

The King James Version Challenged

A look at the claim that the King James Version is the most accurate version

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Introduction

For those reading a hard copy of this paper, please ignore the word *Go* at the end of each outline heading. The *Go* is a quick link to a passage in the electronic form of this paper.

I suggest to the reader that before reading further, my article titled "*The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*" be read first in order to give proper context to the arguments presented below. A section of this paper deals with a significant attack on the authority of Scripture which occurred while the KJV was by far the majority translation. Naturally, there is a slight overlap in the material presented in both papers, for instance, the brief statement on General MacArthur is repeated in this paper. The article on the inspiration of Scripture is a free download from the main page of the www.defenceofthefait.org site.

A chief reason for my writing this paper is to counter material put out by King James Version only advocates which is very selective in its reporting. I have read material which finds errors in modern translations (in the view of the writer at least) but not one single error in the KJV is presented. Material which is highly biased, is in my view, little more than propaganda. The very aggressive marketing of the material has in a small number of cases split Churches. This paper presents facts from a wide range of sources so that the reader will be better informed to make a decision on what is a good translation. It further supports the view that the student of God's Word will benefit greatly from reading several translations; including the KJV.

Regarding the Greek text; I have consulted the Greek text which is the 1976 copyrighted Greek text of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS). This society strongly advocates the use of the KJV.

To add some balance to this subject, I must state that it is not a good idea to read the best version of the Bible, and then find oneself at the bottom end of a line of people being honoured by our Lord on Judgment Day! The Bible gives a warning, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." (James 1:22).

By way of example of some of the errors in the King James Version (KJV), it says, "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth." When you

consult the Greek text recommended by the TBS, you will discover the words, 'cast the same in his teeth' are missing.

¹ In fact, you will not find the words in *any* Greek text. Although this statement is not theologically misleading, it is a clear case of the KJV translators exercising poetic licence. The statement is a strong English expression which was very meaningful at the time of the translation, but means little to people today. There are further problems which this paper will reveal. However, before dealing with the problems, I must affirm the reliability and authority of Scripture.

Scripture is from God

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness," (2 Timothy 3:16).

The above passage in simple terms means the Bible is the Word of God to us. The movement of the Spirit of God upon certain men in order to convey his will was clearly understood long before Timothy or any part of the New Testament was written. Many of the prophets were so clearly guided by God they were able to say, "The Lord Almighty says" (1 Chronicles 17:7). Expressions such as, or similar to, "The Lord says" are used over four hundred times throughout the Bible.

The authority of Scripture

Scripture has its authority because of the one who stands behind it. At the end of World War II, General Douglass MacArthur along with other leading officers signed documents to formally declare a cessation of hostilities toward Japan following its unconditional surrender.

The documents were signed on the deck of the battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 02 September 1945. Any person who continued hostile activities toward the former enemy after being made aware of the surrender, faced the prospect of severe discipline because of the authority invested in the leading figures who signed the documents.

Imagine for a moment a situation where a small group of men receive a signal sent out by General MacArthur which informs them they must end all hostilities. Part of the message is missing, but it is still clear they are to stop fighting. One of the men foolishly suggests they should keep fighting because they do not have a good copy of the original message, but the others wisely point out that they still have a clear message, and they had better not ignore the message because it comes from the highest ranking officer over them.

The above story highlights a couple of issues when looking at Scripture. Authority, and the quality of the documents that have come down to us. A further issue is the reliability of Scripture.

An attack upon the reliability of Scripture comes from the misinformed claim that it was written down more than a century after the event, and was therefore tainted by other beliefs. That claim can be proven to be false by looking at the evidence from within Scripture.

The Bible mentions the stoning of Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 7:54-60). It also mentions the death of James by the sword at the command of Herod (Acts 12:2). However, it does not mention the deaths of Peter and Paul, men who were much more prominent in the Bible. Additionally, no mention is made of the terrible persecution of the emperor Nero in AD 64 in which Peter and Paul were killed. The book of Acts ends with Paul living in a rented house with a soldier to guard him (Acts 28:16, 30-31).

Jesus foretold the destruction of the temple. "As he was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, 'Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!' 'Do you see all these great buildings?' replied Jesus. 'Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.'" (Mark 13:12). See also Luke 19:42-43.

The Bible does not mention the fulfilment of the destruction of the Temple by the Roman military force under the command of Titus in 70 AD. Quite clearly, the Bible was completed before the deaths of Peter and Paul, and the destruction of the Temple.

Another point to consider is the fact that Scripture was regarded as Scripture at the time it was written. Peter clearly refers to the writings of Paul as Scripture when he says, "He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:16).

Perhaps highest on the list of differences between evangelical Christians and others is on the question of the authority of Scripture. After the Roman emperor Constantine of the fourth century brought to an end a long period of persecution against Christians, he ushered in peace and calm for the Church. Furthermore, he brought wealth and privilege to Church leaders. The flow-on effect of this privilege and wealth was that many non-Christians sought and gained positions in Church office. The most destructive effect the non-Christians had upon the Church was a weakening of the authority of Scripture. What man says, and the traditions of the Church, came to have greater authority than the Word of God. That is the very thing Jesus complained about in his time. He told the religious leaders, "You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men." (Mark 7:8).

Many of those who suffered and died during the period of the reformation did so because they held the Word of God to be more important than the words of the Pope. Those who followed the Pope were forbidden from reading the Bible. This action was asserting the authority of the Pope to be over the Word of God. The fight to have the Bible freely available to people has been a long and bitter one as can be seen for instance from the life of Tyndale.

In 1525, **Tyndale** completed the translation of the New Testament from the Greek into English. However, because the authority of Scripture was seen as a threat to the authority of the Pope and some other Church leaders, Tyndale encountered much resistance, in fact, his life was under threat.

He fled to Cologne in Germany where he began printing the New Testament (1526). When Roman Catholic

authorities suppressed his work there, he moved to Worms to continue his publishing. Tyndale continually revised his translation. English merchants sympathetic to Tyndale smuggled his New Testament - mostly in bales of wool - across the channel to England. Tyndale had to keep on the move, but eventually he was betrayed. He was captured, strangled, and his body was burned in 1536. The history of this man and many others reveals the high cost some have paid to translate and publish the Bible in the English language.

The first major translation of Scripture is that of the Old Testament into Greek. The translation was necessary because a large section of the world spoke Greek as a common language between nations, and many Jews living outside of Israel could speak Greek, but not Hebrew. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew except for a small section which was written in Aramaic.

Translation of the Old Testament Into Greek

There is some debate regarding the translation of the Old Testament into Greek. One view is that it was completed by seventy-two scholars in seventy-two days at Alexandria in Egypt between 250 and 200 BC. This translation came to be known (inaccurately) as the **Septuagint**, often abbreviated LXX, meaning seventy.

Many of the writers in the NT quote from the LXX, for instance, in Acts 15:16 Luke quotes from Amos 9:11-12 using the Septuagint version of Scripture. The LXX "...is often quoted in the New Testament. Luke and the writer to the Hebrews use it the most, Matthew least."² The fact that this translation of the Old Testament (O.T.) is quoted in the New Testament (N.T.) means that faithful translations of the original Hebrew O.T. and Greek N.T. carry equal authority as the original documents. The 'Word of God' is still the 'Word of God' regardless of the language it is translated into. (for some technical points on the use of the Septuagint, see [footnote](#))

The Vulgate

After Christianity spread throughout the Roman world, it became necessary to have a translation of the Scriptures in the language of the Romans - Latin. Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Emperor Constantine in 313 A.D. However, it was not until 404 A.D. that Jerome produced the much needed Latin Vulgate. As with all translations, it was not without its critics over minor variations from the previous much used translation. The Vulgate was used throughout the Christian world including England. An English translation was produced in 1384. From an English perspective, that means the Vulgate reigned as the translation of choice for just twenty years short of one thousand (1,000) years!

The revision of the Vulgate

When Desiderius **Erasmus** (1466-1536) read the Vulgate, and made comparison with old commentaries which used the Vulgate, he noticed small variations in the text. He reasoned that since the Vulgate was copied more times than the commentaries, there would be more opportunities for errors to slip into the Vulgate, rather than the commentaries

which quoted the Vulgate. He then decided that a revision of the Vulgate was necessary. It is important to note that Erasmus searched for the oldest Vulgate texts to achieve accuracy. Erasmus was simply using some of the methods which are used by translators today to ascertain what are the original words amongst the errors in the manuscripts he had to sift through.

Erasmus came under considerable criticism for making changes to the old Vulgate. How dare someone change even one word of the Vulgate, a translation which had been in use for over one thousand years. He was thought of as someone who was tampering with the Word of God. In the same way, KJV only advocates denounce those who have worked on modern versions.

The First Printed Greek Text

The first published edition of the Greek text was that produced by Erasmus. The emphasis here is on first *published*, because another scholar, Cardinal Ximenes had already printed his *Complutensian Polyglot*, which included the Greek New Testament. He was following Church protocol by waiting for approval from the pope before publishing his work. Unfortunately for Cardinal Ximenes, Erasmus had a plan which would give him the honour of being the first to publish. He dedicated his work to Pope Leo X (a few years later, this pope excommunicated the reformer, Martin Luther). Erasmus hoped the honour given would prevent any trouble from his rushing to press without approval; the plan worked.

Erasmus published his work in **1516**, one year before the beginning of the reformation led by Martin Luther. The reformation began in earnest when Martin Luther nailed ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg on 31 October 1517.

The book which Erasmus produced was in parallel columns with the Greek text in one column and his revised Vulgate in the other. Erasmus produced his two parallel columns work so that those with the ability could make comparisons between his revised Vulgate and the Greek text.

Regarding the Greek text produced by Erasmus, he again had to deal with errors made by the copyists. Lest the reader become alarmed at the word *errors*, I must make the point that the vast majority are very easily detected. By way of illustration, let's assume we have twenty scribes writing while the leader slowly reads from the main text. We will further assume that a single mistake is made on every line by someone within the group. So while it is true that a large number of mistakes accumulate by the time they get to the end of the work, it is also true that in our hypothetical situation that for every one error, there are nineteen correct copies of each line. The vast majority of errors are very minor, such as spelling mistakes, words missing or repeated. From the above, we see that it is important that translators are able to examine as many ancient texts as possible in order to eliminate the errors. Those who work in this area examine texts from various countries so as to identify errors which may have taken hold in one locality.

