

WHY DISPENSATIONALISTS SHOULD USE THE KING JAMES VERSION

* * * THE PURIFIED AND PRESERVED WORDS OF GOD * * *

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Soli Deo Gloria!

"The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever." (Psalm 12:6-7)

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I. INTRODUCTION

The first translation of the Bible into English was made by John Wycliffe (and his associates) circa 1384. However, Wycliffe's Bible was a translation made from the Latin Bible, not from the Hebrew/Greek. The first English translations from Hebrew/Greek arose in the 1500's. William Tyndale published a complete English New Testament translated from Greek in 1526 and had translated a considerable portion of the Old Testament from Hebrew into English prior to his martyrdom in 1536. The remainder of the 16th century saw a steady succession of complete English translations/revisions of the Bible appear. When King James authorized a new translation at the opening of the 17th century, he gave its translators 15 rules to guide their work, two of which were:

1. The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the *Bishops Bible*, to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the original will permit.

and

14. These translations to be used when they agree better with the Text than the Bishops: *Tindoll's, Matthews, Coverdale's, Whitechurch's, Geneva*.¹

The Bible listed as *Whitechurch's* is more commonly known as the *Great Bible*. Thus, the King James Version of the Bible published in 1611 built upon the six outstanding English translations that preceded it (i.e., Tyndale's New Testament, Coverdale's Bible, Matthew's Bible, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and the Bishops' Bible), it being the seventh revision of the Bible in English (cf. Ps12:6-7).

¹ David Daniell, *The Bible in English* (Yale University Press, New Haven, CT: 2003) p. 439.

Following its publication, the King James Version (KJV) quickly became the Bible used exclusively by the English speaking world for the better part of the next four centuries. The next translation of the Bible into English (of any significance) was the Revised Version published in 1885. As the name suggests, it was purported to be a revision of the KJV; however, it was in fact a radical departure from the KJV, even introducing a completely different textual basis from which the translation was derived. Subsequently, the 20th century has seen the publication of hundreds of new (so-called modern) English translations of the Bible, all of which make use of the new (and ever evolving) Hebrew/Greek textual basis in their works of translation.

Today, though still widely read² and loved by many, the King James Version is being increasingly forsaken by the Christian public at large in favor of one of the modern versions (e.g., NIV, ESV, NASB). Christians are encouraged to do so by both publishers and scholars. The two most oft repeated reasons to abandon the King James Version are: 1) the archaic language used in the KJV makes it difficult for modern readers to understand, and 2) new archeological discoveries of biblical manuscripts, purported to be older than the manuscripts available to the KJV translators, differ from the Hebrew/Greek manuscripts used as the textual basis in the King James Version; thus, the KJV is derived from an inferior Hebrew/Greek textual basis. However, both of these assertions, when "weighed in the balances", are "found [to be] wanting" (Cp., Dan5:27).

Dispensationalists, especially those without facility in the Hebrew/Greek scriptures, should not abandon the King James Version of the Bible for one of the hundreds of modern versions. Rather, they should continue to use the KJV as Bible-believers have for the past four centuries, for the following reasons. First, the precision of the English grammar used in the KJV accurately communicates grammatical subtleties inherent in the Hebrew/Greek, most of which are lost in the modern versions (including the New King James Version). Second, the philosophy of translation used by the KJV translators (i.e., formal equivalence, or word-for-word translation) honors the nature of scripture and stops short of introducing (potentially) biased interpretation into the translation. Third, the English used in the King James Version gives rise to essential doctrines that are absent from many modern versions. Fourth, the Hebrew/Greek textual basis undergirding the King James Version is superior to that used by the modern versions, being based on the textual tradition that has been providentially preserved by God throughout all generations. In the sections that follow, each of these reasons will be considered in more detail.

² Polls generally indicate that among Christians who actually and consistently read the Bible (as opposed to merely using Bible sales as a metric), the King James Version is preferred overwhelmingly. See Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra, "The Most Popular and Fastest Growing Bible Translation Isn't What You Think It Is", *Christianity Today*, March 13, 2014.

II. PRECISION OF GRAMMAR IN THE KJV

The precision of the English grammar used in the KJV accurately communicates grammatical subtleties inherent in the Hebrew/Greek, most of which are lost in the modern versions.

