

KJV — Best in English

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- A. Questions: Has God's word been accurately preserved and reliably translated into English? Are there spiritually fatal errors in modern translations? Which Bible in English is the best?
- B. Clarification: I am not affirming that the KJV is an absolutely perfect translation. I recognize that on occasion we must check the original language with the KJV for clarity and fullness of meaning. I am not opposed to the idea of a present-day attempt to translate the Bible. I'm not affirming that the KJV translators were perfect (or inspired) men. I'm not saying it is a sin to own or even read and check what other translations say. I am affirming as my title says: The KJV continues to be the best English translation.
- C. The following 6 points will demonstrate how we got the Bible and why I consider the KJV to be the best in English today.

I. REVELATION

- A. God has always disclosed His will to man — Gen. 2:16; 4:1-11; the prophet Enoch (Gen. 5:19-24; Jude 14); the preacher Noah (Gen. 6:1-3; 2 Peter 2:5); all the Gentile world from creation had revelation from God (Rom. 1:18-32); Israel was selected by God to be His chosen nation to bring Christ into the world and was given a written law (Rom. 3:1-2); the revelation which came through Christ was and is for all people (Heb 1:1-2; Rom 1:16-17).
- B. The New Testament claims to be the final revelation from God. (John 16:13; Heb. 9:15-17; Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3)

II. INSPIRATION

- A. God not only revealed His will, but inspired those who spoke it and wrote it (2 Sam. 23:2; Amos 3:7; Eph. 3:1-7; Deut. 29:29; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; I Cor. 2:9-14; Gal 1:10-11). These verses teach that the Bible claims both verbal (words) and plenary (all parts) inspiration.
- B. When one surveys Bible claims for revelation and inspiration, he sees the following:
 - 1. O.T. for itself — Exodus 24:4; Jer. 1:9; Neh. 9:20, 30; 2 Sam. 23:2
 - 2. N.T. for itself — I Cor. 14:37; Gal. 1:10-12; I Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16
 - 3. N.T. for O.T. — 2 Peter 1:20-21; 2 Tim. 3:15-17
 - 4. O.T. for N.T. — Jer. 31:31-34
 - 5. Christ for the O.T. — John 5:39; Luke 24:44; Matt. 23:35 (note: Jesus viewed the O.T. as the voice of God — Matt. 19:4-6)
 - 6. Christ for the N.T. — John 14:26; 16:13

III. CONFIRMATION

- A. God not only revealed and inspired His word, but authenticated it with miraculous confirmation.
- B. O.T. examples: Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel
- C. N.T. examples: Christ and the apostles and prophets of the N.T.
- D. John 20:30-31; Mark 2:10; John 3:2; Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3-4; I Thess. 1:5; 2 Cor. 12:12; Acts 8:5-13
- E. The miraculous signs and gifts of the N.T., having served their purpose of revelation and confirmation, passed away when the N.T. was complete and disseminated (I Cor. 13:8-11; Eph. 4:7-15).
- F. There is no need for miraculous confirmation today because the Bible is self-authenticating — by that I mean it possesses qualities that prove it is what it claims to be: supernatural unity, pre-scientific, predictive prophecies, historical and archaeological precision (the Koran, the book of Mormon, the catechism, etc. originate with men and do not possess these divine attributes).

IV. DISSEMINATION

- A. The Bible was not only revealed and confirmed, it was universally disseminated between AD 33 and AD 70 (Mark 16:20; Col. 1:5-6, 23; Rom. 10:17-18; Matt. 24:14).
- B. Jesus said He would send forth inspired men and also inspired scribes (Matt. 23:34; Rom. 16:22; I Peter 5: 12; Col. 4:16). This is sometimes overlooked in such a study as this, but these points clearly indicate that by the end of the apostolic period there were thousands of infallible copies of the Greek N.T. circulated among churches of Christ. Nobody voted on these letters as to whether or not they would be included in the N.T. or not. No uninspired man-made council later decided what books would be in the N.T. New Testament books were received and miraculously authenticated immediately as God's word. The canon of the N.T. was not developed slowly nor established by uninspired men.