King James Only advocates have a high regard for

Erasmus and the ancient texts he consulted from the Byzantine area. However, the texts from this area are not the best texts. There are few examples of very ancient texts which date back prior to 800 AD in the Byzantine region. We can be sure of this because the Greek text is written in a different style prior to around 800 AD. The early style is in CAPITAL LETTERS (called uncials) later, the all capitals style was dropped in favour of the 'minuscule' which looks much like the text in modern Greek New Testament books.

While the Byzantine area lacks the honour of having many very ancient texts, it does have the distinction of having the majority of texts through a disadvantage which struck north Africa. North Africa was invaded by Muslims who destroyed any Scriptures they came across.

Regarding errors, some King James Only advocates don't believe ancient texts in the Byzantine area contain errors, however, Erasmus who is highly regarded by this group says in reply to a letter, "You must distinguish between Scripture, the translation of Scripture, and the transmission of both. What will you do with the **errors of the copyists?**"³ Another statement from Erasmus on this point says, "But one thing the facts cry out, and it can be clear, as they say, even to a blind man, that often through the translator's clumsiness or inattention the Greek has been wrongly rendered; often the true and genuine reading has been corrupted by ignorant scribes, which we see happen every day, or altered by scribes who are half-taught and half-asleep."⁴

In summary, Erasmus has few documents. None are very ancient documents, and finally, he spots errors in the documents he works with. However, he produces a good Greek text considering the above limits. It is this text which becomes the primary underlying Greek text of the KJV. Erasmus revised his work several times. New editions came out in 1519, 1522, 1527 and 1535, the year before he died.

In addition to the revisions by Erasmus, others also produced revisions which were ultimately used by the KJV translation team. One authority states, "Three men were primarily responsible for the creation of the Greek text utilized by the KJV translators in their work on the New Testament: Desiderius Erasmus, Robert Estienne (better known as Stephanus), and Theodore Beza. One can trace the text from Erasmus, who died in 1536, through Stephanus (died 1559), through Beza (died 1606), to the KJV translators. While the text produced by each of these men is substantially the same, there *are* variations between their various editions."⁵ We will look at this subject in more detail later. For the moment, we will deal with the early translations into English.

Early Translations Into English

It is a common misconception that the Bible was first translated into English by John Wycliffe; that honour primarily belongs to Nicholas **Hereford** (under the support and supervision of Wycliffe). He finished the Old Testament in 1382. The N.T. was finished by others in **1384**. His translation (from the Vulgate) was difficult to read.

A more readable and much loved translation was that of John Purvey (secretary of Wycliffe), completed in 1395, and known as the **Lollard Bible**. As for John Wycliffe (c. 1329-

1384), "...it is possible that he contributed directly no part to any translation, but he inspired the enterprise and supervised the writing of others from his rectory at Lutterworth..."⁶

The next major translation for the English speaking people is that of the already mentioned Tyndale (1526).

Translations of the Bible into English up to 1611 in chronological order are:

- 1384 John Wycliffe translation (by Nicholas Hereford and others).
- 1395 Lollard Bible (by John Purvey).
- 1526 Tyndale began printing his translation of the NT.
- 1535 Coverdale
- 1537 Matthew
- 1539 Great Bible
- 1560 Geneva Bible - the first English Bible to be printed with verse divisions.
- 1568 Bishops Bible
- 1611 The King James Version (KJV). Also known as the Authorised Version (AV).

The KJV was very popular, as it reflected the language of the people of that time. This is an important consideration with translation work, as the N.T. was originally written in koine (common) Greek - the language of the people on the street. That means a translation of the Bible must be in the common vernacular - the language in everyday use - otherwise the translation is not strictly faithful to the original manuscripts.

The KJV translators had a humble opinion of their translation, they advise the Bible scholar in the preface of the first edition to consult other translations so that "... *if anything [in the KJV] be halting or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original [Hebrew and Greek], the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place*" (p. 7 of preface).⁷ 17th century spelling is updated in this quote.

What many who push the King James Version do not realise is that the King James Version now in use is not the original 1611 version, it has thankfully gone through several revisions. The version now in use is the result of a revision carried out by Benjamin Blayney in **1769**, a professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, it was therefore known as the "**Oxford Standard Edition**". This revision followed three other revisions, these were carried out in 1629, 1638 and 1762.⁸

An obvious improvement that the current edition has over the original 1611 edition is in the area of spelling. For instance, the passage on love in 1 Corinthians 13:5-6 reads, "*Doeth not hehaue it selfe vnseemly, seeketh not her owne, is not easily prouoked, thinketh no euill. Reioyceth not in iniquitie, but reioyceth in the trueth.*"

The Apocrypha

The *Apocrypha* was included in the 1611 edition, much to the annoyance of the Puritans. In 1615 Archbishop Abott forbade anyone to issue an edition without this inclusion.⁹ Most of the thirteen books of the Apocrypha were written in

Palestine between 300 BC and 100 AD. The reformers rejected the Apocrypha as a collection of books not worthy of the same status as the sixty-six books of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1545-1563) officially added the Apocrypha to the 39 books of the Old Testament. The New Testament contains many quotes from the Old Testament, but none from the Apocrypha.

Significant Errors in the KJV

Those who cling to the KJV sometimes assert that modern translations water-down the major doctrines of Scripture, but that is simply not true. The KJV is weak on the divinity of Christ when compared with the N.I.V. (New International Version) and most modern versions.

The Divinity of Christ Not Supported

In three instances in the KJV, the divinity of Christ is not supported: Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1 and John 1:18.

KJV "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and **our** Saviour Jesus Christ;" (Titus 2:13). (emphasis on 'our' added). The word '**our**' is not in the original Greek, this mistake in the KJV gives support to those who deny the deity of Christ.

The NIV says, "... great **God and Saviour**, Jesus Christ, ..."

"Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and **our** Saviour Jesus Christ:" (2 Peter 1:1, KJV). Here again, 'our' should not be there. The NIV says, "... our **God and Saviour** Jesus Christ ..."

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared {him}." (John 1:18, KJV).

The N.I.V. is far better, it says, "No one has ever seen God, but **God the One and Only**, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (John 1:18, NIV).

The KJV leaves out the word '**Me**' in the following verse which points to Christ being divine. "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." (John 14:14, KJV).

The NIV more accurately says:

"If you ask **me** anything in my name, I will do it." (John 14:14, NIV).

The Divinity of the Holy Spirit

The KJV does not show the divinity and personhood of the Holy Spirit in the following passage. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit **itself** maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom. 8:26, KJV).

The word "itself" gives the impression that the Holy Spirit is simply a force. The NIV, being true to the context of the whole of Scripture says, "...the Spirit **himself**..." To be fair, I must state that the Greek says, *alla auto to pneuma* (with English letters substituted which is not ideal). The key word *can* be translated 'itself'. However, the KJV has exercised considerable licence by supplying words in another

place to make a passage clear, for instance, "... cast the same in his teeth." (Mat 27:44) even though, as mentioned earlier, the words, 'cast', 'same' and 'teeth' are not found in any Greek manuscript. The translators have not chosen to be clear on the point of the personhood of the Holy Spirit by using the equally correct word, 'himself' in their translation.

The KJV says 'Holy **Ghost**' e.g. Matt. 1:18, 20, 12:31-32, Mark 12:36; it should be '**Holy Spirit**'. The Holy Spirit is omnipresent, and is nowhere in the original scriptures referred to as simply a 'ghost'. "God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

Contradiction in the KJV

In the King James version, there is a contradiction between Acts 9:7 and 22:9. In one passage, the men hear a voice, and in another, they do not hear a voice.

"And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, **hearing a voice**, but seeing no man." (Acts 9:7, KJV). In another passage describing the same event it is stated.

"And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they **heard not the voice** of him that spake to me." (Acts 22:9, KJV).

"The construction of the verb 'to hear' (*akouo*) is not the same in both accounts. In Acts 9:7 it is used with the genitive, in Acts 22:9 with the accusative. The construction with the genitive simply expresses that something is being heard or that certain sounds reach the ear; nothing is indicated as to whether a person understands what he hears or not. The construction with the accusative, however, describes a hearing which includes mental apprehension of the message spoken. From this it becomes evident that the two passages are not contradictory."¹⁰ When the meaning of the Greek is understood, it becomes clear that the *New International Version* has the better translation - there is no contradiction. The NIV says:

"The men travelling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone." (Acts 9:7).

"My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me." (Acts 22:9). (NIV). The KJV also presents a conflict in Genesis.

Genesis 2:19 '**God formed**', should be, 'God had formed', as in the NIV. With this mistake in the KJV there is a conflict between the order of creation of chapter one and that of chapter two. From conflicts, we move to a diminishing of strength in some statements.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in {their} knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are **not convenient**;" (Rom. 1:28, KJV). 'not convenient' is very weak in the light of our modern understanding of the term. The N.I.V. more accurately says, "... to do what **ought not to be done**." (Rom. 1:28, NIV).

The New King James Version has fixed many of the

weaknesses in the KJV but it has not satisfactorily improved the translation of John 1:18 or Rom. 1:28. For John 1:18 the NKJV has "... The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

The NIV by contrast gives a clear and strong statement. "No one has ever seen God, but **God the One and Only**, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." (John 1:18). There is no ambiguity here, Jesus is declared to be 'God the one and only'.

The New King James Version is weak at Rom. 1:28 it says, "... to do things which are not fitting;"

The original manuscripts spoke plainly to the people; however, the KJV does not speak plainly to modern man as a read through 1 Samuel chapters seventeen and eighteen illustrates:

1 Sam. 17:12 "Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of **Bethlehemjudah**, ..." Should be "**Bethlehem** in Judah".

17:12 "... the man **went among men for an old man** in the days of Saul." This translation is awkward, it should be, "... and in Saul's time he was old and well advanced in years."

17:25 "... and make his father's **house free** in Israel." It should read, "... and will exempt his father's family from taxes in Israel."

17:31 "... **they rehearsed them** before Saul" Should be, "**reported** to Saul"

17:39 "... and he **assayed** to go;..." Should be "... and **tried walking around**, ..."

17:40 "and **chose him** five smooth stones" Should be, "chose five smooth stones"

17:40 "... and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a **scrip**; ..." Should be, "... put them in the **pouch**"

18:8 "And Saul was very **wroth**, ..." Should be, "Saul was very **angry**; ..."