In modern times, the discipline of using precise (even correct) grammar in verbal communication has been all but abandoned. This extends, sadly, even to modern translations of the Bible, the very words of God (cf. Matt24:35; 2Tim3:16). Dispensationalists, who want to know what God has actually said, and who emphasize the importance of grammar in proper interpretation, should be disturbed (even alarmed) by this development. For one who desires to know what God has said, precision is paramount.

Biblical Hebrew (with a small amount of Aramaic; e.g., Daniel 2:4-7:28) and Greek, the original languages used by God to record His inspired words (cf. 2Pet1:19-21; 2Tim3:16), are fully inflected languages. Whereas Old English made a greater use of inflection, modern English retains very little. Inflection in grammar is the modification of the form of a word to indicate person, number, and gender. A language that makes use of inflection is capable of much more precision in communication than a language that does not. For this reason, by definition, modern English is not capable of communicating with precision all of the subtleties resident in biblical Hebrew/Greek.

To address this issue, the KJV translators (following a pattern introduced by Tyndale) revived some of the inflection of Old English for use in their English translation of the Bible, which gives rise to much of the criticism that the language of the KJV is "archaic" and difficult to understand by modern readers³. At this point, a common misconception must be corrected. Many presume that the KJV translation was rendered into a form of English commonly spoken in the 15th/16th centuries (i.e., that it was contemporary English for its day), but nothing could be further from the truth. The English of the King James Version was "archaic" in 1611, if by "archaic" one means it was not the form of English commonly spoken at that time. This is readily evident when one looks at the preface to the King James Version written by the translators for the original publication of their Bible in 1611. Consider the first paragraph of *The Translators to the Reader*:

Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, serveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. It is welcomed with suspicion instead of love, and with emulation instead of thanks: and if there be any hole left for cavil to enter, (and cavil, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned. This will easily be granted by as many as know story, or have any experience. For, was there ever any thing projected, that savoured any way of newness or renewing, but the same endured many a storm of gainsaying, or opposition? A man would think that Civility, wholesome Laws, learning and eloquence, Synods, and Church-maintenance, (that we

³ Inflection incorporated into the English of the KJV is what results in *-est* and *-eth* endings appended to some verbs and the addition of *thee*, *thou*, *thy*, and *thine* used as pronouns.

speak of no more things of this kind) should be as safe as a Sanctuary, and out of shot, as they say, that no man would lift up the heel, no, nor dog move his tongue against the motioners of them. For by the first, we are distinguished from brute beasts lead with sensuality; By the second, we are bridled and restrained from outrageous behaviour, and from doing of injuries, whether by fraud or by violence; By the third, we are enabled to inform and reform others, by the light and feeling that we have attained unto ourselves; Briefly, by the fourth being brought together to a parley face to face, we sooner compose our differences than by writings which are endless; And lastly, that the Church be sufficiently provided for, is so agreeable to good reason and conscience, that those mothers are holden to be less cruel, that kill their children as soon as they are born, than those nursing fathers and mothers (wheresoever they be) that withdraw from them who hang upon their breasts (and upon whose breasts again themselves do hang to receive the Spiritual and sincere milk of the word) livelihood and support fit for their estates. Thus it is apparent, that these things which we speak of, are of most necessary use, and therefore, that none, either without absurdity can speak against them, or without note of wickedness can spurn against them.

Notice in this paragraph, written by the translators themselves, a (virtually) complete absence of the inflection incorporated by the translators into the English of the King James Version. Such inflection had already fallen out of common use in the contemporary English of the 15th/16th centuries. It was used by the translators in the King James Version not because it was contemporary English for their day, but because it was required to communicate with greater precision and accuracy what the biblical Hebrew/Greek texts said.

The additional⁴ inflection of English words incorporated into the KJV is used to precisely communicate person and number and affects pronouns and verbs. The following two tables illustrate (in red) the additional inflection used in the KJV.

