

History of the Received Text

Biblical English
Study Pak 9A

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"Sounds like the Bible. More than any other version, the KJV sounds like the Word of God, even to unbelievers. The KJV translators aimed at this very thing. Even in 1611, the KJV sounded old-fashioned, ancient, a voice from the past. This was to command a reverent hearing, and to suggest the timeless and eternal character of God's Word.

The modern unbeliever, if he has any spiritual concern at all, is well aware that the contemporary scene really offers him no hope. He expects the church to speak in a way that is timeless and other-worldly.

Many churchgoers and occasional visitors to a church go much more by "feel" and "mood" than by intellectual content or apprehension. They are more likely to take seriously what is said to them if they sense that this is something more important than a casual conversation."

~~ Reason #11 from *13 Practical Reasons for Retaining the KJV* by Dr. Joel R. Beeke of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary ~~

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THE WORLD TODAY

English is spoken and understood by over _____ (even though it is the mother tongue of only 300,000,000). Only Chinese is spoken by more people. English has become the world's language of diplomacy, communication, trade and entertainment.

English is _____ sometimes called a mongrel language); and largely because of this it has the richest vocabulary of any language in the world. Eighty percent of its vocabulary comes from words "borrowed" from other languages. Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

"The English language is the sea which receives tributaries from every region under heaven."

There are over one million words common to the English language. By comparison, German has 185,000 words and French 100,000.

English has become the language of trade and diplomacy because so many people speak English as a second language. Violence broke out all over India after the assassination of the prime minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi. When her son, Rajiv Gandhi, went on television to appeal for an end to the violence, he did not use any of the Indian dialects. He spoke in English. More Indians know English than know any single Indian dialect. Travelers can communicate in English in countries as widespread as India, Nigeria and Japan.

English has become the world's second language through several means. _____ and early English colonists spread English all over the world. The entire world is anxious to _____ with both England and the United States. American and British _____, and _____ have spread around the world and are seen in almost every country.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF STANDARD ENGLISH

Standard English (the accepted usage of English words) was formed as various peoples intermingled in the development of the British Isles.

The Celts were the first conquerors of England. Their Germanic root language merged with the language of the original inhabitants. Later, Roman legions brought Latin which was merged into the Celtic language.

Anglo-Saxon invaders brought their Germanic languages to the British Isles. They picked up enough Celtic and Latin words to create a new language referred to as English. Viking raiders would contribute many new words to this already polyglot language.

The Normans conquered the British Isles next. Their language was a polyglot of various Viking dialects and French. The influence of their language would transform Old English into Middle English.

Words from Latin and Greek literature continued to be added to the English language. The language was gradually changed into modern English.

Some have suggested that this unusual polyglot language (formed from so many other languages of the world), so uniquely rich in vocabulary, is _____ raised up as a _____ for the work of _____.

English became standardized during the reigns of _____ and _____ (1558 to 1625). Many great English authors (Shakespeare and Spenser, for example) contributed to this standardization.

III. THE CONCEPT OF BIBLICAL ENGLISH

One of the most frequently heard criticisms of the King James Bible is that it is based upon Elizabethan (1611) English, and thus it is out of date. However, even just a little bit of research would demonstrate how unscholarly and unsound that statement is.

English literature is flowing with material from this period — the writings of Shakespeare, Samuel Johnson and the many scholarly works of King James himself for example. These are all dramatically different in style and prose than the King James Bible. There are

many sermons and writings available from the men who translated the King James Bible, and not one of them used a style like that of the King James Bible. This is made clear when you compare the style of the Translators Preface with the translation itself. Bible scholar Edward Hills explains the distinctiveness of the language of the King James Bible this way:

"... The English of the King James Version is not the English of the early Seventeenth Century. To be exact, it is not a type of English that was ever spoken anywhere. It is _____ which was not used on ordinary occasions even by the translators who produced the King James Version ... Even in their use of thee and thou the translators were not following Seventeenth Century English usage but Biblical usage, for at the time these translators were doing their works these singular forms had already been replaced by the plural you in polite conversions."

~~ *King James Version Defended*, p. 218) ~~

A.T. Robertson makes the same point when he says:

"No one today speaks the English of the Authorized Version or ever did for that matter. For though like Shakespeare it is the pure Anglo - Saxon yet unlike Shakespeare it reproduces to a remarkable extent the spirit and language of the Bible."

