

WHICH BIBLE?

by Dr Robert Joyner

Many people have written books claiming the KJV is without error. They say it is God's perfectly preserved word with no mistakes.

Peter Ruckman says over and over in his book, *HANDBOOK OF MANUSCRIPT EVIDENCE*, that the KJV is superior to the original Greek. He says where the Greek says one thing and the Authorized Version (AV) says another, "*throw out the Greek.*" Ruckman says the AV 1611 is necessary to recover the original text and straighten out the corrupt Greek. "The AV 1611 is correct; the Greek texts are wrong." (p. 125) Again and again Ruckman says the KJV is the final authority. William Grady has written a book called *THE FINAL AUTHORITY* in which he says the KJV is the final authority, not the original Greek and Hebrew.

The KJV Only folks tell us the KJV had superior translators, superior manuscripts, and therefore is a superior translation. The KJV Only people tell us that translators of other Bible versions were unbelievers. They assert the other translators were biased against the deity of Christ. They allege other versions left verses out.

Have we been lied to about Bible versions? I want the reader to compare the facts and decide for himself.

SOURCES FOR OUR TRANSLATIONS

The New American Standard Bible used around 5,000 Greek manuscripts dating back to the 3rd and 4th centuries. The translators used early versions in other languages, plus writings of the early church fathers who quoted the Bible in their writings. These three sources - manuscripts, versions, and fathers - were all combined for the first time. There were almost 100 Bible believing scholars from different denominations who translated this version.

The New International version used over 100 scholars working with the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The group was transdenominational and international. There were people from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand working together.

There were many denominations that included Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian and others. This was to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias. No other translation has gone through a more thorough process of review and revision from committee to committee than this one. They tried to make every effort to produce an accurate contemporary English translation.

Erasmus, who compiled the Textus Receptus, from which the KJV was translated, used six manuscripts, none older than the 9th century. Some scholars say none were older than the 12th

century. All together there was not a complete copy of the New Testament. Verses were copied out of the Roman Catholic Latin Bible to complete the book of Revelation. He had only a fraction of the copies of Greek manuscripts available today.

THE GREEK TEXT

The Greek text used by the NASB was compiled by Bible believing scholars such as Ellicott, Alford, Lightfoot, Westcott and Hort. Their Greek text was approved by the greatest Greek scholars such as AT Roberson and Gresham Machen.

The Greek text used by the KJV translators was compiled by Erasmus, who was a liberal Roman Catholic. He added verses from the Catholic Latin translation. It was the work of one man. There has been 18 editions of this Textus Receptus with no two exactly alike.

TRANSLATORS

The NASB was translated by about 100 of the best scholars in Europe and America. They were Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist and other denominations to omit bias. As I have already stated, the NIV had scholars from all over the English speaking world. There were many denominations represented on the translation committee.

The KJV was translated by the Church of England (called the Episcopal Church in the US). They reveal their bias by refusing to translate words like "baptism" and "deacon," because if they did, it would contradict the practice of their church. The KJV originally contained the Apocrypha, 14 books and 172 chapters of uninspired writings from the Catholic Bible. Also, it contained a list of holy days, including one for the "blessed Virgin." There was not a big variety of denominations on the KJV translation committee. There was not one Baptist. King James hated Baptists. He said he wanted to "harrow out of England" all Baptists.

King James selected 54 learned men from high churchmen and some Puritans. He tried to secure the cooperation of every Biblical scholar of note in his kingdom. The translators were instructed to use the Bishops' Bible as a basis and departed from it only when the text required it. It was to have no marginal notes, except for the explanation of Hebrew and Greek words. This last simple rule, probably more than anything else, helped to make our Authorized Version the Bible of all classes in England and America. All versions before the KJV had notes. King James did not like some of these notes. This is one reason the king wanted a new translation.

Never before had such labor and care been expended on an English Bible. The result was a translation with grace and dignity and masterful English.

TRANSLATION FINISHED

The American Standard Version came out in 1901 and has been rightly regarded for its scholarship and accuracy. It was a product of both British and American scholarship. Nearly a

hundred scholars labored 10 years. In 1959 a new translation project was launched, based on the ASV. There were about 100 more eminent scholars who labored. The result was the New American Standard Bible.

The Lockman Foundation said their fourfold aim was (1) be true to the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek (2) be grammatically correct (3) be understandable to the masses (4) give the Lord Jesus Christ His proper place.

The KJV, on the other hand, was finished in 1611. The translators revised it in 1613, making about 400 changes. They revised it again in 1629, leaving out the Apocrypha. It has been revised at least five times. The last revision was in 1769. It still has at least 400 outdated words. Some today think they still have the 1611 edition, when in fact, we have the 1769 edition. If you did have a 1611 edition, it would be very valuable, worth at least a hundred thousand dollars probably. When people today say they have a 1611 KJV, it is gross ignorance on their part.

THE RESULT

The result for the NASB and the NIV is a contemporary and easy to understand Bible in modern English. They are an accurate translation of the original Greek and Hebrew.

The result for the KJV is a good translation with beautiful old English. However, it has many outdated words and some obvious mistakes.

EXAMPLES OF OUTDATED WORDS

The KJV says in *1 Peter 3:8* that we are to “be pitiful.” This is old English for “*be full of pity.*” *2 Corinthians 8:1* says, “*We do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia.*” *Joshua 9:5* says, “*clouted upon their feet.*” *Exodus 19:18* says, “*Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke.*” These verses can be hard for the modern reader to understand. With the modern translations one does not have to deal with outdated words.

NAMES ARE A PROBLEM

The KJV sometimes uses the Greek form, the Latin form or the Hebrew form of the same name. Examples of this is Joshua and Jesus used for same Old Testament character. (*Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8*) Different spellings are used for Cis and Kish; Noe and Noah; Kora and Core; Hosea and Osee; Isaiah and Esay; Judas, Judah, Juda and Jude; Elijah and Elias; Elisha and Eliseus, etc.

CONCLUSION

I believe it is misguided for fundamental Baptists to defend a version of the Bible based on a Greek text, prepared by a liberal Roman Catholic, translated by Episcopalians and authorized by a king who hated Baptists. While they reject translations based on a Greek text approved by all the great scholars and early fundamental leaders and translated by good Bible believing

scholars from all groups, including Baptists. AT Robertson was the greatest Greek scholar America ever produced. He was a conservative Baptist and approved of the American Standard Version. This irony is strange indeed when fundamental Baptists take sides with Episcopalians and Catholics and reject their own.

I also find it disturbing that the KJV Only group can write books, preach sermons and talk continually against all other versions. However, the minute I point out errors in the KJV, they call me a "Bible corrector" and an unbeliever, and other names. Why is it all right for them to blaspheme God's word found in other versions but no one can even point out undeniable facts about the KJV?

I want to solemnly warn those who condemn all translations besides the KJV that they are blaspheming God's word. Those who magnify the differences between Greek texts and versions are blaspheming God's word. If a person wants to use only the KJV, that is well and good. However, if they tear down all other versions, they are destroying people's faith in God's word. That is a wicked sin. Those who insist on a KJV Only view are causing a division in the body of Christ. This is a very serious sin. Do not be a partaker of their evil deeds. God will hold you responsible. (*Psalm 138:2; Romans 14:12*) Be sure you are worshiping King Jesus and not King James.

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