Personal Pronouns in the KJV

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	I, me, my, mine	we, us, our, ours
2nd	thou, thee, thy, thine	ye, you, your, yours
3rd	he, him, his she, her, hers it, its	they, them, their(s)

Note that in the KJV, the archaic pronouns "thou", "thy", "thee", and "thine" were introduced in order to distinguish between singular and plural in the second person, a distinction that exists in the Hebrew/Greek texts, but which is totally lost in modern English which uses "you" for both singular and plural in the second person⁵. There

⁴ Some inflection is retained even in modern English. For example, the form of most verbs is modified to indicate person (e.g., an -s is usually appended to a verb if it has a singular, 3rd person subject), and some pronouns have different forms to indicate person, number, and/or gender (e.g., "I" and "we" are first person pronouns that are singular and plural, respectively; "he/she/it" and "they" are third person pronouns that are singular and plural, respectively, with gender distinction in the singular form only).

⁵ Speakers of modern English are innately aware of this limitation in the second person, often resorting to the use of "you all" or "y'all" in an attempt to

are a multitude of instances in modern English translations where improper interpretation can result from an inability to distinguish between singular and plural in the second person (e.g., Exod29:42; Matt5:39-44; Luk22:31-32; Jn3:3-7).

Thus, in KJV English it is correct grammar to say, "I pray" (1st person), "Thou prayest" (second person), and "He prayeth" (cf. Matt6:5; Act9:11). In modern English, the *-est* ending indicating second person has disappeared, and the *-eth* ending indicating third person has been replaced with *-s*.

Endings on Present Active Verbs in the KJV

Person	Singular	Plural
1st	n/a	n/a
2nd	<i>-est</i>	n/a
3rd	<i>-eth</i>	n/a

III. PHILOSOPHY OF TRANSLATION OF THE KJV

The philosophy of translation used by the KJV translators (i.e., formal equivalence, or word-for-word translation) honors the nature of scripture and stops short of introducing (potentially) biased interpretation into the translation.

A. The Nature of Scripture

Ideas are communicated using words, but what did God inspire – ideas or words? And what did God promise to preserve – ideas or words? Dispensationalists, who take the testimony of scripture both seriously and literally, understand that God inspired the words written by His prophets (Deut8:3; 2Pet1:19-21; 2Tim3:16), and God promised to preserve those words (Ps12:6-7; Matt24:35). The philosophy of translation used by the KJV translators, called by modern scholars "formal equivalence" (i.e., word-for-word translation where possible), honors the testimony of God Himself regarding the nature of scripture – inspiration is of the very words of scripture. An accurate translation is one that renders the words of scripture in Hebrew/Greek into the proper words in English.

Concerning inspiration, it is common today for Christians to confess a belief in the inspiration of scripture (2Tim3:16), but to qualify that confession such that the object of inspiration is limited to the original autographs⁶ only. In such a view, inspiration does not extend to copies of those autographs (since scribal errors can be introduced in the copying process), nor does it extend to translations of those autographs (or copies) into other languages. Since none of the original autographs of scripture are extant, it must follow that no Bible today can be confidently received as the inspired, inerrant, infallible words of God according to this view. But is this view

communicate a plural in the second person (although this is not proper grammar in modern English).

⁶ The "autograph" is the original manuscript written by the prophet or apostle himself.

biblical? Absolutely not, as scripture itself testifies against such a view.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, the Apostle Paul asserts that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God". The English word "scripture" is a translation of the Greek *γραφή*, which means *written words*. It necessarily follows that all that is called "scripture", by definition, is inspired. But consider the preceding verse (2Tim3:15). Paul says of Timothy, "that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures". Certainly Timothy was not in possession of any of the original autographs. He had, or had access to, copies, which Paul called "the holy scriptures". If Timothy's copies were called "scripture", then inspiration extended to those copies.

Furthermore, in Luke 4:16ff the Lord Jesus Himself stood to read in the synagogue in Nazareth. When given the scroll of Isaiah, Jesus found and read Isaiah 61:1-2a (Luk4:18-19). The original autograph of Isaiah was written in Hebrew. The scroll from which Jesus read was a copy written in Hebrew, undoubtedly a number of times removed from Isaiah's autograph. But Luke recorded the words of Jesus in Greek, providing a translation of a copy of Isaiah's autograph, which Jesus calls "scripture" in Luke 4:21. If Luke 4:18-19 is "scripture", then inspiration must extend to both copies and translations of copies. Obviously this argument is hypothetical in order to illustrate the principle. Certainly not every copy or every translation is inspired scripture, but only faithful copies and accurate translations. For this reason, however, it is imperative that the approach used in translating scripture be one that honors the nature of scripture. Formal equivalence, or an essentially word-for-word translation methodology as used by the KJV translators, most honors the verbal inspiration of scripture.