18:21 "And Saul said, I will **give him her**, ..." Should be, "I will **give her** to him,"

18:21 "Thou shalt this day be my son in law in the **one of the twain**." Should be, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law."

18:30 "his name was much **set by**." Should be, "and his name became **well known**."

Without the context, the claim that the name of David was much 'set by', could to the modern mind, be taken to mean that the name of David was set aside to be forgotten about, however, the very opposite is true.

The KJV in the Old Testament has sixty-nine references to **Elijah** beginning at 1 Kings 17:1, however, when his name is used in the New Testament (thirty times) beginning in Matthew 1:11, his name is changed to **Elias**. The name 'Elias' is not found anywhere in the O.T. That sort of confusion is not found in modern versions.

Elisha the prophet is changed to **Eliseus**. Luke 4:27.

Isaiah the prophet is changed to **Esaias** in Matthew 3:3 and in twenty other places.

Jonah in the Old Testament (book of Jonah) becomes **Jonas** (Matt. 12:39-41).

Timothy is changed to **Timotheus**. See for instance Acts 16:1, 17:15, 18:5, 19:22, Philippians 1:1.

Those using the KJV don't have to read far into the New Testament before running into trouble. In Matthew chapter one, we read that Salmon begat **Booz**. Who is this Booz? The KJV does not list this name anywhere in the Old Testament! We are informed that Booz was of Rachab. Does that mean he lived in Rachab? Modern versions inform us that Booz is actually **Boaz** and that his mother was Rahab. Below is a list of this type of error from the book of **Matthew**:

Matt. 1:5 "And Salmon begat **Booz** of **Rachab**; ..." Should be, "Salmon the father of **Boaz**, whose mother was **Rahab**"
1:7 "**Roboam** begat **Abia**" Should be, "**Rehoboam** the father of **Abijah**"

1:8 "... and **Josaphat** begat **Joram**; and Joram begat **Ozias**;" Should be, "... **Jehoshaphat** the father of **Jehoram**, Jehoram the father of **Uzziah**, ..."

1:9 "... **Achaz** begat **Ezekias**; ..." Should be, "... **Ahaz** the father of **Hezekiah**, ..."

1:10 "And **Ezekias** begat **Manasses**;" Should be, "**Hezekiah** the father of **Manasseh**, ..."

1:11 "**Josias** begat **Jechonias** ..." Should be, "**Josiah** the father of **Jeconiah** ..."

1:12 "**Jechonias** begat Salathiel; and **Salathiel** begat **Zorobabel**;" Should be, "**Jeconiah** ... **Shealtiel** the father of **Zerubbabel**"

1:14 "**Sadoc** begat **Achim**" Should be, "**Zadok** the father of **Akim**"

2:17 "**Jeremy** the prophet" Should be "through the prophet **Jeremiah**"

Other types of errors found in the book of **Matthew**

Matt. 1:18 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was **on this wise**:" Should be "This is how the birth of Jesus Christ **came about**:"

1:18 "Mary was **espoused** to Joseph," Should be, "Mary was **pledged** to be married to Joseph"

2:22 "did reign in Judaea in the **room** of his father" Should be, "in **place** of his father"

3:4 "John had his **raiment** of camel's hair" The word 'raiment' is a good translation of the Greek word, however it is an awkward word in an English translation. A modern version has, "John's **clothes** were made of camel's hair".

3:8 "fruits **meet** for repentance" Should be, "fruit **in keeping** with repentance."

3:12 "wheat into the **garner**" Should be, "wheat into the **barn**"

3:13-14 "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But **John forbad him** ..." Should be, "But John tried to **deter** him" The KJV translation wrongly places John the Baptist in authority over Jesus. Another translation has "John **restrained** him".

3:15 "**Suffer it** to be so now: for thus it **becometh us** to fulfil all righteousness." Should be, "**Let it be** so now; it **is proper** for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."

5:37 "But let your communication be, **Yea, yea**; Nay, nay" Should be, "Simply let your '**Yes**' be '**Yes**,' and your '**No**,' '**No**'"

5:41 "go with him **twain**." Should be, "go with him **two**

miles."

6:25 "Is not the life more than **meat**" Should be, "Is not life more important than **food**".

6:28 "why take ye thought for **raiment**?" Should be, "why do you worry about **clothes**?"

7:3 "the **mote** that is in thy brother's eye" Should be, "the **speck** of sawdust in your brother's eye".

7:13 "which go in **thereat**" Should be, "many **enter through it**."

8:6 "sick of the **palsy**" Should be, "lies at home **paralysed**".

8:13 "in the **selfsame** hour." Should be, "in **that hour**".

8:29 "art thou come **hither** to" Should be, "come **here to**"

9:5 "**whether** is easier" Should be, "**Which** is easier"

9:17 **bottles**, should be **wineskins** (Greek *askoi*).

13:40. Should be 'age', (Gk. *aiwnos*) not 'world'.

Some of the errors in other parts of the NT

John 9:1 "And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man **which** was blind from his birth." It is a poor English expression to have the word "which" in this verse. I would not be encouraging young people to read the KJV if I was wanting them to develop good expression. The NIV more accurately states, "As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth."

Luke 12:49. The question mark should not be there.

Eph. 4:12. The semicolon should not be there.

1 Tim. 4:1. 'devils' should be 'demons'.

Luke 22:31. 'desired' should be 'demanded'.

Rev. 4:2. 'spirit' should have a capital 'S' as it refers to the Holy Spirit. John is certainly not stating that he is in his own spirit.

Psalm 88:13. The KJV says, "... and in the morning shall my prayer **prevent thee**." Our prayers are not greater than God, they can not prevent God from doing what he has determined to do. The correct translation is "...my prayer comes before you." (NIV).

Psalm 86:13. The word 'Sheol' is incorrectly translated 'hell'.

Psalm 12:7. "Thou shalt keep **them**" should be "Thou shalt keep **us**". Contextually and grammatically the pronoun should refer to people, not words.

Mark 6:20. 'observed' should be "kept him safe" or 'protected'.

1 Corinthians 4:4. "For I know nothing by myself" should be "For I am conscious of nothing against myself".

Acts 5:30. The KJV says, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." But Jesus was not killed, then placed on the cross. He was nailed to the cross, and later died on the cross as the NIV more accurately translates and makes clear. "...whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree." (NIV).

Isaiah 53:9 "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; **because he had done no violence**, neither was any deceit in his mouth." This error in the KJV diminishes the message of the substitutionary atonement. Jesus did not make 'his grave with the wicked' because he had done no violence. The NIV more accurately says, "He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, **though he had done no violence**, nor was any deceit in his mouth."

Isaiah 14:12. The KJV says ‘**Lucifer**’ instead of ‘morning star’. A figurative reference to the King of Babylon as the context clearly shows, see 14:16-19. The KJV translators referred to the Vulgate where the Latin word for ‘morning star’ is ‘lucifer’.¹¹

1 Timothy 6:10. The KJV says, “For the love of money is **the root of all evil**” The definite article (the) is not present in the Greek. Therefore the modern translations are correct in replacing ‘the’ with ‘a’. “For the love of money is **a** root of all sorts of evil...” (NASB). The NIV has, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil...” This statement reflects the true situation. Many sins, especially the majority of sexual sins, do not have the love of money as the root cause.

The KJV sometimes uses measurements which are not in common use and are therefore not understood by most readers. For instance, it uses the term ‘firkins’ in John 2:6, instead of expressing the measurement in litres or gallons.

The Hebrew word ‘*tetter*’ in Leviticus 13:39 does not mean ‘freckled spot’ as translated in the KJV. The men and women reporting had white patches of skin. Diagnosis was necessary because a white patch is occasionally an early sign of leprosy. The NIV more accurately has ‘dull white’.

Hell

The KJV sometimes uses the word ‘hell’ when the word ‘grave’ should be used. This is misleading according to the modern understanding of the term. “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” (Acts 2:31, KJV).

The soul of Christ did not go to hell (the place of eternal punishment) immediately after he died in order to endure further suffering. Just before he died on the cross, Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30). The Greek word *tetelestai* translated ‘It is finished’ is in a tense which reveals it is finished for all time, not just for the moment. Therefore, it would be wrong to suggest a further period of suffering is needed by Christ on behalf of his people.

The NIV quite rightly avoids the word ‘hell’, it says, “Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave [Gk; *hades*], nor did his body see decay.” (Acts 2:31).

Modern translations use the words, ‘Grave’, ‘Hades’, and ‘Shoel’ where appropriate in place of the KJV ‘Hell’ in order to avoid confusion and misunderstanding.

Firmament

“And God said, let there be a **firmament** in the midst of the waters...” (Gen. 1:6) KJV.

The word ‘*firmament*’ used by the KJV is a bad choice of words as it is based upon a false view of the universe. H. Vos says of this word. “The ‘firmament’ is a mistranslation due to the false astronomy of the Greeks of the third century B.C., who believed that the sky was a solid crystalline sphere. Hence the Hebrew word *rakia* was rendered *stereoma* in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Then when Jerome translated the Old Testament into Latin, he used the Latin word *firmamentum*, which in turn was

rendered by the English word ‘firmament’ in KJV. The original word in the Hebrew, *rakia*, does not have the idea of something ‘firm’ but comes from a root meaning that which is ‘stretched out,’ or ‘attenuated,’ or ‘extended,’ and is best translated ‘expanse,’ as in the NIV. It perfectly describes the expanse of the atmosphere of our earth.”¹²

Since or when?

The KJV says, “He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost **since ye believed**? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” (Acts 19:2). The KJV gives the idea that the Holy Spirit comes upon the believer *after* conversion. All modern versions translate, ‘**when you believed**’. The NIV says, “... ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They answered, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’” Back in the 1960s and 70s a new teaching swept through many Churches. At the heart of the teaching was the view that there was an extra measure of the Holy Spirit available to those who submitted to his infusion. A sign of a successful infusion of the Holy Spirit was speaking in tongues. It did not matter that the tongues spoken were unintelligible tongues rather than the miraculous languages mentioned in Acts chapter two.

Luke informs us, “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs - we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’” (Acts 2:4-11). We should note that the passage says ‘other tongues’ making clear from the context that they were not speaking in their own language, but rather, in the languages of the people around them.