~~ *A Grammar of the New Testament*, p. 56 ~~

O.T. Allis also stresses this truth when he says:

"IT IS QUITE OBVIOUS THAT THE AV DID NOT ATTEMPT TO MAKE THE USAGE OF THE HEBREW AND GREEK CONFORM TO THE USAGE OF THE ELIZABETHAN OR EARLY JACOBAN PERIOD. IT SIMPLY FOLLOWED THE BIBLICAL USAGE, DESPITE THE FACT THAT FOR SOME THREE HUNDRED YEARS THE TREND HAD BEEN INCREASINGLY AWAY FROM IT."

~~ J.P. Thackway, *Archaic or Accurate*, p. 45 ~~

Much of the King James Bible was not easy for the people of 1611 to understand. That is because the translators were not interested in an easy translation; _____. The translators stated that their purpose this way ... "That out of the Original Sacred Tongues, together with comparing of the labors both in our own, and other foreign languages of many worthy men who went before, THERE SHOULD BE ONE MORE EXACT TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES INTO THE ENGLISH TONGUE." (Emphasis added)

These translators were not trying to create an "easy read." They were not looking for a marketing technique. They were not trying to put the Scriptures in the "language of their day." They were trying to honestly translate the Word of God.

King James Bible critics are fond of referring to the use of thee and thou as proof that the King James Bible is trapped in 1611. In reality, thee's and thou's are the language of the Old Testament Hebrew and New Testament Greek. In Hebrew and Greek, "thee," "thou," and "thy" are singular words; and "ye" and "you" are plural words. To change all of these words to the generic English "you" is to miss the full meaning of the words in the Biblical text. The reader who can't cope with "thee" and "thou" had better be prepared to settle _____.

Almost all modern translations are based upon the "dynamic equivalence" method of translation. The translators give you the meaning that they think the words in the text communicate. The translator thus becomes a bridge between the reader and the Scripture. The translation is only as accurate as the honesty, objectivity, and scholarship of the translators allow. The translators become the priests for the reader. The King James Bible translators reproduced the _____. Thus the _____ as each individual believer can study the Scripture directly. This literal approach to Bible translation stems from the doctrine of formal, literal Bible inspiration that the King James translators held to.

The truths of the Scripture are not always simple, consequently, an accurate translation does not always contain simple words and easy to understand concepts. The truths of the Bible are universal, and they often cannot be captured in the unique expressions of an individual era. As a result, the translators of the King James Bible avoided the unique speech patterns of Elizabethan English and used a basic historic English that would be _____, _____, and _____.

By carefully choosing the English words which accurately rendered the Hebrew and Greek words of the Scripture, the King James translators created an enduring _____ which has survived all attempts to alter and replace it.

As Adam Nicholson writes: "The English is there to serve the original not to replace it." (*God's Secretaries*, p. 210)

The KJV translators were aware that the Tyndale Bible was in the hearts and minds of the English people. The Geneva and Matthews Bible had greatly reproduced the wording of the Tyndale Bible. Many words that Tyndale used had already fallen out of use in everyday English. The people remained familiar with these words only through their use of the Bible. The KJV translators stayed with these words, maintaining the accuracy of Scripture and creating a distinct category of the English language - _____.

David Daiches has written about the influence of previous English translations in the development of _____:

"The style of the Authorized Version was in some degree archaic by now (at the time of its publishing), and the revisers were thus deliberately perpetuating a Biblical style which was something apart from contemporary English prose, a style that had been forged in almost a century's experimentation. It was the culmination of the successive versions of which Tyndale's was the first. And though _____ it had a great influence on the rhythms and the vocabulary of the later English prose, especially in the Seventeenth and Nineteenth Centuries."

~~ David Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature*, pp. 470-471 ~~

These Biblical scholars showed themselves much wiser than the current procedures of "modern translations." I remember hearing about the new "Living Bible" during my high school days. It was supposed to be "cool," "hip," and with a "with it" translation. But its "modern figures of speech" are already as out of date as the Mod Squad and Happy Days. _____ was effective then, and it is still now.

Edward F. Hills asks how we can dare put the Bible in _____:

"What is the language of today? The language of 1881 is not the language of today nor the language of 1901, nor even the language of 1921. In none of these languages, we are told can we communicate with today's youth. There are even some who feel that the best way to translate the Bible into the language of today is to convert it into "folk songs." Accordingly, in many contemporary youth conferences and even worship services, there is little or no Bible reading but only crude kinds of vocal music accompanied by vigorous piano and strumming guitars. But in contrast to these absurdities, the language of the King James Version is enduring diction which will remain as long as the English language remains, in other words, throughout the foreseeable future."