B. Translation, not Interpretation

A distinction must be made between translation and interpretation. The real issue with philosophies of translation such as "dynamic equivalence" (e.g., NIV) is that it presupposes that an idea is inspired rather than the words used to communicate the idea. With such a presupposition, the very words of scripture no longer matter, and any number of different words (i.e., translations) may be used to properly express the idea. However, no two words (even synonyms) ever mean precisely the same thing, and more often than not even synonyms carry subtly different connotations, such that they are not universally interchangeable (especially when context is considered).

Consider John 5:7 where the Greek word *ταραχθῆ* is translated "troubled" in the KJV, which is a perfectly good translation of the word in this context. This same word occurs more than a dozen times in the N.T., always communicating the idea of agitation (sometimes physical agitation as in Jn5:7, other times emotional agitation). Contrast that with virtually every modern English translation, which renders that word as "stirred". Troubled and stirred do not mean the same thing. The water at the pool of Bethesda could have been "troubled" as a result of any number of different things, but by translating the word as "stirred", the translator has made an interpretation that is not supported by the text. Rather than providing an accurate translation of what the word means so that the Bible student can make his own

interpretation, the translator has supplied his interpretation (which is certainly not inspired, and may not be correct).

Consider Romans 15:20. Here, the Apostle Paul justifies his own ministry as, "I strived to preach the gospel, **not where Christ was named**, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (KJV). The rendering provided in the King James Version is an accurate word-for-word translation in which every English word has explicit support in the underlying Greek text. The natural understanding of the straightforward qualification "not where Christ was named" would be outside of Jerusalem and the nation of Israel, consistent with Paul's assertion elsewhere that his unique ministry was to take the gospel to the Gentiles (cf. Gal2:7-9). With no warrant from the Greek text, however, many modern versions (e.g., NASB, ESV) insert "already" into their English translations, as "not where Christ has already⁷ been named" (ESV). The unwarranted addition of "already" completely changes the meaning of the clause, suggesting that Paul only preached in places where no Christian witness previously existed; not only is such an assertion unsupported elsewhere in scripture, it is demonstrably untrue—it is not even true for the city of Rome (Cp., Rom1:8), the recipient of this letter! Rather than the addition of a word in English which clarifies the meaning of the Greek text, this addition actually obscures that meaning.

Consider also 1 Corinthians 7:1. Here, the Apostle Paul says that "*it is good for a man not to touch a woman*" (KJV). Admittedly, this is a somewhat ambiguous assertion, causing difficulty in interpretation. But this ambiguity originates in the Greek text, since the KJV provides a literal, word-for-word translation of the original. In contrast, modern versions render this clause as "it is good for a man not to marry" (NIV, 1st Edition) or "it is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman" (ESV). In the Greek text, neither the word for "marry" nor "sexual relations" occurs. Not only have these modern versions provided a defective translation, the translators have introduced (two different) interpretations, and without alerting the reader to their doing so. One of these interpretations may be correct, but they cannot both be correct; at least one of them is wrong, and perhaps both. The point is, however, that speculative and fallible human interpretations are the proper domain of commentaries; they should not be introduced into the text of scripture as if they are translations.

Of particular significance to dispensationalists, consider 2 Timothy 2:15. In the KJV, this verse reads, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, *rightly dividing* the word of truth". The Greek word translated "rightly dividing" is **ὀρθοτομοῦντα**, the participle form of a Greek verb meaning "to cut straight". The Apostle Paul, himself a "workman" (i.e., artisan, craftsman), understood well the importance of *straightly cutting* in his own vocation of tentmaking (Act18:3), and he asserts that there is an analogy to be made relative to understanding scripture. Scripture has right divisions, and to be understood properly it must be "rightly divided", so much so that Scofield wrote that "any study of that Word which ignores those divisions must be in large measure profitless and

⁷ At least *already* is italicized in the NASB, indicating the word has no support in the Greek text (not so in the ESV).

confusing"⁸. In translating this Greek word in a literal fashion, Paul's analogy, which is key to establishing a foundational principle of dispensationalism, has been preserved in English by the KJV translators. Modern versions render the Greek participle in this verse as "correctly handles" (NIV), "rightly handling" (ESV), or "accurately handling"(NASB), which is more of an interpretation than a translation, and which obscures the very analogy Paul intends to make. No Bible student would learn from 2 Timothy 2:15 in these modern versions that scripture has right divisions.

