

John 5:4 The Missing verse

This verse is not typically found in modern translations. Those which include it often note that it is not found in older or more reliable manuscripts. The disputed text indicates that an angel would agitate the water of the pool, and the first invalid into the water after that would be healed. This raises theological questions, such as why God would make healing into a contest, or express miraculous power in such a random yet repetitive way. According to manuscript evidence, the most likely answer is that these words were not part of the original text of the gospel of John. They might have been written in a margin, as a note, or a traditional explanation of the pool. At some point, the note might have been inadvertently copied into the main body and absorbed as part of the text. Ultimately, this is a better example of biblical reliability than of biblical weakness. Verses such as this represent the most extreme version of "variants" found in scriptural manuscripts. Accepted or not, the text has no bearing on any doctrine, belief, or other meaningful facts of the faith. In other words, its exclusion isn't important, and if it were included, it wouldn't overwhelm the rest of what the Bible says on related topics. The Bible is an amazingly well-preserved and well-documented work. [<https://www.bibleref.com>]

Missing Verse

The verse is not just missing in the NIV; the situation is the same in the ESV, NRSV, CEV, NLT, and the net Bible. If you use the NASB or NCV you will see the verse, but it's been placed inside brackets, whereas the KJV and the NKJV contain verse 4 without any notation or demarcation. So what's going on here? Who took John 5:4 out of the Bible? If you're using a study Bible that doesn't have verse 4, you will likely see a note at the end of verse 3, or the beginning of verse 5, explaining why it isn't there. This is a textbook case of a disagreement between manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. What would be John 5:4 (the missing material that begins in verse 3) is not found in any of the earliest and most accurate manuscripts of the Gospel of John. Scholars who make a career of comparing manuscripts ("textual critics" and "paleographers") have discovered that in roughly two dozen manuscripts scribes put asterisk marks at the verse to warn the next scribe who would copy the manuscript that the verse was likely not original. To top it all off, four of the last five Greek words of what would be John 5:4 aren't found anywhere else in John's writings. This suggests that John 5:4 does not belong in the New Testament, which explains why many modern Bible translations have omitted it. After 1900, translators used new manuscript discoveries from the 1800s, which revealed that the verse was likely not original. This is why verse 4 is listed in the pre-1900 KJV "as is" without brackets (the NKJV followed the KJV in this regard). More recent Bible translations (omitting or retaining the verse with brackets) give us a clearer picture of what the original product of inspiration looked like.

Why would verse four have not been included in the original New Testament? It is not because of the angel in the story. The Bible has no problem with angels; they're all over the place, doing all sorts of things. But, like today, there was a great deal of folklore and superstition about them. The idea that an angel stirred the waters at a given time during the year was one such superstition. John 5:7 mentions the stirring of the water, but does not mention the angel. It's likely that John knew of the belief about the waters of Bethesda, but chose to leave it out for a specific reason. Perhaps he does not wish to endorse that an angel was stirring the water. By excluding the popular belief about the angel, John focuses his readers on the healer who was indeed present—Jesus. [<https://www.crosswalk.com>]