~~ *King James Version Defended*, p. 219 ~~

By accurately translating the Bible, the King James translators created _____ — the unique expressions, terms, and idioms that communicate God's truth to the English speaking world. By refusing to cater to the trends of the day, by refusing to subject their works to a marketing strategy, _____ they avoided the mistakes that poison the efforts of modern English translators.

Rousas J. Rushdoony sums up the issue well when he says:

"The issue is not that the Bible should speak everyday language, for this involves debasement, but that it should be understandable, and have all arguments to the contrary notwithstanding that King James speaks a language which, while sometimes difficult because the matter itself is so, is the more often simple, clean cut and beautiful."

~~ *Journal of Christian Reconstruction*, 1989, pp. 12-13 ~~

Adam Nicholson writes: "The King James Translators do exactly what Luther had described as absurd: they mimic precisely the form of the original. No searching for the language of mothers, or the man at the market stall. They acted in other words ... as God's Secretaries," (*God's Secretaries*, p. 195).

IV. A GUIDE TO THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BIBLICAL ENGLISH TERMS

Thou	designates the _____.
Thee	designates the _____.
Ye	designates the _____.
You	designates the _____.
T	a personal pronoun beginning with T is a _____ pronoun, e.g. Thou, Thy, Thee, Thine.
Y	a personal pronoun beginning with a Y is a _____ pronoun, e.g. Ye, You, Yours.
Est	indicates the _____ (the one spoken to).
Eth	indicates the _____ (the one spoken about).
Shall	refers to the _____ with future tense.
Will	refers to the _____ or _____ person in the future.

All these shades of meaning are in the original Greek and Hebrew words. To replace these terms with a generic "you" or a generic "will" is to produce a translation with less meaning than the King James.

Famed scholar, J. Gresham Machen clearly believed that "thee" and "thou" were the only way to translate the Bible correctly and included this information in his Greek grammar for beginners.

D.A. Waite points out how important all this is to Biblical accuracy:

"The King James Bible, in their use of the pronouns, thee, thy, thyself; thou, the, ye, you, your, and yourselves, have rendered accuracy a great service. All the pronouns beginning with the letter "T" are singular. All the pronouns beginning with the letter "Y," are plural. In this way, the English reader can pick up the King James Bible, and unlike any of the other modern versions, he can tell immediately whether the second person pronoun is singular or plural ... _____."

~~ *Defending the King James Bible*, pp. 255-256 ~~

These items are not archaic English just because most modern readers don't understand them. They are _____ of the Hebrew and Greek.

Oswald T. Allis correctly states:

"It is a well-known fact that in contemporary English the forms THOU, THY, THINE have almost disappeared from secular use. They are largely restricted to

the language of religious devotion, in which they are constantly employed, and which is largely formed by, and owes its peculiarities to, the Authorized Version. Consequently, it is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this: THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. IT IS _____ BASED ON THE STYLE OF _____ SCRIPTURES."

~~ Thackway, p. 37 ~~

V. BIBLICAL GRAMMAR

Some have wanted to correct what they felt was improper English grammar in the Bible. However, sometimes God chooses to express Himself in ways that violate all the human rules of grammar, Greek, English, and Hebrew.

In referring to Himself, God often _____, _____, and _____ . This, of course, would be grammatical nonsense if such terms were used in this way in reference to anyone but God. But God is greater than human rules of grammar. The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity is _____ .

The very word translated "God" in the English Bible is the plural Hebrew word Elohim. Yet, it is properly translated (when referring to Jehovah) as the singular word God. God is simply three but one (I John 5:7). The classic verse on the nature of God, "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is One LORD" mixes the plural word God with the singular word LORD and the compound singular word (in the Hebrew) one. This is grammatical nonsense unless you are talking about the Trinity.

Singular and plural words are also mixed in reference to God in Ezra 1:3; Dan. 5:26; Rev. 16:5, and every time the phrase Lord God is used. To "straighten out" the grammar _____ of the original Greek and Hebrew words that God gave the human writers of Scripture.