Because of their commitment to the verbal inspiration of scripture, in rendering the Hebrew/Greek scriptures into English the KJV translators took care to avoid reading their own ideas into the word or passage being translated. Since the KJV translators were not dispensationalists, it is to be appreciated that they refrained from allowing their theology to influence their translation. Unfortunately, such is not the case for many of the modern translations.

IV. ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES IN THE KJV

The English used in the King James Version gives rise to essential doctrines that are absent from many modern versions.

The English word "dispensation" is a biblical word, occurring four times in the King James Version of the Bible (1Cor9:17; Eph1:10; 3:2; Col1:25); "dispensation" translates the compound Greek word *οικονομία* (the transliteration of which gives us the English word 'economy'), the two words of which it is comprised meaning "house" and "law". The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the English word "dispensation" to mean: a general state or ordering of things; *specifically*, a system of revealed commands and promises regulating human affairs. This is an excellent definition of "dispensation" as used in the Bible. Sadly, modern English translations of the Bible have forsaken the use of this term, preferring to translate the Greek word as "stewardship" or "administration", thus removing from contemporary biblical vocabulary a term of vital theological import. Many today view the foundational idea of dispensations and dispensational doctrine with skepticism because the word dispensation no longer appears in their (modern) versions of the Bible.

Even the word "inspiration", of immense doctrinal importance, used in the King James Version as the unique, defining attribute of scripture (2Tim3:16), has disappeared from most modern versions (e.g., NIV, ESV, NASB). Words intimately tied to understanding salvation and important issues associated with it, such as "sanctification" and "propitiation", are missing from many modern English versions. Unfortunately, this has resulted in theologians incorrectly referring to the sacrificial work of Christ as an *atonement*, which is the O.T. concept of an ineffectual, temporary covering that must be repeated (cf. Heb10:1-4), rather than a "propitiation" (Rom3:25; 1Jn2:2; 4:10), which is the N.T. concept of a payment that perfectly and permanently satisfies the debt owed (cf. Heb10:9-14).

⁸ C.I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (Loizeaux Brothers, Neptune, NJ: 1986) p. 5.

Also largely omitted from modern English new testaments (e.g., NIV, ESV, NASB) are the words "predestinate" and "reprobate", which are used to define key concepts in the soteriology of Calvinism. However, as used in the King James Version, these words have meanings that are very different from those imputed to them by Calvinistic theologians. In the Bible, predestination has to do with God's commitment to perfectly sanctify/glorify all who believe in Christ (Cp., Rom8:28-29), not Calvinism's notion of God preselecting those who will be saved from before the creation of the world; and a "reprobate" is a person (or even an inanimate object⁹) who fails to pass a test (i.e., one who refuses to believe; Cp., Rom1:28; 2Tim3:8; Tit1:16), not Calvinism's designation of one foreordained to damnation. But by eliminating these words from our English Bibles, modern versions make it difficult to constrain the theological meaning ascribed to these terms by their biblical usage.

The word "hell", which occurs 54 times in the KJV, has been reduced to 15 occurrences in the NIV and NASB and 17 in the ESV, and the usage of "hell" by modern versions seems to decrease with every revision. It is generally replaced with transliterations (not translations) of the original Hebrew/Greek words, *sheol* in the O.T. and *hades* in the N.T. Since all of the modern versions purport to render the text of the Bible into English that is in contemporary use and much more understandable to a modern reader, one should consider whether the substitution of *sheol/hades* for "hell" genuinely accomplishes that?

