

The 1611 Authorized King James Translation of the Bible ... and the Bible

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As God has been granting me spiritual opportunities via the internet, I have been encountering brethren, in church settings, where The King James translation of the Bible is heralded as *the* Bible. All other translations originate from the pit ... and will descend into it. Those propagating this "*faith*" will be referred to as "*KJV only*" here. They are not my target audience. This Article is for those *who have been told* the KJV is *the only* legitimate English translation of the Bible ... yet, are having some nagging questions about the truth of this position.

I do not know anyone who has ever read the Authorized 1611 King James Translation of the Bible. I do not even know anyone *who has seen* the Authorized 1611 King James Translation. In fact, if those of the "*KJV only*" group actually had this translation in their hands, they likely could not read it. With some coaching, they would learn that what looked like an "*f*" is actually an "*s*." But, before long, they would encounter foreign words - with no idea of their meaning (holpen, knop, neeing, Osee, wot, wottech, wit ... just to name a few). They would need to retranslate this into current English. Come to think of it, ... that is exactly what has happened.

The 24th, ... I Mean 26th, ... Uh, Actually the Unknown Revision Number of my KJV Translations

When the "*KJV only*" translators retranslate the "*Textus Receptus*," they call the new translation a new "*revision*." They justify using the word, "*revision*" over, "*translation*" because these new translators (revisionists?) use the same manuscripts the original 1611 translators used (the *Textus Receptus*).

For this Article, I rounded up my KJV Bibles, and turned to each one's "*Preface*" to see what revisions of the original 1611 translation I possess. While each Editor acknowledges I do have a revision, the number of the revision ... is not stated. This is rather curious. One time (in the early 1980's), I told a "*KJV only*" man he probably had the 24th (or 26th? - I can't remember now) revision of the 1611 translation. He proceeded to almost run off the road, frantically flipping through the Preface of the Bible on his dashboard. After finding my assertion was correct, I was quite relieved when his wild-eyed eyes refocused on the road.

So, why would the Editors withhold the revision number on my newer copies of the KJV? Has the revision number become so high that they feel it would be better ... to hide it? Surely not! These people are publishing ... the Bible! So, why this *deliberate* omission? There maybe a very base motive. But, first ...

If anyone wants to read the 26th revision of the KJV (or whatever is the current revision number) ... do it. And if a church wants to use some preferred revision number as their pulpit Bible, that is absolutely fine. But if a person, or church, or denomination insists this translation, or any of its *dozens* of revisions, is the only true Word of God - that is an issue that must be taken on ... and taken down. The Word of God is an exceedingly important theological matter. God uses His Word in the salvation event (Mt 13:1-23, 1Pet 1:23,24, Ja 1:18, etc.) and in a Christian's subsequent growth (1Pet 2:2, Eph 5:26, etc.). To place some doctrine on The Word of God itself is a subject of the highest order. Ignorance, or error, on a subject this important must be exposed.

The Rejection of Knowledge

Those holding “*KJV only*” demonstrate a lack of knowledge in three major fields of study - Textual Criticism (Lower Criticism), Biblical Languages and the History of Translations. They do not understand the goals, history, evidences or current status of these disciplines. Whether this is willful darkness, or just a lack of interest, is ultimately irrelevant. The journey of the Biblical documents from the original author’s pen, to the copy in one’s hand - may indeed be as much of a miracle as any miracle recorded in its pages. While knowledge *of the Bible’s contents* is of first importance, knowledge *about the Bible* runs a close second. Knowledge of Biblical languages, and the copying and transmission history of these documents, enhances one’s ability to accurately handle - and present - its contents. Knowledge, accurate knowledge, is always ... a good thing. “*Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2Pet 3:18).

An Exception: The New King James Translators

The Preface to The New King James Translation, fifth revision, 1994, is a noteworthy exception to the charges just levied. The publisher addresses these fields of study - and accurately represents them - yet, still defers to the *Textus Receptus*. The publisher even includes these “*contrary materials*” in that translation’s textual apparatus. This integrity *commends the publisher* - and serves the readers of this translation, and its revisions, well. But, I have the feeling the “*KJV only*” adherents deem the New King James publisher a wayward brother - or disown him outright.

I have always found it interesting to listen to anyone who teaches the Bible (whether “*KJV only*” adherents ... or others). When expounding a verse, the preacher/teacher often *rephrases that verse* - using synonyms, etc. - so as to make its meaning more understandable. This activity is in itself ... re-translating. It just happens to be verbal and not written down. Presenters of the Bible are almost continuously in a re-translation mode when expounding the Scriptures.

“The Faith”

As one reads various prefaces of KJV Bibles, it is not just the omission of the revision number that stands out. For example, these publishers know that *red lettering* Jesus’ words is a modern day fabrication - and that many in their audience will errantly exalt these particular words over the rest of the God-breathed materials. As one reads the justifications for this (and several other subjects) - it becomes increasingly clear these publishers *are pandering to a niche market* - and if they do not produce a Bible for this group ... someone else will. I am indeed assigning a very base motive here - but my Christian experience has shown that when money becomes part of the equation ... very strange things happen. “*A root of all the evils is the cherishing of silver*” (1Tim 6:10 - this is not KJV, as they really botched that verse). Error, of any kind, in any arena, is destined for a short life-span.

Those who insist the KJV is the only Word of God, are calling on others to adopt this “*faith*.” “*We believe the 26th revision (or whatever it is now) of the original 1611 translation, authorized by King James of England is inspired by God. Its translators were borne along by the Holy Ghost ... as were the translators of the other 25 revisions. Furthermore, we believe the Byzantine texts, which Middle Age theologians compiled into the Textus Receptus, is flawless.*” Call me a simpleton, but I believe “*All Scripture is God-breathed ...*” (2Tim 3:16), not, “*The 26th revision of the 1611 King James Translation of Scripture ... is God-breathed.*” I have no desire to add this to the Word of God ... and present that as “*Biblical faith*.” This would be similar to asking one to believe the Pope’s “*ex cathedra*” (from the throne) declarations are on par with the Word of God. Sorry, ... not an option.

Conclusion

I have no desire to patronize whatever audience God allows me touch. There is no point. It never leads to spiritual prosperity. In fact, in my experience, the mentality that leads to embracing “*KJV only*” - does not end with just the rejection of Textual Criticism, Biblical Languages, and Translation History. They also reject, and often demonize, those engaged in these objective, fact-filled studies. This exposes a serious spiritual problem possessed by these “*believers*.” Clinging to error is personally dangerous on several fronts. For starters, errant beliefs - no matter how fervently held or heralded - *are abysses void of God*. Secondly, genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. “*When He, the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth*” (Jn 16:13). The Word of God is so foundational to the entire Christian faith, that there is absolutely **no way** He is leading any Christian to adopt this “*KJV only*” position. God does not exist in - or promote - error. This persuasion is either from the flesh (stubbornness, pride, fear, willful ignorance - or some toxic combination) ... or else demons. Brethren, do not yield to it. That is not God’s call to you.

Well, here is a question for the “*KJV only*” group (in case any *might* be reading). Are other cultures only supposed to read the 26th (?) revision of the 1611 KJV ... even if they do not know English? If you really think this question through ... you are going to get all knotted up.

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