Some critics of the King James Bible have been unhappy because Rom. 8:16 refers to the Spirit "itself." Many modern translations try to correct this "error." However, the neuter "itself" is found in _____ the "critical" and "traditional" text. This passage is not the only place that God uses neuter words contrary to the normal rules of human grammar. In Luke 1:34-35 and Rev. 5:6, Christ is referred to with neuter words. In John 4:21-22, God the Father is referred to with a neuter word. Prov. 18:22 refers to wives with a neuter term. These terms are not mistaken translations by the King James translators but _____ . God is greater than the rules of human grammar and is entitled to use any words that He chooses. _____ .

VI. THE KING JAMES BIBLE AND THE USE OF ITALICS

The differences in languages sometimes make it difficult to do a literal word for word translation. At times to do a proper formal equivalent translation, additional words are required. When the King James Bible translators found it necessary to do this, they designated the additional words by marking _____ print. Most new English translations fail to mark the added words in anyway (Compare Ps. 23:1 in the KJV with Ps. 23:1 in the NIV).

Joseph Philpot comments on the importance of using italics in this way:

"We cannot but admire the great faithfulness of our translators in so scrupulously adhering to the exact words of the Holy Spirit, and when they were necessarily compelled to supply the ellipses in the original, to point out that they had done so by marking the word in italic characters. By so doing, they engaged themselves, as by bond, to give the Word of God _____ and yet, as thorough scholars in the original tongues, and complete masters of their own, they were enabled to give us a version admirable not only for its strict fidelity, but also for its eloquence, grandeur, and beauty."
~~ Fuller, *True or False*, p. 282 ~~

Jacob van Bruggen adds,

"To a large extent, the KJV owes its authority to the rule that most inserted words were printed in italics. The Bible reader was thus able to see how carefully the translators treated God's Word. They were afraid to add even one word, but if they were not able to translate without adding a word for the sake of clarity, they indicated that it had been added."
~~ *The Future of the Bible*, pp. 246-247 ~~

The importance of italics can be seen in the matter of who slew Goliath. I Chron. 20:5 proves that Elhanan killed a brother of the giant Goliath. I Sam. 17 states that David killed Goliath. The Hebrew text of II Sam. 21:19 is obscure. The New American Standard Bible and the New International Version translate II Sam. 21:19 as stating that Elhanan killed Goliath thus creating a contradiction in the Bible. Through the use of italics, the KJV translators end this confusion without using any secrecy or subterfuge.

VII. THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT ITS BEST

Literary scholars are in almost unanimous agreement that the modern English language was at its height in the Elizabethan period. The reigns of Queen Elizabeth I and her successor, James I, are the high point of this. This is seen in Bacon in natural science, Shakespeare in literature, Spenser and Sidney in poetry, Raleigh in civil government, and Hooker in theology.

The *Story of English* declares about this period, "During their reigns, about seventy years, the English language achieved a richness and vitality of expression that even contemporaries marveled at"(p. 91).

Most language scholars would also recognize that the English language is in a state of deterioration in the early 21st Century.

This raises the question, "Should the standard English translation of the Bible come from the height of the English language _____?"
David Otis Fuller answers this question.

"We are now come, however, to a very striking situation which is little observed and rarely mentioned by those who discuss the merits of the King James Bible. The English language in 1611 was in the very best condition to receive into its _____.
Each word was broad, simple, and generic. That is to say, words were capable of containing in themselves not only their central thoughts, but also all the different shades of meaning which were attached to that central thought.

Since then, words have lost that living, pliable breadth. Vast additions have been made to the English vocabulary during the past 300 years, so that several words are now necessary to convey the same meaning which formerly was conveyed by one. It will then be readily seen that while the English vocabulary has increased in quantity; nevertheless, single words have lost their many shades, combinations of words have become fixed, capable of only one meaning, and therefore less adaptable to receiving into English the thoughts of the Hebrew which likewise is a simple, broad, generic language. New Testament Greek is, in this respect, like the Hebrew. When our English Bible was revised, the Revisers labored under the impression that the sacred writers of the Greek New Testament was _____
_____ rather than the language of scholars, and is flexible, broad, generic, like the English of the 1611 Version," (Fuller, *Which Bible?* pp. 246-247).

The period in which the King James Bible was translated is clearly the best period in the English language to produce a standard English Bible. Certainly, it takes some work to understand the King James Bible, but any great work of literature requires more work to understand it than a newspaper, comic book, or pulp fiction. The Holy Scriptures certainly require that a person be willing to study and work hard.

VIII. IMPORTANT REFERENCE HELPS

Since some of the English words of the King James Bible have become relatively unfamiliar to most modern readers, it is good to have appropriate study aids available. Several good study aids, produced by men respectful of the Word of God, are available.