Particularly disturbing is the elimination of the personal name "Lucifer" from all modern versions. Lucifer is used once in the KJV (and English versions that preceded it) in a passage that links this pre-fallen angelic creature in heaven (Isa14:12) to Satan, whose final destiny is to be cast into hell (Isa14:15; cf. Ezek28:13-19; Rev20:10). Modern translators insist that the Hebrew word (הֵילֵל; found only in Isa14:12) is a title, not a personal name, and translate it variously as "morning star" (NIV), "star of the morning" (NASB), or "day star" (ESV). That such translations are not accurate is exposed by the fact that these alternative phrases appear in other places in modern versions (e.g., Job38:7; NIV, NASB, ESV), where the Hebrew phrase so translated does not include the Hebrew word (הֵילֵל). Theologically, omission of "Lucifer" from modern versions renders it impossible to know that Lucifer is the origin of "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" (Rev12:9). Even more problematic is the fact that these modern Bible versions have introduced a grave heresy by translating the single occurrence of Lucifer¹⁰ as phrases that are indeed used in the Bible as titles of the Lord Jesus Christ (i.e., the "morning star", as in Rev22:16; the "day star", as in 2Pet1:19).

Perhaps most disturbing of all is the elimination of the personal name of God, Jehovah, from all modern versions. Jehovah occurs seven times in the KJV (Gen22:14; Exod6:3; 17:15; Judg6:24; Ps83:18; Isa12:2; 26:4). Psalm 83:18 reads, "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth". However,

⁹ See Jeremiah 6:30 (KJV) for a non-soteriological use of "reprobate".

¹⁰ The English word "Lucifer" is a transliteration of the word used in Jerome's corrupt Latin Vulgate, a fact modern critics often use in an attempt to smear those who defend its use. However, this Latin word was in use as a personal name associated with the heavenly creature who is the subject of Isaiah 14:12-15 by ante-Nicene fathers for two centuries before Jerome.

"Jehovah" as the divinely-revealed personal name of God cannot be found in any modern version.

To a large extent, essential theological concepts still used today were defined and systematized using the vocabulary of the King James Version. As this vocabulary increasingly disappears from modern versions, it appears as if theology is increasingly divorced from the Bible. Proverbs 22:28 says, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set", and 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine". For over four hundred years, foundational biblical doctrines have been defined and defended using the language of the King James Version. The language of the King James Version is an "ancient landmark" that should not be casually removed; doing so will only cause confusion among the people of God.

V. PROVIDENTIALLY PRESERVED TEXTUAL BASIS OF THE KJV

The Hebrew/Greek textual basis undergirding the King James Version is superior to that used by the modern versions, being based on the textual tradition that has been providentially preserved by God throughout all generations.

The most important of the many good reasons dispensationalists should use the King James Version is that it is a translation based on a Hebrew/Greek textual tradition that has been used almost exclusively by the people of God throughout all generations. Since God promised long ago to "preserve" His "pure words" for every generation, "forever" (Ps12:6-7; Cp., Matt24:35), it should be expected that the text of scripture traditionally used by the people of God are the words of God providentially preserved. Until approximately 150 years ago, there was no question in the minds of believers that the verbally inspired, inerrant, infallible, and sufficient Word of God had been preserved in the Masoretic Hebrew/Aramaic text of the Old Testament and the Traditional (Byzantine-based *Textus Receptus*) Greek text of the New Testament. The vast majority¹¹ of extant biblical manuscripts, as well as ancient versions, represent these Hebrew/Greek textual traditions.

The issue of the correct Biblical text (in the original languages) is not a trivial or peripheral matter; since it involves the very words of God, it is a matter of supreme importance. Furthermore, the presuppositions of modern textual criticism (which has created an entirely new Hebrew/Greek textual tradition, upon which all modern translations are based) are unbiblical. In fact, the foundational presupposition, from which modern critics reason their way to a conclusion about which reading among multiple variants is most likely to be authentic, is in conflict with the testimony of God in His Word. This foundational presupposition of modern textual criticism is one of godless naturalism applied to the transmission of the text of Scripture (thus ignoring God's promise of preservation).

¹¹ By "vast majority" is meant (with no dispute) >95%, and arguably >99%. Though generally ignored (or perhaps intentionally obscured) by modern textual scholars, this is also true of the "new" manuscripts discovered since the translation of the King James Version.

Westcott and Hort, the fathers of the modern theory, asserted that "there are no signs of deliberate falsification of the text for dogmatic purposes"¹². But such an assertion flies in the face of the testimony of Scripture itself, for the Apostle Paul affirmed that "many ... corrupt the word of God" (2Cor2:17). Scripture is corroborated by Irenaeus in the 2nd century, who testified¹³:

Wherefore also Marcion and his followers have betaken themselves to mutilating the Scriptures, not acknowledging some books at all; and curtailing the Gospel according to Luke and the epistles of Paul, they assert that these alone are authentic, which they themselves thus shortened.