V. PRESERVATION OF THE TEXT

- A. If God has the power to speak the universe into existence and verbally inspire all 66 books of the Bible, He certainly has the power (in His providential care) to preserve His words down through time.
- B. The O.T. claims verbal preservation — Psa. 12:5-6; 78:1-7; 119:89
- C. The N.T. claims verbal preservation — 2 John 2; I Peter 1:24-25
- D. Jesus affirmed O.T. preservation — down to the “jot” and “tittle” — Matt. 5:17-18
- E. Jesus affirmed N.T. preservation — John 12:48; Matt. 24:35
- F. Preservation is essential for every generation to be able to obey God's will — Matt. 4:4
- G. Special note: When Jesus cited the O.T., He used the formula “It is written.” The Greek verb tense here is a perfect tense verb which denotes action completed in the past, the results of which is ongoing. It emphasizes the present or ongoing result of a completed action. So every time Jesus used this statement, He was asserting O.T. preservation.
- H. Text base for the KJV:
 1. O.T. — The traditional Masoretic Hebrew text — standardized by the Masoretes (whose job in life was to copy the Hebrew text with astonishingly strict rules — counting letters and words, etc) between 500-1000 AD. Remember, Jesus used the Hebrew O.T. text, not the Septuagint or the Dead Sea Scrolls or other spurious sources (Luke 24:44; Matt. 23:35; 5:17-18; Rom. 3:1-2). (Remember, Jesus never corrected the Hebrew text, He just quoted it.)
 2. N.T. — The traditional Greek text (Received Text) — four kinds of Greek manuscripts: papyrus (fragment), uncials (all capital letters), cursive (long-hand), lectionary (Greek and Latin public reading). Although there were 30 editions of the Received Text made over the years with slight inconsequential differences such as spelling, accents and breathing marks, word order, etc, they are essentially the same. The KJV translators had all this evidence before them.
 3. Westcott and Hort refused to accept the Received Text and sought to modify it. In 1881 they published their Greek text, changing the Textus Receptus in over 5,600 places that included almost 10,000 words. Clearly, they had no regard for the verbal inspiration and preservation of the Bible, and yet, most modern translations use a text base similar to theirs (Nestle/Aland, etc.). See John W. Burgon to refute the theories of Westcott/Hort.

VI. TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

- A. Tampering with God's Word is sinful (Jer. 26:2; Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9; Prov. 30:5-6; Deut. 4:2; 12:32; 2 Peter 3:15-16; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2).
- B. Why is the KJV best in English?
 1. The KJV uses the correct text base for the O.T. (Masoretic) and N.T. (Received Text).

2. KJV translators are unsurpassed, even today, in linguistic scholarship (example: John Bois at age 5 had read the Bible through in Hebrew). Translators today are not in the same category of scholarship.
 3. Their translation technique was verbal and formal equivalence because they believed that the words were inspired, unlike so-called modern translators who use “dynamic equivalence” as their technique. This philosophy is seen in the preface of the NIV: “they have striven for more than a word for word translation...to achieve clarity the translators sometimes supplied words not in the original text.”
- C. Fatal Errors in Modern Versions
1. The NASV (New American Standard Version) uses the general terms “unchastity,” and “immorality” instead of the specific “fornication” in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9. By definition, this would allow divorce for other reasons than what the Lord said.
 2. The NKJV (New King James) uses the general term “sexual immorality” in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9. This is still too general. Lasciviousness is sexual immorality, but not a scriptural reason for divorce. (The NKJV is not as bad as other new translations, but it does have its issues.)
 3. The NIV (New International Version) has “faith only” — Rom. 1:17; sinful nature — Rom. 8 and 9; Timothy testifying in 2 Tim 1:8.
 4. The RSV (Revised Standard) has “faith only” — Rom. 11:20; young woman — Isa. 7:14; “only son” instead of “only begotten” — John 1:14; 3:16, etc. They reject the Virgin Birth in Luke 1:34.
 5. The ASV, NASV, NIV, and RSV use the faulty and corrupt Westcott-Hort text base or one kin to it, and thereby remove the word “firstborn” Matt. 1:25, “God” I Tim .3:16, the confession Acts 8:37, and cast doubt on the integrity of Mark 16:9-20 by brackets or marginal notes.

Concluding Thoughts:

1. In my view, modern translations pose a clear and present danger and have done so for a number of years. The biggest danger it seems would be with new converts and young people who have no basic familiarity or knowledge of an accurate translation or sound doctrine.
2. The N.T. is the last will and testament of our Lord (Heb. 9:15-17). You would not want someone to change words and phrases in your will, and the Lord will not hold them guiltless who do the same to His (Gal. 1:6-9).
3. Charges against the KJV are exaggerated and without merit. Archaic words are not wrong; they are just old. The KJV has 791,328 words; only a little over 600 are archaic. Some charge the KJV with Calvinism. Sound brethren have for years used the KJV to expose Calvinistic doctrine time and time again. The NIV is bringing Calvinism into the church, not the KJV. Some make a big to-do about nothing in reference to Easter in Acts 12:4. Since they corrected it in every other passage from previous translations, this was probably just an oversight on their part. It doesn't teach Easter observance, either way.
4. We agree with the late lamented Guy N. Woods who said, “*We are prepared to affirm that not one modern speech version which has attained to any publicity in our day is in harmony with the Greek New Testament; and if these documents continue to gain acceptance in the churches of Christ the Cause, as we know it, cannot continue. These changes are but the prelude to more sweeping ones soon to engulf us.*” (Questions and Answers/Open Forum FHC, p. 347).
5. The average person depends upon a translation to learn and obey God's Word. If one reads error, he will believe error, obey error and therefore teach error. The King James continues to be, when all evidence is considered honestly, the best translation in English.

“FOREVER, O LORD, THY WORD IS SETTLED IN HEAVEN” — PSALM 119:89