The Acts 19:2 passage in the King James Version was used by those who believed that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is limited to those who speak in unintelligible tongues. They could point to the KJV verse as evidence that there is a work of the Holy Spirit to be done in the believer *after* belief in Jesus Christ.

With regard to the Greek word translated ‘when’; it is not so narrow in its possibility of translation that only the word ‘when’ can apply. However, the context does rule out the ‘since’ option. Doctrine must be gained from the context of the whole of Scripture. Nowhere in the Bible do we find the disciples or anyone else for that matter urging believers to seek a baptism of the Holy Spirit after conversion. Even when writing to Churches plagued with problems, Paul does not urge them to seek a special post conversion experience with the Holy Spirit. They are to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives, which they already have (1 Cor.

6:19-20, 12:3, Eph. 1:13-14, Gal. 3:2, Heb. 12:5-8).

Jesus informs us, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.” (John 7:38-39). There is no room for a limited baptism of the Holy Spirit doctrine here, the Holy Spirit goes to all believers; ‘Whoever believes in me’.

The question mark is missing

“His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strowed:” (Matt. 25:26, KJV).

The NIV does not delete the question mark. It says, “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed?’” (Matt. 25:26).

The Greek says (with English letters), “*ou dieskorpisa;*”. Note the semicolon. The semicolon in Greek is equivalent to the English question mark (?).

The *Good News Bible* (TEV) gives an excellent translation of this verse, it says, “‘You bad and lazy servant!’ his master said, ‘You knew, did you, that I reap harvests where I did not plant, and gather crops where I did not scatter seed?’” (Matt. 25:26 TEV). It is clear with this translation that the statement is a question.

A further problem with the KJV rendering of the above passage is that it states, “... where I have not **strowed**.” Most people today would not know what ‘strowed’ means.

In a passage in the book of Acts, we are told Paul and his companions ‘**fetched a compass**, and came to Rhegium’. Modern versions make more sense. “From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium” (Acts 28:13).

Change of Meaning

Those who use the KJV not only have inaccuracy to contend with, they must also contend with the change of meaning of many words, e.g. The KJV uses the word ‘let’ in the sense of ‘hinder’, ‘prevent’ to mean ‘precede’, ‘allow’ in the sense of ‘approve’, ‘communicate’ for ‘share’, ‘conversation’ for ‘conduct’, ‘comprehend’ for ‘overcome’, ‘ghost’ for ‘spirit’.

Some words and phrases in the KJV have dropped completely out of use, for example: ‘Cocatrice’ Isaiah 11:8, ‘sackbut’ Dan. 3:5, ‘cieled’ Haggai 1:4, ‘chambering’ Romans 13:13, ‘crockbackt’ Lev. 21:20, ‘tabret’ Gen. 31:27, ‘glistening’ Luke 9:29, ‘froward’ 1 Pe. 2:18.

Special pronouns

The KJV uses special pronouns such as *thee, thou, ye, thine* and *thy*, however, the original Koine Greek manuscripts did not have special pronouns. Neither Hebrew or Aramaic use special pronouns.

Koine Greek

It is important to keep in mind that the New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Koine means ‘common’. It was

the language of the common people. Therefore, any translation which does not reflect the language of the common people is not faithful to the original.

One writer says regarding Koine Greek, “As recently as the last century [19th] many did not understand the nature of the Greek used in the New Testament. They thought of it as ‘Holy-Spirit’ Greek, that is, as a language that the Spirit prepared especially for the NT. The reason was this: NT Greek was clearly not classical Greek. Where did it come from, then? One popular answer was: it must have been invented just for the NT! We now know, that the language of the NT was - roughly speaking - the language of the day. It is the kind of language that has turned up in personal letters and bills of sale from the first century. It is the ‘koine’ or ‘common’ language of the day.”¹³

The New Testament writers did not use words or phrases that had dropped out of use over the previous three hundred years, and the King James translators also did not use words or phrases that had dropped out of use in the previous three hundred years. So clearly, people should be reading the Bible in a modern translation.

Before presenting the next KJV problem, it is necessary to outline some history regarding King James and his translation team. The team, which worked on the translation for seven years - beginning in 1604 - numbered about fifty scholars from Cambridge, Oxford and London. They were clearly men of high intellectual caliber and learning, but not all in the team were evangelicals, nor were they immune from political interference as we will soon see.

Congregation or Church?

Michael Drake of Whitcliffe Christian Schools and author of *The King’s Bible* makes the point that King James interfered with the translation of the KJV. “James directed that certain ‘old ecclesiastical words be kept’ specifying by way of example that ‘Church’ was not to be translated *congregation*. ‘Church’ was a recent inclusion in English translations and could hardly therefore be called an ‘old ecclesiastical word’, but to protect the High Church Anglican centralised ‘Church’ structure it was essential that no sense of congregationalism be allowed in the King’s Bible.

The Roman Catholic humanist Erasmus had translated *ekklesia* as ‘congregation’, as did Tyndale in 1525. Modern readers might wonder how important just one word is, but it was very clear in Tyndale’s day that this was fundamental. [The Church was seen as] ‘... the gathering and hierarchies, were priest and bishop and pope are essential ... The bishops saw that this idea [congregation] could make the whole Church structure fall apart.’ This was one of Tyndale’s ‘heresies’ for which he and his translation would be burned.”¹⁴ The king - never mind that he was not a Christian in the evangelical sense - wanted control of the Church.

Textus Receptus and the Ancient documents

I must now deal with the subject of the ancient documents on which translations are based. Most KJV only supporters believe the KJV should be used because it is based on a Greek text labelled ‘Textus Receptus’.

Some believe the Textus Receptus Greek text to be so faithful to the original that other ancient documents should not be considered. Therefore, some additional comments need to be made about this text.

Textus Receptus

A key point of dispute between those in the KJV only camp and advocates of modern versions is the value placed on several editions of the Greek text which have the label 'Textus Receptus'. Great store is placed on this label which has in the minds of some the idea that the text is specially preserved by God, and that therefore, all other Greek texts are inferior. This text is the 'received text' from God. This then makes modern versions inferior because they are not based for the most part on 'Textus Receptus' Greek texts. It will be helpful at this point to investigate where the label 'Textus Receptus' came from.

Two brothers of the **Elzevir** family published many editions of the classics. Their books were called 'Elzevirs'. They also published several editions of the Greek New Testament between 1624 and 1678 as a commercial enterprise. It was their second edition of **1633** which contained the advertising blurb which gave the name 'Textus Receptus' to their published text. The Latin preface read (translated into English) "you have therefore the text now received by all, in which we give nothing altered or corrupt." The words 'received text' (*textum receptum*) passed into common use ..."¹⁵ The 'Textus Receptus' label is not a recommendation from an expert in the field of textual criticism. Furthermore, it was not attached to any Greek text until twenty-two years after the first edition of the KJV was published.

Errors in Textus Receptus Greek Texts

Errors in 'Textus Receptus' labelled Greek texts became apparent as more ancient reliable texts became available. "New Testament editions in the 18th century did not question the Textus Receptus (T.R.), despite new manuscript evidence and study, but its limitations became apparent. E. Wells, a British mathematician and theological writer (1719), was the first to edit a complete New Testament that abandoned the T.R. in favour of more ancient manuscripts; and English scholar Richard Bentley (1720) also tried to go back to early manuscripts to restore an ancient text, but their work was ignored."¹⁶ Others who determined to go back to earlier and more reliable texts included the German scholar J.J. Griesbach (1745-1812). The above men were doing exactly what Erasmus did. They were going back to the earliest manuscripts they could find to produce an accurate text. This type of work did not begin with Westcott and Hort as one can be led to believe through reading material put out by King James Version only advocates. The work has wide support from scholars across several nations.

Michael Drake, author of "*A King's Bible*" says of the Textus Receptus, "The wonderful array of Bible manuscripts now available are grouped together by things they have in common, mainly to do with linguistic issues. One such group is known as the Textus Receptus, which means received text. This group is based on manuscripts that come

from the Eastern or Byzantine Empire which continued to use Greek after it separated from the rest of the Roman Empire. Frequently, reference is made to the Textus Receptus as if it is a single New Testament Greek text, one that is said to be reliable to the exclusion of all other manuscripts.

Such a text does not exist. Although there is obviously a group of texts called Textus Receptus, that they should have special powers associated with 'being received' is nonsense. For a start, this group does not produce a single Greek New Testament about which there is total certainty, even among those who treasure it. It is not simply a choice between Textus Receptus and other sources of manuscripts - choices have to be made even when translating from all the manuscripts within the Textus Receptus group.

Most advocates of Textus Receptus now recognise that it originates in a broader group of manuscripts in which there are about six to ten variants per Bible chapter about which these choices have to be made! In fact, the handful of manuscripts used to construct the Textus Receptus were not even all the manuscripts then available - its compiler, Erasmus, was in such a hurry he had to make do with what was at hand at the time, instead of making a comprehensive collection.

The idea of such a superior text of group of manuscripts upon which they could rely was completely foreign to the King's writers. They used other language versions of the New Testament based on manuscripts that were not Textus Receptus, openly bewailing the limited number of manuscripts available to them, and saying they would have consulted more texts had they been able to. Not only does a single, completely reliable Textus Receptus not exist, the concept was not invented until after the King's writers had completed their work." Michael Drake further makes the point that objection is sometimes made to the use of alternative texts as coming from Roman Catholic sources - but so did the Textus Receptus!" He further makes the point, "It is important to note that while there are minor variations in the texts from which our Bibles are translated there is nothing of any importance with regard to Christian doctrine that is jeopardised by the variants. Agreement characterises the ancient texts."¹⁷

Other scholars make similar comments. **Dr. Kruse**, lecturer in NT at the Bible College of Victoria at the time of his statement in 1999 states, "When what became known as the Textus Receptus (the editions of the Greek NT which became the basis for all Protestant versions of the NT prior to 1881) was produced, scholars only had access to very few Greek manuscripts. As a result the text they produced, though certainly not misleading theologically, was not as good as it might otherwise have been.

Erasmus, for instance, in producing his printed version of the Greek NT made use of only six relatively late Greek manuscripts. His work was incorporated by others who were responsible for producing what became known as the Textus Receptus. The Textus Receptus, in about a dozen passages, includes readings which have no support in any known Greek manuscripts."