If many were corrupting/shortening the text of the New Testament in the 1st and 2nd centuries, the argument that biblical manuscripts allegedly dated to the 4th century (e.g., Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) contain readings that are closer to the original autographs solely because of their supposed antiquity is decisively undercut¹⁴. When one examines the types of corruptions and the occasions of shortening found in an extremely small minority of manuscripts, all originating in and around Alexandria, Egypt (the epicenter of Gnosticism), their intention appears clear and deliberate. Although scholars assure the faithful that none of the changes they are making to the textual basis of scripture have any effect on essential doctrines, nothing could be further from the truth.

Consider a few of the changes made in modern Bible versions, along with the profound doctrinal implications of those changes.

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| 1 John 5:7 | The clearest, most explicit assertion of the triune nature of God has been removed, as have the three uses of "godhead" (Act17:29; Rom1:20; Col2:9), considerably undermining the doctrine of the Trinity. |
| 1 Timothy 3:16 | The description of Jesus Christ as " <u>God</u> ... manifest in the flesh" has been changed (see also 1Jn4:3), thus impugning the doctrine of the incarnation and undermining the doctrine of Christ. |
| John 1:18 | The description of Jesus Christ as "the only begotten Son" has been changed to "the only begotten God", introducing an ancient Gnostic heresy into the text of scripture and impugning the doctrine of Christ. |

¹² B.F. Westcott and F.J.A. Hort, *The New Testament in the Original Greek* (Macmillan and Company, London: 1881) p. 282.

¹³ Irenaeus, "Against Heresies", III.xii.12 in *Anti-Nicene Fathers* (Vol. 1), pp. 434-435.

¹⁴ Arguably the oldest extant manuscript fragment of the N.T. is a portion of Matthew 26 contained on the Magdalene Papyrus, dated to not later than 66 AD. It includes the reading **ἐκάστος αὐτῶν** (translated "every one of them" in the KJV) in Matthew 26:22, which is unique to the Textus Receptus; see Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew D'Ancona, *Eyewitness to Jesus: Amazing New Manuscript Evidence About the Origin of the Gospels* (Doubleday, New York: 1996) pp. 59-61, 125.

- Luke 2:33** Joseph becomes the "father" of Jesus, thus impugning the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ.
- Mark 16:9-20** The post-resurrection appearances and ascension of Christ have been removed from the Gospel of Mark. Modern critics allege Mark's Gospel was the first written, then argue that the resurrection event recorded in the other Gospels are late, spurious additions. There is no doctrine more essential than that of the resurrection of Christ (1Cor15:14). The single other record of the ascension of Christ in the Gospels (Luk24:51) is also the subject of a textual variant that many argue should be removed.
- Acts 8:37** The only verse that gives belief as a prerequisite condition for baptism has been removed, thus undermining the doctrine of believer's baptism. This opens the door for infant baptism, which accommodates an unregenerate (and even state) church.

Furthermore, factual errors are introduced into the text of the Bible by many modern versions that accept variant readings in the Greek text. For example, Asa and Amon, descendants of David who were kings of Judah (1Kgs15:8; 2Kgs21:18) and whose names appear in the genealogy of Christ (Matt1:7,10), are changed to "Asaph" and "Amos" (ESV), thus creating an error. In Mark 1:2, "As it is written in the prophets" (KJV) is followed by quotations from Malachi 3:1 (Mk1:2) and Isaiah 40:3 (Mk1:3); however, based on a textual variant all modern translations read "as it is written in Isaiah the prophet" (NIV, NASB, ESV), yet the remainder of the verse is a quotation from Malachi, thus creating an error. And finally, the assertion of Jesus that, "I go not up **yet** unto this feast" (Jn7:8; KJV) is changed to "I am not going up to this festival" (NIV), "I do not go up to this feast" (NASB), or "I am not going up to this feast" (ESV), which turns out to be a lie since Jesus does indeed go to the feast two verses later (Jn7:10). By introducing obvious errors into the text of the Bible, the doctrine of inspiration is undermined and the doctrine of inerrancy becomes untenable.

