a large wound. It was so large as to admit the hand (John 20:27); but for a lance thus tapering to have made a wound so wide as to admit the hand, it must have been at least four or five inches in depth, and must have been such as to have made death certain. If it be remembered that this blow was probably in the left side, the conclusion is inevitable that death would have been the consequence of such a blow. To make out this fact was of special importance, probably, in the time of John, as the reality of the death of Jesus was denied by the Gnostics, many of whom maintained that he died in appearance only.

[Pierced his side] Which side is not mentioned, nor can it be certainly known. The common opinion is that it was the left side. Car. Frid. Gruner (*Commentatio Antiquaria Medica de Jesu Christi Morte*, 30-36) has attempted to show that it must have been the left side. See Wiseman's Lectures, pp. 161, 162, and Kuinoel on John 19:34, where the arguments of Gruner are fully stated. It is clear that the spear pierced to the region of the heart.

(from Barnes' Notes)

Hence, if the spear was the cause of death, it is not a stretch to conclude that He would have cried out His last time at this point.

Two Key Phrases from Matthew 27:50

Notice this now from the Interlinear New Testament:

Matt 27:50

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

KJV

Notice the phrases, "when he had cried" and "with a loud" (voice):

"when he had cried":

NT:2896

krazo (krad'-zo); a primary verb; properly, to "croak" (as a raven) or scream, i.e. (genitive case) to call aloud (shriek, exclaim, intreat):

KJV - cry (out).

(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary)

"with a loud":

NT:3173

megas (meg'-as); [including the prolonged forms, feminine megale, plural megaloi, etc.; compare also NT:3176, NT:3187]; big (literally or figuratively, in a very wide application):

KJV - (+fear) exceedingly, great (-est), high, large, loud, mighty, + (be) sore (afraid), strong, X to years.

(Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary)

Jesus screamed in a large, mighty, exceedingly great and strong voice. What could have caused such a response? Based on all that we have in scripture, commentary and the Fenton translation, we conclude it was the spear thrust into His side that killed Him and caused Him to cry out so.

Commentary by Philip W. Shields on Death by Spear

In his article, "Why Did Jesus Have to Die by Crucifixion", Philip W. Shields states, in part...

Was Jesus Stabbed Before or After He Died? "Diligent study of the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ can lead to a host of questions, especially about the timing of events. One question bound to surface concerns the Roman soldier who "pierced His side with a spear" (John 19:34). Did this occur before or after His death? A simple reading through the gospel accounts would seem to answer this question conclusively. The three synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) do not mention the incident, while John addresses it after Jesus "gave up His spirit" (19:30). Where is the controversy?

"The contention arises from a verse that is not even there! The King James Version leaves out the last part of Matthew 27:49, though it is present in the most ancient manuscripts: "And another took a spear, and thrust it into His side, and out came water and blood." The Moffatt and Fenton translations both include this additional material. What makes it controversial is where these words appear: just before Jesus "yielded up His spirit" (verse 50). Which is right?

"They both are! The problem is in the translation of John 19:34: "But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out." The culprit is a common Greek tense called the aorist tense.

"Spiros Zodhiates, in The Complete Word Study New Testament, explains:

"The Aorist Tense is used for simple, undefined action. In the indicative mood, the aorist tense can indicate punctiliar action (action that happens at a specific point in time) in the past. . . . With few exceptions, whenever the aorist tense is used in any mood other than the indicative, the verb does not have any temporal significance. In other words, it refers only to the reality of an event or action, not to the time when it took place. (Emphasis ours.)

"Modern translators, however, often render the aorist tense into English as simple past tense. Granted, most of the time this is correct, but in John 19:34 it is an error.

"The missing portion of Matthew 27:49 supplies the timing; the soldier thrust his spear before Christ died. In John 19:34, the apostle John describes an event that had happened previously as proof that Jesus had fulfilled the prophecies of Psalm 34:20 and Zechariah 12:10. Thus, a correct translation of this verse is, "But one of the soldiers had pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water had come out."

"How do we know this is correct?

"1. Matthew 27:50 records that Jesus suddenly "cried out again with a loud voice" and died. The spear thrust, acting as a coup de grace, neatly accounts for His scream of pain, as well as His quick death.

" 2. Dead bodies do not bleed. Doctors jump through hoops trying to explain how "water and blood" could pour out of a corpse, saying that "in rare instances" such a thing is possible. However, if the spear thrust was pre-death, no such explanation is necessary.

"Jesus was stabbed before He died."

---END---

King James Translation Error in Matthew 27:49

Many years ago, students and staff at Ambassador College compiled a single document showing the translation errors in the King James Bible. This document is posted on this web site, in Specific Studies [here](#).

For Matthew 27:49 under the heading, "Translation Errors" is states:

Matthew 27:49

"And another took a spear and pierced his side and out came water and blood."

[The Orthodox Church says this was part of the Greek Text until mistakenly deleted in 511 A.D.] *-end quote-*

In another place in the same document under the heading, "Items Wrongly Substituted or Left Out of the KJV, Should be Reinstated"...

"**Matthew 27:49** omits text which was in the original. Moffatt correctly adds it, while the RSV puts it in a footnote: "And another took a spear and pierced His side, and out came water and blood." The Savior's death came when a soldier pierced His side, Revelation 1:7." *-end quote-* (Note: the Moffatt is quoted in the next section, which is on [page two](#) of this study.

Revelation 1:7 says...

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

This verse is tied to Zechariah 12:10

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

It only makes sense that these references to Him being pierced are relating to how He died.

Study on the Missing Verse Text of Matthew 27:49 by Herman L. Hoeh.

In the aforementioned sermon by Garner Ted Armstrong, he states that his father, Herbert W. Armstrong had found all of the proof about the missing verse text of Matthew 27:49 years ago. In 1959, Herman L. Hoeh put much of that original material into a single paper, "Jesus Death, How Did It Happen?". An excerpt from that paper regarding Matthew 27:49 is on [Page Two](#) of this study.