

A Great Piece of Detective Work in the Book of Acts

Investigating the veracity of Acts 13:38,39

Over the decade or so, I have written a great deal about the centrality of Torah, both in the life of Yeshua and his disciples, as well as its centrality to all who wish to be resurrected to eternal life in the Coming Age.

And as a result I have addressed a lot of verses that are mis-used to argue that the Torah is no longer relevant for any and all who wish to be 'saved' and have called upon the name of Yeshua, or that it is only in some spiritual sense that we should obey it, or some other argument that tries to dismiss the Torah, and often even the whole Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) to some unimportant relic of history that has been super-ceded by a new religion and sacred text in the form of the New Testament.

But there is one passage (2 verses) that surprisingly I have not directly addressed before. And they are Acts 13: 38,39.

Here they are from the New English Translation (NET):

³⁸ *"Therefore let it be known to you, brothers, that through this one forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you,*

³⁹ *and by this one everyone who believes is justified from everything from which the law of Moses could not justify you...."* - NET

I have referenced the NET version as it is representative of the great majority, if not all well-known versions, in part because almost every version is based on the KJV, whose foundations are seriously suspect with respect to a number of significant passages and doctrines.

While, we should always look at the context of any verses, both where it sits in the text as well as the historical context within which it was spoken and recorded, on first reading I would think it hard to not imagine that this passage is somehow suggesting the Torah (the law of Moses, but better understood as 'The Instructions/Teachings of Yehovah') has some serious shortcomings.

Even to the point that it's hard to imagine how the context when fully factored in would change the apparent implication that I have suggested is naturally implied.

Yet, with such an elementary reading that appears to imply some shortcoming in Torah, we are faced with the challenge that this rendering and understanding is in direct conflict with a number of clear and explicit statements in the Tanakh.

For example, here are just two such statements:

"...and he will do to the bull just as he did to the bull of the Chat'at [sin offering]. This is the way he shall prepare it. And the Kohein [Priest] shall make the atonement for them, and they shall be forgiven." – Lev 4:20

and

"I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to Yehovah," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin." – Psalms 32:5

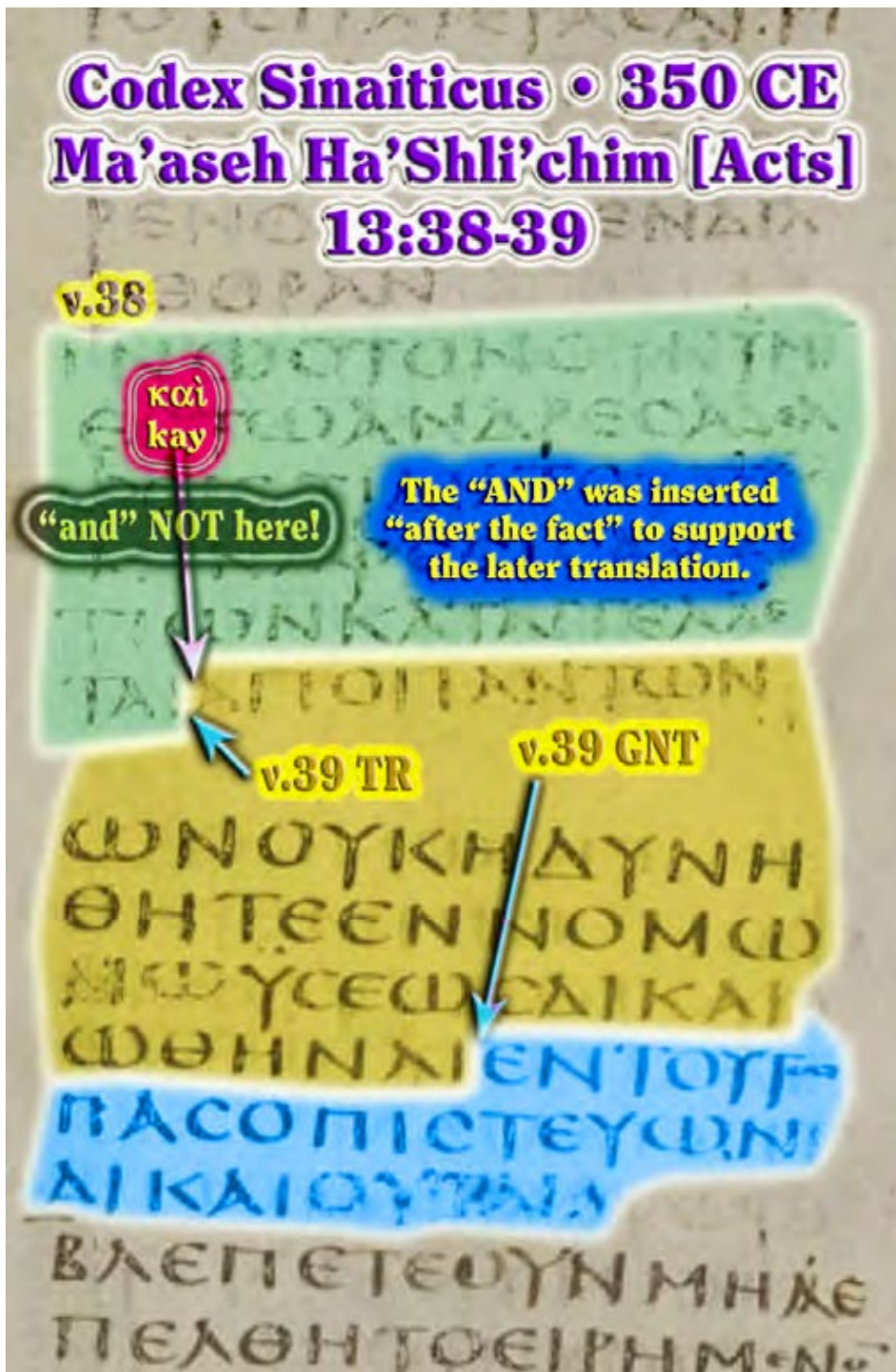
So would Rav Sha'ul (the Apostle Paul) a very learned, and orthodox Jew, who remained an orthodox and Torah observant Jew his entire life speak words that are contradictory to the Scriptures, to the Tanakh? This is simply not a reasonable consideration.