Dr Kruse further states, "The two English scholars,

Westcott and Hort, were the first to produce a version of the Greek NT which eventually established itself as a replacement for the Textus Receptus. The text they produced (in 1881) was based upon a careful analysis of the Greek manuscripts existing at that time. They worked for 29 years on a multitude of Greek manuscripts, comparing their variant readings. These included copies of the NT or parts of the NT, lectionaries, and quotations from the NT in the writings of the early Church fathers.

Westcott and Hort did not decide arbitrarily to favour one or two manuscripts over others because of their early dating. Their approach involved the labourious comparison of hundreds of sets of variants, in hundreds of manuscripts and then classifying the manuscripts into groups according to their tendencies to support similar readings. It was only after 29 years of work along these lines that they came to believe that Codex Vaticanus (so named because it, along with many other important early Christian documents, is held in the Vatican Library) more often (but not always) contained what they believed were readings most likely to be original.

Things have moved on since the time of Westcott and Hort, and NT textual scholars today have access to manuscripts not available to them. The methods used by Westcott and Hort have been refined, and improved. The work of modern scholars tends to be less dependent upon the 'external' support alone (whether a particular variant has the support of such and such manuscripts) and takes more notice of the internal considerations (which variants can be explained as having developed from others, etc)."

"NT textual scholars have no axe to grind. They are seeking by scientific methods to make rational choices between the hundreds of sets of variants that exist in the hand written Greek manuscripts." ¹⁸

The discipline which makes judgments on which copies of ancient texts are the most accurate is biblical criticism.

Biblical Criticism

The New Bible Dictionary states, "Biblical Criticism is the application to the biblical writings of certain techniques which are used in the examination of many kinds of literature in order to establish as far as possible their original wording, ...". This discipline is divided into several specialist areas; Textual Criticism, Literary Criticism and Form Criticism. When a KJV advocate commends the KJV because it is based on what is alleged to be a better text, whether he likes it or not, what he is doing is engaging in 'textual criticism'. He is making value judgments based on what others have presented to him. Academics who work in this field are trained to a very high level. Regarding textual criticism, *The New Bible Dictionary* states, "Textual criticism is the discipline by which an attempt is made to restore the original wording of a document where this has been altered in the course of copying and recopying." From this we can see that this area of study is very important. Scholars who engage in this work are seeking by every means possible to bring to us a text which is faithful to the original manuscripts. The problem for the lay person who does not understand Hebrew or Greek, and is not able to examine the ancient documents, is that he is vulnerable to

arguments which are beyond his scope to adequately assess.

Material from KJV advocates usually conveys the idea that they are on a mission to preserve the original text from corruption by modern translators. The impression given is that they are the only ones seriously engaged in preserving the original wording of the Bible. However, such a view is completely false. Biblical criticism is the discipline which not only seeks to uncover and maintain the original wording of the Bible, it also works on exposing false ideas which are imposed on the Word of God. Lower criticism should not be confused with 'higher criticism' where too often, the false subjective ideas of the scholar are imposed on the work.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, devotes eleven pages to the subject of biblical criticism. Perhaps chief among those in the past who did not hold the Bible to be the inspired word of God are two German men; Graf and Wellhausen who engaged in higher criticism. The encyclopaedia devotes six and a half pages to exposing and explaining the false ideas of these two men (Vol. 2, pp. 754-760). Evangelicals who engage in biblical criticism are well aware that there are some who attempt to degrade the word of God. In other words, they are not asleep at the wheel as it were, allowing mistakes to slip into the modern translations. They are vigilant in their work as the above article in the Encyclopaedia shows.

Regarding which ancient texts are best, experts in this field of study say, "But we have two manuscripts, produced during the 4th century by professional scribes at Alexandria, which contain much more of the New Testament. In fact, **Codex Sinaiticus** contains the whole New Testament. And the slightly older **Codex Vaticanus** takes us as far as Hebrews 9:13). Neither of these manuscripts was used in the preparation of the Authorised Version [KJV]". ¹⁹

Codex Sinaiticus

One of the most valuable documents to come to light is Codex Sinaiticus, so named because it was found in the Monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai. It contains both the O.T. and N.T. complete. It is very ancient, written about the middle of the fourth century. The script is of a very high standard on quality material - vellum. The script is in Greek in uncial letters. A photo of two pages of the Gospel of John is published in the *Pictorial Encyclopaedia Of The Bible*, Vol. 5, p. 700. The high quality of the script is clear from the photo.

This valuable document was not available to the men who worked on the KJV. It was discovered by Constantin Tischendorf and brought from Mount Sinai to Russia in 1859. In 1933, it was purchased by the British Government from the Soviet Government for one hundred thousand pounds - a very large sum of money at that time.

Codex Alexandrus

This is a fifth century manuscript containing most of both testaments. It was presented in 1627 - sixteen years after the publication of the KJV - to King Charles I of England by the Patriarch of Constantinople who obtained it in Alexandria.

Codex Vaticanus

It was written about the middle of the fourth century and has been located in the Vatican Library since at least the fifteenth century. It contains most of both testaments. The text is very neat and without adornment.

As can be seen from the above facts, scholars are in a much better position now to produce a very accurate translation.

False claims answered

Copyright

Modern versions are copyrighted, therefore they are out to make money. That idea overlooks the fact that the British Crown owns the copyright to the KJV. In the beginning, only the Royal Printers could print the KJV. Any Church which wanted a copy had to part with a lot of money, consequently, most Churches waited until their existing version became worn before purchasing the KJV. The situation now is that the Crown does not seek royalty payments for the production of the KJV, consequently, the text to the KJV is freely available on the Internet.

The reason for copyright is not simply for economic reasons. Without copyright, someone for instance, could plagiarise (steal) the text of the NIV, make alterations, and then print the work under the false claim that it is the original. Any work in which a lot of time and effort has been invested should be copyrighted, even if the intention is to make the work freely available on the Internet.

Heresy in North Africa

The claim is sometimes made that there was a lot of heresy in North Africa, therefore, texts from that region can not be trusted. Lets consider a heresy spread by Arius, presbyter of Alexander who died in 336 A.D. Arius denied the eternity of Jesus Christ the Son of God. The Jehovah's Witnesses of today deny the deity of Jesus in a similar way. The Arian controversy went from c.318 to 381 A.D. His views were condemned at the council of Nicea in 325 A.D. While it is true that Arius was from Alexander, it is also true that the best attacks on his false ideas were from men in Alexander. Bishop Alexander of Alexandria was opposed to his false ideas, however, it was the young Athanasius, deacon to Alexander who successfully carried the argument against Arius.

Destruction of the Scriptures in North Africa

The claim is sometimes made that the texts from the Byzantine area are obviously the best, because many copies were made in comparison to the number of copies made in North Africa. However, the reason for the smaller number of texts in North Africa is because that region was overrun by Muslims in the seventh century. They forbade the copying of Scripture and destroyed any copies they came across. Only the Koran was allowed. The Byzantine empire did not suffer the above problem until 1453 when the Islamic Turks conquered Constantinople, later named Istanbul.

Sickness

Some KJV only advocates like to point an accusing finger at any translator of a modern version who got sick during the translation process. The accusation is sometimes made that the sickness is the judgment of God on the person for his involvement in the translation of a modern version. However, this accusation overlooks the fact that some of the KJV translators got sick and died. That's not surprising because they were mostly old men. Should we mistrust the KJV simply because not all of the translators lived to see the completion of the work?

The beliefs of Westcott and Hort

Many KJV only advocates proclaim the view that some of the beliefs of Westcott and Hort are erroneous, and that therefore, all modern versions are flawed, because they are allegedly based on the Greek text of these men which was published in 1881. So what did these men believe?

I have come across statements claimed to have been made by Westcott and Hort in private letters which places some doubt on their respect for the word of God. One quote shows a contempt for inaccuracy in copying the bible. However, that is a completely different thing to contempt for the bible itself. Some statements from these men show they both had a high regard for Scripture and its accuracy after more than one and a half thousand years of copying. In defence of its accuracy, they make the point that, "... if differences of no significance are disregarded, only about one-sixtieth of the words can be regarded as in doubt; and only about one word in a thousand involves both a substantial question of meaning and serious doubt of the correct text."²⁰ It should be remembered, those statistics, while good, refer to the situation back in 1881. The situation has improved since that time with the discovery of more ancient texts.

Some KJV advocates believe we should minutely examine the beliefs of Westcott and Hort with the idea that if a fault can be found, then their work can not be trusted. A problem with that idea - at least for those who believe baptism should only be applied to those who profess faith in Christ - is that if the same scrutiny is applied to the translators behind the KJV, then perhaps we should not trust the KJV because they all believed in infant baptism. Furthermore, King James who authorised the translation was a practising homosexual. However, there is no evidence that the KJV leans toward infant baptism or homosexuality.

Westcott was accused of being involved in spiritism. His written response to the claim is very telling with regard to his faith. He says, "Many years ago I had occasion to investigate 'spiritualistic' phenomena with some care, and I came to a clear conclusion, which I feel bound to express in answer to your circular. It appears to me that in this, as in all spiritual questions, Holy Scripture is our supreme guide. I observe, then, that while spiritual ministries are constantly recorded in the Bible, there is not the faintest encouragement to seek them. The case, indeed, is far otherwise. I cannot, therefore, but regard every voluntary approach to beings such as those who are supposed to hold communication with men through mediums as unlawful and perilous. I find in the fact of the

Incarnation all that man (so far as I can see) requires for life and hope.” We see here that Westcott places himself under the authority of Scripture. He states, “Holy Scripture is our supreme guide”.²¹

I am surprised that some amateur textual critics desire to closely examine the beliefs of those involved in working on the Greek text, and then come to a conclusion on the value of their work, based on their beliefs. Professional textual critics don’t work in that way. They examine texts from around the world. When they find a group of texts in one locality which differs from the rest, they keep the text and it becomes part of the footnotes in good study bibles. Nothing gets thrown out, that is why we can confidently declare that we have the whole of the word of God.

I put this question to the reader, would you like an amateur textual critic to inform you that he is somewhat confident that we have the word of God because he has examined the beliefs of some of those involved in copying the Greek texts? It would need to be admitted that Erasmus was a Roman Catholic, and what of the beliefs of the copyists through the centuries? The professional textual critic works with solid evidence, therefore, he can come to a solid conclusion.