The Defined King James, published by D.A. Waite, provides the King James text with helpful word definitions as foot notes. *Archaic Words and the Authorized Version* by Laurence M. Vance defines and explains every word in the King James Bible that has been labeled as archaic. *The King James Bible Dictionary* by David Cloud defines many words used in the King James Bible.

The Webster's 1828 Dictionary, which is still in print, is keyed to the King James Bible and contains all 8,000 words used in the King James Bible.

IX. THE RELATIVE SIMPLICITY OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Despite modern complaints to the contrary, the King James Bible is a model of simplicity. "Whereas Shakespeare ransacked the lexicon, the King James Bible employs a bare 8,000 words - God's teaching in homely English for every man,"(Mc Crum, *The Story of English*, p. 113).

Anyone who wishes to master any book has to become familiar with the distinctive language and terminology of that book. The King James Bible has a smaller vocabulary than any other book of its size. It is true that word definitions sometimes change or develop. But if you re-translate a book every time a few words change, you must re-translate that book _____ You are left with a translation that is here today and gone tomorrow.

This constant process of re-translating is not done with Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Bunyan, or any of the great English classics.

If this process was followed, these classics would be in such a constant state of change that no one would become familiar with them or ever memorize any passages from these classics. In some circles, this is exactly what is happening to the Bible. As William O. Einwechter points out, "Isn't it ironic that with the proliferation of all the modern language versions that are supposed to increase readership, that there is such a neglect of serious Bible reading and study and that there is such a profound theological ignorance in the average evangelical Christian as we see today? There is a heavy price to pay when the Bible is made _____

_____ and when people are deceived into thinking that the difficulty of Bible study is simply due to the 'archaic language' of the AV, and that all they need is a modern language Bible that reads like today's newspaper."(The *Excellence of the Authorized Version*, the Chalcedon Report, June 1997)

X. A CHALLENGE FROM MARTIN LLOYD JONES

In an address at Royal Albert Hall in 1961, Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones sums up the matter well:

"I suppose that the most popular of all the proposals at the present moment is to have a new translation of the Bible ... The argument is that people are not reading the Bible any longer because they do not understand its language - particularly the archaic terms-what does your modern man know about justification, sanctification, and all the Biblical terms? And so we are told the thing that is necessary is to have a translation that Tom, Dick, and Harry will understand, and I began to feel six months ago that we had almost reached the stage in which the Authorized Version was being dismissed, to be thrown into the limbo of things forgotten, no longer of any value. Need I apologize for saying a word in favor of the Authorized Version ...

It is a basic proposition laid down by the Protestant Reformers that we must have a Bible "understood of the people." That is common sense ... we must never be obscurantist. We must never approach the Bible in a mere antiquarian spirit ... but it does seem to me that there is a very grave danger incipient in so much of the argument that is being presented today for these new translations. There is a danger, I say, of our surrendering something that is vital and essential.

Take this argument that the modern man does not understand such terms as justification, sanctification and so on. I want to ask a question. When did the ordinary man ever understand those terms? ... Did the colliers to whom John Wesley and George Whitefield preached in the 18th Century understand? They had not even been to a day school ... They could not read, they could not write. Yet these were the terms that were used. This was the version that was used - The Authorized Version. The common people have never understood these terms. We are concerned here with something that is spiritual: something which does not belong to this world at all, which, as the apostle Paul reminds us, the princes of this world do not know. Human wisdom is of no value here - it is a spiritual truth. This is a truth about God primarily and because of that it is a mystery ...

Yet we are told - it must be in such simple terms and language that anybody taking it up and reading it is going to understand all about it. My friends, this is sheer nonsense. What we must do _____, not _____, _____ . One of the greatest troubles today is that everything is being brought down to the same level: everything is cheapened. The common man is made the standard of authority; he decides everything, and everything has to be brought down to him ...

Are we to do that with the Word of God? I say no! What has happened in the past has been this: ignorant, illiterate people, in this country and foreign countries, coming into salvation have been educated up to the book and have begun to understand it, to glory in it, and to praise God for it, and I say that we need to do the same at this present time. What we need is therefore, not to replace the Authorized Version ... We need rather to reach and train people up to the standard and language, the dignity and the glory of the Old Authorized Version," (Quoted

in the *Trinitarian Bible Society Quarterly*, July-September 1981.

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