So, either he didn't say this as it is written here in the NET Bible and most other translations or we are totally mis-interpreting it (which also seems most unlikely).

Before we look at the context and what is a much more reasonable understanding of his message at Antioch in

Turkey, let us first look at the great detective work of Uriel ben-Mordechai in uncovering the egregious redaction that has taken place here.

Firstly, Uriel illustrates in this highlighted image of the Codex Sinaiticus Greek manuscript the verses in question:



To quote Uriel with respect to this image:

“The text breaks down to three sections in Greek. You can see them here in Codex Sinaiticus from 330 CE. The Greek editions of this text that are based on the older MSS, break the two verses between the yellow and the blue — the 2nd and 3rd sections, while the 16th century CE TR (Textus Receptus), breaks it between section 1 and 2, between the Green and the Yellow.

But, that is a minor point. The real damage to this text comes, when English translators came along and decided on their own, to completely switch the order of the text, and instead of translating **GREEN, YELLOW, BLUE**, the translate **GREEN, BLUE and YELLOW** last.”

To repeat and emphasize, instead of translating the verses in the order given here, namely the text highlighted in green followed by yellow followed by blue, they deliberately and unconscionably swap the text around so that the portions that represent verses 38 and 39 in our modern versions are around the other way!

That is, they placed verse 39 before verse 38 so as to change the actual meaning.

Further Uriel writes: “They literally skip over the yellow, insert the BLUE into its place, and then stuff yellow portion in last place.

Then, realizing that this created a problem with the “**FLOW**” of the text, they decide to add the conjunction “**AND,**” **IN ENGLISH**, so that the **GREEN** would **FLOW** together with the **BLUE**. And of course, they hope no one will notice what they have done.”.

And they were successful!

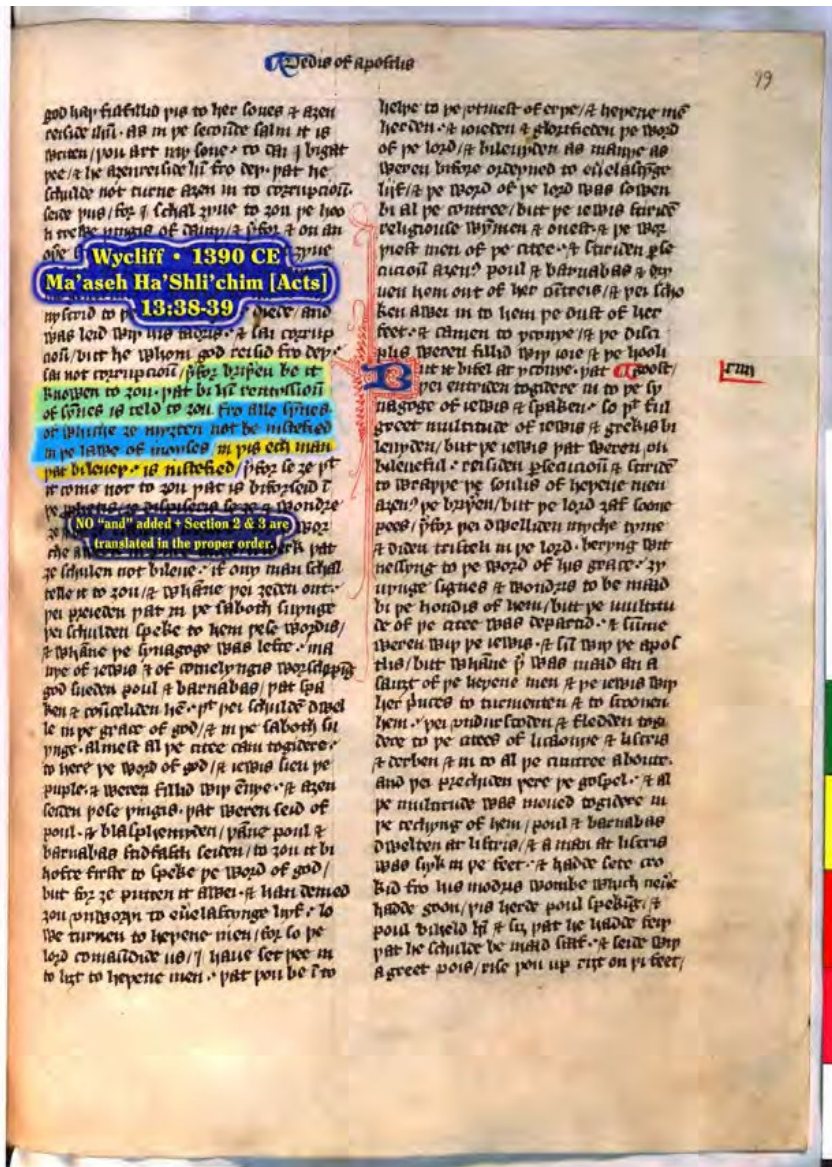
How many have noticed this?! Certainly not any scholars that have mainstream recognition or we would surely have heard about it and seen articles and arguments printed about it and the implications of this serious and totally unwarranted redaction and interpolation.