Graf and Wellhausen who engaged in higher criticism were very much concerned with what men who wrote the Scriptures believed. That is because they did not believe the Scriptures to be inspired by God. They also had a high interest in what the copyists believed. Those who join with Graf and Wellhausen in this type of thinking are on the slippery slope into doubts on the trustworthiness of the Word of God.

There have been considerable advances since Westcott and Hort produced their Greek text (1881), particularly in the area of technology. Those who examine ancient texts today can, where necessary, employ advanced photographic techniques such as infrared photography to reveal writing which is not visible to the naked eye. Physically handling fragile texts is no longer necessary. They can be photographed and collated with the help of a computer. Copies can be sent to experts around the world via the Internet for examination and comment. Ancient documents continue to be found, and consequently, research continues. It should come as no surprise that Greek texts superior to that of Westcott and Hort have been produced, and consequently, their 1881 text is no longer the basis of modern translations. Take for instance the English Revised New Testament.

English Revised New Testament

One authority makes the point, “Likewise, it is important to recognize that the English Revised New Testament which came out in 1881 was not directly based on the text of Westcott and Hort, although in many particulars they are the same. The Greek text followed by the Revisers was compiled and published in 1882 in an edition with the KJV and ERV in parallel columns. It is true that the Westcott-Hort text and the English Revised New Testament of 1881 are rather similar to each other, but they are not

identical.”

Further to the above point, “None of the major modern English Bible translations made **since World War II** used the Westcott-Hort text as its base. This includes translations done by theological conservatives, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, the New King James, for example, and translations done by theological liberals, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, the Good News Bible, etc. In a very real sense, the very question of which is superior, Westcott and Hort, or the *textus receptus*, is *passé*, since neither is recognized by experts in the field as the standard text.”²²

Lets summarise

- Erasmus produces the *Textus Receptus* from a few relatively late Greek manuscripts.
- More Greek manuscripts are found and added to the *Textus Receptus* group.
- Additional Greek texts become available and a more reliable text is produced in 1881.
- Additional refinements have been made to the 1881 work. Modern translations are based on the latest refinements in collating and interpreting manuscripts. They are founded on a superior Greek text to that of the old Westcott and Hort text of 1881.

Improved Translations

The men working on the translation of the KJV lamented the fact that they did not have a large number of manuscripts to consult. However, the situation has improved greatly over the years because archeology, and searches within various libraries around the world have unearthed thousands of manuscripts. “During the centuries from the Renaissance to A.D. 1800 a considerable number of Heb. MSS were collected by various universities and libraries. Yet the amount of such material available today is probably three times as great as in A.D. 1800”.²³

Because of an increase in knowledge, the KJV was revised several times, however, the first notable improvement on the KJV came with *Young’s Literal Translation*, published in 1863. Young also produced the high acclaimed *Young’s Analytical Concordance*. Young’s version was followed by the *Revised Version* in 1898. As we have increased our ability to get closer to the meaning of the original N.T. Greek, there has been considerable effort employed in producing yet more faithful translations; some of these are:

- 1863 Young’s Literal Translation.
- 1898 Revised Version. NT only in 1881.
- 1901 The American Standard Version.
- 1946 & 1952 Revised Standard Version.
- 1960 New American Standard Version (NASV).
- 1966 Today’s English Version (Good News For Modern Man, NT).
- 1978 New International Version (NIV). NT 1973.
- 1979 New King James Version
- 2001 English Standard Version (revised in 2007, 2011).

Regarding the need for a modern version of the Bible. The 1769 edition of the KJV says in part in its preface.

“But how shall men meditate in that which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? As it is written, ‘Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian to me’.”²⁴

Having Scripture translated into English which is easily understood by the person on the street is not a new idea as the above quote proves. We must now look at the work of Gail Riplinger who opposes modern versions of the Bible.

Gail Riplinger

In a TV interview in the 1990s, Gail Riplinger claimed that in her counselling of students, she became concerned at what she felt was a lack of zeal in the students for reading the Bible. She attributed the lack of zeal to the modern versions. This led to her long campaign of attacking modern versions, and support for the KJV.

Gail Riplinger published “*New Age Bible Versions*” (NABV) in 1993. It is an attack on modern versions. Several highly respected scholars have some strong comments to make about the book. “**H. Wayne House**, professor at large at Simon Greenleaf University, author and lecturer who holds earned doctorates in both theology and law as well as a master’s degree in biblical and patristic Greek, comments, ‘The foolishness of its various claims are transparent when one takes the time to study them ... NABV is replete with logical, philosophical, theological, biblical, and technical errors ... Riplinger incessantly quotes people out of context... [she] does this repeatedly, page after page...’”²⁵

Dr. Robert Morey says, “This is beyond all doubt the worst book I have ever read. Its pages bristle with so many logical fallacies and biblical, theological, historical and linguistic errors that one wonders where to start.”²⁶

Riplinger claims that B.F. Westcott who co-produced the 1881 edition of the Greek NT which set the pattern for almost all future editions of the Greek text, was involved in spiritism and that therefore his work should not be trusted. However, she confuses **B.F.** with **W.W. Westcott** who was born twenty-three years later in 1848.

A pamphlet which advertises “*New Age Bible Versions*” makes the claim that “The Antichrist will use the new versions to set up his One World New Age Religion, with its mark and worship of the Antichrist and the dragon.” No scripture reference is given or could be given to support this fanciful statement.

The pamphlet also makes the astonishing claim that the King James Version is “... the easiest version to read according to computer analysis based formulas from the Flesch-Kincaid research firm.” That statement ignores the fact that the huge popularity of the modern translations is because they are in the modern vernacular - as was the Koine Greek and the KJV in their day - and are therefore easy to read.

Gail Riplinger makes the claim that in writing her book, she was inspired by God. She says for instance, “... I used G.A. Riplinger, which signifies to me, God and Riplinger -

God as author and Riplinger as secretary.”²⁷

The discerning reader will find her claim to inspiration from God hard to accept in view of the fact that her book contains a large number of mistakes, and by her own admission, it took six years to write.

Does The KJV Develop Zeal?

Many KJV advocates have adopted Gail Riplinger’s idea that switching people to a modern version will fix lack of zeal, however, the well informed will notice two glaring problems. Firstly, this view does not agree with the testimony of many who claim to have an increased interest since taking to reading the Bible in a modern version. Secondly, the idea that switching everyone to the KJV will fix lack of zeal and many theological errors reveals a poor understanding or consideration of recent Church history. The three main views on the second coming; Postmillennialism, Premillennialism and Amillennialism all spread extensively under the reign of the KJV - they can’t all be correct. The errors of the Mormons, the Jehovah’s Witnesses and those of Ellen G. White who advocated abandoning the Christian Sabbath in favour of the Jewish (Saturday) Sabbath all occurred when the KJV was supreme. To that list we can add the many now discredited ideas of the Neo-Pentecostal movement which had its beginnings at the start of the twentieth century, primarily from the teachings of Charles Fox Parham (1873-1929) and William Seymour (1870-1922). Finally, the worldwide drift away from the view that the Bible is the inspired word of God - largely due to the teachings and influence of the German biblical critic Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918) and higher criticism, all occurred when the KJV reigned supreme among the translations. You certainly can’t blame the NIV. It didn’t arrive on the scene until 1978. Clearly, using the KJV won’t prevent errors. It hasn’t worked in the past, and it certainly won’t work now.

I will take this important point one step further. Let’s imagine for a moment that a Church full of very intelligent people decides they will advance themselves ahead of the other Churches by putting aside their English bibles in favour of reading the original Greek. After studying Koine Greek for several months, they are all reading the Bible in the original language. Will this result in extra strong Christians?

We will go way back in history for an answer. The first century Church at Corinth in Greece (south-west of Athens) had many errors which had to be addressed by the apostle Paul. The two books of the New Testament - 1 & 2 Corinthians - reveal that this group of people, were not head and shoulders above the rest of the Churches, or even modern day Churches because of the advantage of their native Koine Greek tongue. The problems in this Church include:

- Divisions in the Church (1 Cor. 1:10)
- Pride in man’s wisdom (1 Cor. 1:20)
- Immorality in the Church (1 Cor. 5:1)
- People settling disputes in the law courts instead of before fellow brethren (1 Cor. 6:1)

A quick read through the two books addressed to the Corinthian Church will reveal many other problems.

Documents from the early Church Fathers reveal continuing problems which were addressed in the Bible. Clearly, becoming an expert in the original Greek is not going to catapult a person to great heights in the estimation of almighty God. The Bible warns us to not merely listen to the Word of God and be an expert in theology, or in this or that wording. We must be careful to do what it says (James 1:22).

I will now bring up a piece of history which will be of particular interest to Baptists, but it has an important message for others as well.

Charles Spurgeon and the down-grade

Charles Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a man of great ability as a preacher, matched with a humble Christ-like character. The London Metropolitan Tabernacle, was a church specially designed and built to accommodate the large crowd which pressed in to hear him, however, it was soon filled beyond capacity to more than 6,000 each Sunday. Spurgeon rarely preached in the open air, however, when he did, his audience was large. On at least two occasions the crowd numbered more than 20,000. He became known as the 'Prince of Preachers'. A major reason for the high regard in which Spurgeon is held by evangelicals, was his complete trust in the Bible being the inspired word of God.

In the 1880s, the Baptists, along with other denominations were suffering under ideas which devalued the authority of the Bible. In 1887, Spurgeon published his first 'down-grade' article in *The Sword and The Trowel* (a widely circulated periodical) because of his conviction along with others that liberal ideas were downgrading Scripture. The articles aimed at bringing people back to a sound position on key doctrines, and to Scripture generally.

Considerable tension developed in the Baptist Union between the few who followed the biblical position of Spurgeon, and others who had leanings to some degree toward the liberal ideas. Matters came to a head in October 1887 when Spurgeon submitted his personal resignation from the Union which had profited tremendously from his work. Spurgeon's Church resigned soon afterwards at which point it became the largest independent Church in the world!

Liberal ideas which Spurgeon was fighting spread in all denominations with destructive effect. The love of the people for the things of the Lord began to grow cold. We can't blame the modern translations for the 'downgrade'; nearly everyone was using the KJV!

While drawing lessons from history, I will bring up another point. Some KJV advocates believe everyone should be using one translation for the sake of harmony; that translation should be the KJV. A lesson from Islam regarding the Koran might be helpful at this point.

The Koran

After the Koran was written down by the scribes of Mohammed (Mohammed himself was illiterate), many copies were made by others. Over time, errors accumulated and several versions developed. A decision was finally made to solve the problem. The version which was deemed

to be the most accurate was selected and all other versions were destroyed.

The above solution is quite suitable to Islam because conformity and religious ritual are very important. For the Christian however, *truth* is important. For that reason, we can not take the above destructive approach to Scripture, just for the sake of conformity. The Roman Catholics have unity under the pope, and the Jehovah's Witness sect has unity under one set of teaching, but they do not hold to the truth. One further point on the destructive action of the early Islamic leaders with the Koran; Christian scholars actually take the very opposite approach. Small errors which have crept in over the centuries are kept. Many alternate readings are printed in the footnotes of good study bibles. See for instance the "*New International Version Study Bible*". Because nothing has been thrown out, the Christian can assert with confidence that every word of the Bible has been preserved. We will now turn our attention to the problem of false accusations against the NIV.

False Accusations

It was reported in a May 1997 edition of "*New Life*" Christian newspaper that someone was spreading the false claim that the NIV translation team was attempting to make the NIV gender neutral in future translations. A senior member of the team made the point that he grew up memorising 2 Corinthians 5:17 as, "Therefore if any **man** {be} in Christ, {he is} a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (KJV).

He made the point that the NIV team has translated the verse so that it reads, "Therefore, if **anyone** is in Christ, he is a new creation; ..." (NIV).

He further states that no one complains about the change to 'anyone' because that is what the original Greek means (Gk. *ei tis en Christo*). He also gives the assurance that there is no attempt by the team to divert from the original Greek and make the NIV in future editions non-gender specific. The other modern translations also use the word 'anyone' in place of 'any man'.

Also, the claim by some that the modern translations do not clearly condemn homosexuality is false, as a check of the following references will show: Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Romans 1:26-27, 1 Cor. 6:9-10, 1 Timothy 1:10, Jude 7.

We will now look at a verse which is inaccurately translated by most versions, not just the KJV, probably because it is difficult to translate into English.

Matthew 16:19

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matthew 16:19, KJV).

A literal translation of the Textus Receptus and the Nestle Greek documents says "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatever you bind on earth shall occur, having been bound in Heaven. And whatever you may loose on the earth shall be, having been loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16:19).²⁸

The NIV also gives a wrong translation of the Greek.

There is a big difference between the disciples acting according to the pattern of heaven, and heaven acting according to the dictates of the disciples.

KJV Strengths

The KJV correctly uses a small 's' in 1 Corinthians 14:2, thus clearly showing that the Apostle is talking about the spirit of a man and not about God's Spirit (the NIV and some others are also correct). In 2 Samuel 5:21 KJV is better, also Matt. 9:13, Mark 1:14, 9:44, 13:14, Luke 7:29).

Stumbling Block

Some people have used the King James Version for many years and prefer to stay with that version; they should not be forced to change. Unfortunately, some who use the KJV try to force others to use it. They need to recognise that many people - especially the young - have difficulty reading and understanding that version. If they force a young person to try and read that version, they may be inadvertently putting a stumbling-block in their path to reading and enjoying the Bible.

Drawing on my own experience of reading the Bible from cover to cover more than ten times in various versions, I can confidently say that it is reading the Bible that has been the most significant help to me in grasping biblical doctrine, not the reading of one particular version. Furthermore, I can quite strongly state that I have not made a doctrinal change due to the influence of a particular version.

Good and bad versions of the Bible

A good beginner's Bible is the *Today's English Version* (TEV) otherwise known as the *Good News Bible*. This version is very easy to read. It also has sketches which can be very helpful for a beginner in finding and remembering a particular passage. Some object to the sketches being in the Bible, however, it must be remembered that the original documents did not have chapters and verses. For details on that point, see my paper, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, available from the main page of the web site.

The *New International Version* (NIV) enjoys high popularity for good reason, it is easy to read, and is very accurate. The NIV Study Bible is highly recommended. The *English Standard Version* (ESV) is a good version, as is the *American Standard Version*.

A version which has caused some disquiet among scholars is *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language*, by Eugene H. Peterson. I must add my name to the list of those who disapprove of this version. The first thing that strikes me as odd about this version is the front cover. Eugene Peterson has his name in capital letters across the front cover - at least with the copy I looked at. One of the charges against this version is quite serious, that is, there appears to be a considerable amount of *New Age* thinking behind the translation. In good translations, the word 'Lord' appears over 7,000 times. This noun is used more than any other noun. In contrast, *The Message* uses the word only 71 times. In place of Lord, *The Message* uses the *New Age* favoured word 'master'. *The Message* never

directly honours Jesus Christ as Lord. It is in company with Judas the betrayer who also did not honour Christ as Lord. It says for instance, "Then some of them from Cyprus and Cyrene who had come to Antioch started talking to Greeks, giving them the message of the **Master Jesus**." (Acts 11:20). "And what we believe is that the One who raised up the **Master Jesus** will just as certainly raise us up with you, alive." (2 Corinthians 4:14). "... the grace of the **Master Jesus** be with you. Oh Yes!" (Revelation 22:21).

The list of complaints against *The Message* translation by Eugene Peterson is quite long, so I won't attempt to deal with them here. I simply urge readers to consider an alternative translation such as the *Good News* translation. Critical reviews of *The Message* are worth reading for those who want to delve further.

The Clear Word Bible

This is a Seventh Day Adventist Bible which is not even supported by the vast majority of Seventh Day Adventists. It has Seventh Day Adventist ideas which are not just added into the footnotes, but are added into the text itself. The insertions blatantly ignore the warning given in the last book of the Bible, "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book." (Revelation 22:18).

Some senior men in the Adventist camp try to counter criticism of the book by claiming it is not a translation, but rather, a paraphrase. However, this ignores the fact that a paraphrase is actually accurate reporting in an easy to read style. Changing the report under the guise that it is a paraphrase is actually fraud. One example of text being added to support SDA doctrine is found at Daniel 8:14 which actually says, "He said to me, 'It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated.'" (8:14. NIV).

The SDA version says, "After two thousand three hundred Prophetic days (or, two thousand three hundred Years), God will step in, proclaim the truth about Himself, and restore the ministry of the sanctuary in heaven to its rightful place. This is when the judgment will begin, of which the cleansing of the earthly sanctuary was a type" (8:14. CWB). Clearly, there is a significant amount of adding to the word of God here. This version belongs in the rubbish bin.

Another version which makes changes to support false doctrine is *The New World Translation*. It is marketed by the Watchtower Society. This is a large society which dictates the doctrines and practices of the Jehovah's Witness sect. This sect denies the divinity of Christ and the personhood of the Holy Spirit. To maintain their denials, they had to bring out their own translation of the Bible, a translation which is not supported by any other denomination. Some of the changes they made include the change to John 1:1. "In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a **god**." (TNWT). Accurate translations say, "... the Word **was God**." (NIV). In John 14:14 they leave out the word 'me' which points to Christ being divine. "If you

ask anything in my name, I will do it" (TNWT). The text actually says, "You may ask **me** for anything in my name, and I will do it" (NIV).

People caught up in this sect are forbidden from reading an accurate version of the Bible such as the NIV. They are also forbidden from attending another Church and from reading material which is critical of Jehovah's Witness doctrines. Those who follow the above strict rules are trapped in the thinking of the sect.

It is interesting that KJV only advocates can go to great lengths making assertions that good modern versions are corrupting the Word of God, and yet not offer one word in criticism about translations which really are corrupt.

Guidelines

When assessing various translations, it is important to do so in an impartial manner. KJV advocates sometimes use emotionally loaded words such as *missing* or *added*. The curses of Revelation 22:18-19 are then called down upon the offending translation. However, the KJV can also be charged with having words that are missing or added. A case of words being added is, 'cast the same in his teeth'. Originally, the translators added the Apocrypha!

Beware of bias. If a book mentions what are deemed to be errors in modern translations, but fails to mention a single error in the KJV, then clearly, the report is biased.

Beware of character assassination. As mentioned earlier, one report claims B.F. Westcott who co-produced the 1881 edition of the Greek NT was involved in spiritism; he was not. I am bemused that writers who are opposed to the modern translations resort to character assessment in order to gain some advantage. The same tactic could be used very effectively against the KJV. By way of example:

Erasmus who produced the Greek text on which the KJV is based, was far removed from evangelical Christianity in his thinking. He was the illegitimate son of a Roman Catholic priest. He in turn became a priest (when he was about twenty-five) and remained committed to the pope all his life.

In 1529, thirteen years after he published the Greek text, it is clear that he rejects the gospel when he writes to Vulturius Neocomus (Gerardus Geldenhower), "... Show me any one person who by that Gospel has been reclaimed from drunkenness to sobriety, from fury and passion to meekness, from avarice to liberty, from reviling to well-speaking, from wantonness to modesty. I will show you a great many who have become worse through following it ..."

In his 1533 work titled, "*Explanation of the Apostles Creed*", he takes a stand against Luther and his complete trust in the Word of God by asserting that the unwritten sacred tradition of the Roman Catholic Church is just as valid a source of revelation as the Bible.²⁹ However, Erasmus did not insert Roman Catholic beliefs into his Greek text.

King James initiated the production of the King James Version of the Bible. As a young man, James was schooled in the message of the Bible, however, he never became a

Christian or submitted to the teachings of the Bible. He became a homosexual and had lustful relationships with several men.

The **translation team** for the KJV was made up of Anglicans (Church of England). I must emphasise at this point that no person on the team believed a person must first place their faith in Jesus Christ before being baptised. They all believed in infant christening. Furthermore, this group of men had to follow a rule set down by James, that being, they were not allowed to use the word *assembly*, as was used in previous translations. They had to use the word *Church* instead. The reason being, the word *Church* pointed to the Anglican Church over which James was king. James was not prepared to be subject to the Bible, but he wanted everyone to be subject to him.

History is a teacher

When we look at history to learn of the influence of the false ideas of the above men on those who read the KJV, we find that it has had no effect at all. For instance, people did not develop an interest in Roman Catholic teachings because the production of the Greek text (used by the KJV translators) was by a man (Erasmus) who was a devout Roman Catholic.