This change is already in place with the King James Version (KJV) of 1611, so Uriel was curious as to when this flagrant change was first made and he did some further detective work.

He found that it had already occurred by 1535 CE:

And it was also already present in Tyndale's version produced some ten years earlier in 1525:

But go back another 130 years to 1395 CE and to the very first English translation of the New Testament by John Wycliff, and we at last find the same order as in the Codex Sinaiticus, and without the added 'and':



For his great efforts at trying to faithfully translate a complete Bible into English, John Wycliffe was given the death penalty, but then the Vatican decided that was not enough for his 'heinous crime' so they exhumed his bones and burned them to make sure he got the message!!

Uriel dug further and found that in trying to hide their duplicity in all of this the Codex Vaticanus does have the 'and' and that the Vatican asserts that this version pre-dates the Codex Sinaiticus.

But Codex Vaticanus (Codex B) was dismissed by many including the theologian John Mill in 1707 who argued that it had been heavily interpolated and basically written by a Latin scribe for the western world. (see 'La Parola Di Dio Alle Origini' By C. M. Martini, page 287) ¹

Uriel also gives further evidence to indicate that the Codex Vaticanus cannot be trusted and is not older than the Codex Sinaiticus.

So, in summary, there is clear evidence that verses 38 and 39 have been deliberately swapped and that this was recognized though not well-publicized hundreds of years ago.

From at least 1525, Rome and others have set out to deliberately alter the text to paint a false, anti-Torah picture here (and elsewhere).

Therefore, we may ask what was more likely the original autograph's message and what context was it addressing?

Firstly, the historical context:

Those being addressed in Antioch (now in ruins, but near the current city of Antakya in Turkey) lived a long way from Jerusalem and the Temple. In fact, they were some 655 km away which is some 3 weeks of walking for 8 hours a day (and then the same going back). So they really had little access to Jerusalem and the Temple and the ability to go before the Priest and seek atonement as per Torah:

"... So the priest shall make atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them."- Leviticus 4:20.

¹ <https://books.google.com.au/books?id=5pZyQmwxHdsC&pg=PA155&lpg#v=onepage&q&f=false>

Though instructed to visit three times per year, even this commandment did not require the attendance of all of them. So, they really had a limited ability to seek atonement and ‘disinfection’ from their sins, at least by the means of the Torah’s teaching with respect to the function of the Temple and the Priests.

In this context, Rav Sha’ul addresses the Jews and God fearing gentiles in a local synagogue and offers some words of encouragement:

“Accordingly, it may be known to you men, brothers, that through this one [i.e. Yeshua], a release from sins is being declared [or announced] addressing all matters from which you haven’t been able to be acquitted [or atoned, or covered], by means of Torat-Moshe [and the Temple Service outlined therein]. Pertaining to IT [i.e. Torat-Moshe], all those who are trusting [Ha’Shem] will be acquitted [or atoned for, or covered]!”

– Acts 13:38-39 as translated from Codex Sinaiticus by Uriel ben-Mordechai.

Therefore, the Apostle Paul is here declaring the good news and practical reality, that while at that time the Temple was still standing and atonement was still possible through the Temple Service, there was now another way to seek and find forgiveness and atonement, and that way was through the duly chosen and elected Messiah Yeshua ben Yosef.

For more on atonement please see some of my articles:

Atonement: Covering Our Sins From Ourselves:

<https://globaltruthinternational.com/2020/06/20/atonement-covering-our-sins-from-ourselves/>

The Day of Atonement: Nine Questions on Yom Kippur:

<http://circumcisedheart.info/Nine%20Questions%20on%20Yom%20Kippur.pdf>

The Tripartite Salvation Paradigm:

<http://circumcisedheart.info/The%20Tripartite%20Salvation%20Paradigm%20first%20draft%20feb2012.pdf>

Retroactive Atonement:

<http://circumcisedheart.info/RetroactiveAtonement.pdf>

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