People did not abandon evangelical Christianity and believers' baptism, and rush off to the Anglican Church because those behind the translation of the KJV were of that view. The reason is simple, there is no bias in the KJV translation apart from the word *Church* - as far as this writer is aware. The writers put aside their views to produce an accurate translation (for the 17th century age) with the limited amount of material available to them.

While on the subject of history, I must point to the period of about 1880 to 1920. As mentioned earlier, Julius Wellhausen led many Christians into disbelief in the inspiration and authority of Scripture. This slide into disbelief is known as the 'downgrade'. The KJV was predominantly the version in use when this massive slide took place. You can't blame the KJV for the distrust by many in the Word of God; there are many examples of people using the KJV who didn't fall away.

The Bible College movement began in 1904 to counter the liberal teaching which was coming into many Churches through the pulpit. Please note, it was the Bible College movement which acted as a bulwark against liberal theology, not one particular version of the Bible. Bible Colleges mostly used modern versions when they became available. When I was at the Sydney Missionary and Bible College (1974-75) they were using the Revised Standard Version.

Liberalism

Another term used - particularly in the US - to describe a diminished doctrinal standard in the Church is liberalism. Liberalism began to influence the Church toward the end of the 19th century. In liberalism, the authority of the word of God is diminished and the offense of the gospel is removed in an attempt to make the Church popular with people. One writer says regarding liberalism, "No one expressed the irony of liberalism better than H. Richard Niebuhr when he said in

liberalism “A God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a Cross.”³⁰

Several godly men took firm action against the rise of liberalism, one was **Lyman Stewart**, a wealthy oilman in Southern California who believed something needed to be done to reaffirm Christian truths in the face of higher criticism and liberal theology. Lyman began with the support of Rev. Amzi Dixon in 1909. Sixty-four men of good theological standing were chosen to produce a series of small books titled *The Fundamentals*. Finances were then arranged to publish and distribute the books. Three million copies of the books were sent to theological students, Christian ministers, and missionaries around the world free of charge.³¹

Thanks to the above effort, many Churches and organisations were restored to a sound faith, mostly in America. The work of Lyman Stewart and others is similar to that of the Bible College movement. What the Bible College movement did was place an emphasis on the inspiration and authority of Scripture. Church pastors need to follow that example. It is not sufficient to simply quote 2 Timothy 3:16 regarding Scripture. People need to understand in a powerful and tangible way that God has spoken; they need to have their attention focussed from time to time on that great event at Mt Sinai where God spoke so loudly that the whole mountain shook. There is a strong connection between the Mt Sinai passage Ex. 19:9, 16-19 and 2 Tim. 3:16. That connection should not be broken. I won't say anymore on this subject because it is covered in detail in my paper, *The Objectivity Of The faith: A faith with a firm foundation*. I will give a short list of papers on my web site which will be helpful to those who wish to know more. Reading good literature like the following is important, because it is possible to have a stack of Bibles on the shelf, and yet be weak in the faith from lack of knowledge.

- The Objectivity Of The Faith: A faith with a firm foundation.
- The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture.
- God's Method Of Saving Sinners.
- The Kingdom Of God.
- Just A Few Accidents.

The Kingdom of God may seem like a strange choice to place in this list, however, it is a big theme in Scripture, and it is important to see how Christ is central to the theme.

Just A Few Accidents is included because our society is bombarded with the theory of evolution message. This single page quickly demolishes the atheistic theory of evolution story. Finally, Christians should be well grounded in the subject of God's method of saving sinners. It is not sufficient in a challenging environment to simply believe Jesus saves. Believers need to know why salvation through Christ is the only way a person can be put right with God. A short paper on this subject is a free download from the web site.

Summary

The King James Version should be held up to the same scrutiny as every other version. If the original documents spoke to the average person in a clear manner, then a translation must also speak to modern man in a clear manner. It must also accurately convey what was originally stated. Finally, my advice is similar to that of the KJV translation team. Read through several translations!

A person starting out on the wonderful journey of reading through the Bible should consider an easy to read version such as *Today's English Version* (TEV) otherwise known as the Good News Bible.

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth” (John 17:17)

Footnotes

The additional detailed points may be of interest to some:

- The use of the Septuagint in the New Testament.
- Preface to the KJV.
- Non-Christian Scribes.

The Septuagint

Patrick Fairbairn (1805-1874) who for a time served as divinity professor at the Free Church College in Aberdeen, and then as principal of the Free Church College at Glasgow says of the quotations of the Septuagint in the book of Hebrews, "...they are uniformly taken from the Septuagint (i.e., the old Greek translation of the Old Testament), even where that differs materially from the original Hebrew. The New Testament writers generally, and the apostle Paul in particular, very frequently quoted from that version, because it was in common use in the synagogues, and had acquired a kind of standard value. But they also, in many cases, departed from it, when it did not give at least the general sense of the original. This, however, is never done in the Epistle to the Hebrews; the Septuagint version is almost uniformly quoted from, whether it gives or deviates from the exact meaning. Thus the words of the 97th Psalm, rendered in ch. 1:6, "Let all the angels of God worship Him," are literally, [in the original Hebrew] "Worship Him, all ye gods," (Patrick Fairbairn, "*Typology of Scripture*", Kregel, Grand Rapids, © 1989, Vol. 1, p. 394).

Fairbairn further makes the point that Hebrews quotes from the Septuagint translation of Psalm 8:4-6 which says, "You have made him a little lower than the angels..." but the original Hebrew says, "Thou has made him want a little of God".

It is quite clear that the writer to the Hebrews who was inspired of God was given a great deal of freedom in quoting Scripture, so that he was able to quote from the Septuagint translation, even when it deviated from the original. What was important in the above examples was the message which was conveyed, and not the original words of the Hebrew.

I must emphasise at this point that the writer to the Hebrews was inspired of God, and had his authority from God to quote from the Septuagint. I believe the message to us is that we should avoid being champions of using the correct words while losing sight of the message which each particular passage of Scripture is conveying to us.

Fairbairn says, "We must contend for every jot and tittle of the word, when the adversary seeks, by encroaching on these, to impair or corrupt the truth of God. But we are not absolutely bound up to that; we may freely use even a general or incomplete representation of its meaning, if by so doing we are more likely to get a favourable hearing for the important truths it unfolds. Correctness without scrupulosity should be the rule here, as in the Christian life generally." ("*Typology of Scripture*", Vol. 1, p. 395). See also, **Bible Translation**, "*The New Dictionary of Theology*", IVP, Leicester England, 1988, p. 92.

Preface to the KJV

Augustine, a respected early Church theologian, is quoted by the KJV translation team in favour of using several translations to get the correct sense of Scripture.

Many KJV people will only use the KJV. However, the KJV translators say, "Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that varietie of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures:"

Regarding notes in the margin, they say, "... so diversitie of signification and sense in the margine, where the text is not so cleare, must needes doe good, yea is necessary, as we are perswaded." (Preface to the KJV, 1611. Old English spelling is preserved in the quote).

The preface to the KJV, along with other helpful material is only one click away in the recommended web site section.

Non-Christian Scribes

The Winter edition of *SMBC News* (2010) reports that **Dr Alan Mugridge**, Senior New Testament Lecturer, was recently awarded his New Testament Doctorate. His thesis was titled 'Stages of development in scribal professionalism in early Christian circles'. Before starting his thesis, Alan was told by his supervisor that there is some indication that early Christians made use of secular scribes to copy Christian texts. Alan wanted to test that idea. Alan worked on the thesis for seven and a half years (2002-2010). In response to the question, "What were some of the key findings that you found particularly interesting?" Alan responded, "In my view, the large variety of Christian manuscripts from the 2nd - 4th Century (about 500 of them) show that a professional copyist (scribe) produced the vast majority of them. Further, there is often no way of telling if the copyist was a Christian or not. If this is so, then they were mostly produced by people whose occupation was producing accurate copies of texts - and hence had no reason to change these Christian manuscripts. This implies that they were mostly copied to the best of their ability, which offers support for their accuracy." (**Dr Alan Mugridge**, *SMBC News*, Winter 2010, Edition 20).

Unless otherwise indicated, the addition of **bold type** within quotes reflects the emphasis of the author of this article.

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Recommended Reading

Prices given reflect Australian stores in March 2012, and will obviously change over time.

- J. Ankerberg and J. Weldon, “*Facts on the King James Only Debate*”, Harvest House Publishers, 48 pages.
- Dr. D. Carson, “*The King James Version Debate*”, Baker Book House, 128 pages. (\$19.95, in ‘E’ book format \$9.25).
- James R. White, “*The King James Only Controversy*”, Bethany House, 336 pages. (\$13.95 from ‘Koorong Books’, Australia).

Regarding the book by **James White**, the publisher says, “Modern Bible translations still come under attack from the King James Only camp. In this revision of a book continually in print for more than ten years, James R. White traces the development of Bible translations old and new, investigating the differences between versions like the NIV, NASB, and NKJV and the Authorized Version of 1611. Written with the layperson in mind, *The King James Only Controversy* leads the reader through the basic issues of the debate and into the more complex issues of textual criticism. Enlightening reading for all Christians.”

Web sites

- <http://www.skypoint.com/members/waltzmn/TR.html> (this site has good technical information on the Textus Receptus).
- <http://www.kjvibibles.com/kjvpreface.htm> Preface to the original (1611) KJV Bible. Note the support for using several translations toward the end of the preface.
- <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611-Bible/> The 1611 KJV Bible on line, also with the fifteen books of the Apocrypha.
- Lord Melvyn Bragg speaks on the positive impact of the King James Bible on the English speaking world: <http://www.abc.net.au/tv/bigideas/stories/2012/04/02/3467689.htm>
- Good web site on KJV debate: <http://www.kjvonly.org>
- Below: An informative debate on the King James Version between James White and Jack Moorman (1 hr 27 min.).
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbQLAavs7Hw>
- Below: This short video is on a passage of Scripture proven to be missing from the KJV.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbmLdss5uqQ>
- Below: Response to a poorly informed attack on the NIV. A pastor actually burnt some NIV Bibles. (DrOakley1689, Time 19 min 39 sec.).
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5T2aqbyxuA>
- ‘What’s the Big Deal with King James Onlyism?’, Dr James White answers false claims made by Sam Gipp, Part 1, 22 min. in length:
- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNGa_dRTNMo
- Part 2, 9 minutes:
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWoMNLviU4>
- On errors in the “*New World Translation*” (Jehovah’s Witness Bible).
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End Notes

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