It borders on the absurd to suggest that such changes to the textual basis of scripture do not have any effect on essential doctrines (as alleged by modern scholars), or that they were not deliberately made for dogmatic purposes (as alleged by Westcott and Hort).

Finally, it is commonly alleged that the KJV translators merely worked with the printed Hebrew/Greek texts of scripture that were readily available to them, that they were largely ignorant of the textual variants that existed in Alexandrian manuscripts that would be discovered later, and that they certainly did not make a conscious decision in favor of the traditional (Byzantine) text over the Alexandrian text (in the case of the N.T.). This is a gross mischaracterization of the truth. While the KJV translators, as well as Erasmus who edited the printed the earliest Greek New Testament used by the translators, may not have had in their possession Greek manuscripts containing Alexandrian variants, they were certainly aware

of the existence of such variants. Personal correspondence between Erasmus and the Vatican librarian Bombasius is extant which includes discussions they had concerning textual variants present in Codex Vaticanus¹⁵. Erasmus was aware of these variants, and he considered them corruptions which were not included in his editions of the Greek New Testament. Furthermore, Beza, whose 1598 edition of the Greek New Testament was given priority by the KJV translators, was in personal possession of 5th and 6th century manuscripts (Codices Bezae and Claromontanus, respectively) containing a multitude of variant readings, virtually all of which were rejected as corruptions by Beza in his textual work on the Greek New Testament.

The KJV translators were aware of most of the Alexandrian-type textual variants, and the fact that they did not include them in the textual basis of their translation of the New Testament indeed represented a conscious decision to reject them as corruptions. In fact, it has recently been recognized¹⁶ that the Greek text of the Apocrypha used by the KJV translators is consistent with that found in the Alexandrian Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. The KJV translators used this Alexandrian textual basis for the Apocrypha¹⁷ because that was indeed all that was available to them, but they refused to do so for authentic books of scripture.

If modern scholars are correct, generations upon generations of believers over more than a millennia have been using a corrupted text of scripture. The authentic words of God have been buried in the sands of Egypt, unknown to the Church until modern times. Only now are the inspired words of God being gradually reconstructed using the so-called science of textual criticism. Dispensationalists, who take the testimony of scripture both seriously and literally, should stand on God's promise to providentially preserve His words throughout all generations (Ps12:6-7). These are the very same words that have been traditionally accepted in the churches and continuously available to the people of God¹⁸.

¹⁵ While it is true that Codex Sinaiticus and the Egyptian papyri were not "discovered" until the 19th and 20th centuries, the alleged value of these manuscripts is not that they gave rise to new readings previously unknown to Bible translators, but that they corroborated many of the readings found in Codex Vaticanus. In rejecting the Vaticanus readings as corruptions, we can reasonably assume that Erasmus and the KJV translators would have also rejected Sinaiticus and the papyri as similarly corrupt. See Bill Cooper, *The Forging of Codex Sinaiticus* (Creation Science Movement, Portsmouth, UK: 2016) p. 26.

¹⁶ David W. Daniels, *Is the "World's Oldest Bible" a Fake?* (Chick Publications, Ontario, CA: 2017) pp. 232-233.

¹⁷ The original King James Bible of 1611 has long been maligned for including the Apocrypha. First, this was done only because it was so ordered by King James. Second, unlike the ancient, corrupt Codices Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, and Sinaiticus (and the Latin Vulgate) which interspersed the books of the Apocrypha throughout the Old Testament, the KJV translators quarantined these books into a separate section between the Old and New Testaments so that they would not be confused with authentic scripture. Third, along with the Apocrypha, the KJV translators included seven reasons why the books of the Apocrypha should not be regarded as an authentic part of the canon of scripture.

¹⁸ Two neglected or ignored facts that corroborate this assertion are: 1) the Byzantine Greek text is the text of the New Testament that was used continuously in the geographical region of the former Byzantine Empire (i.e., from Greece in the west to Syria in the east), where Greek was the common language used both within and outside the churches until the fall of Constantinople to the Ottoman Turks in 1453, and 2) the Greek text found in the

VI. CONCLUSION

God has uniquely blessed the King James Version of the Bible for more than four centuries. For much of that time it was the English Bible, used almost exclusively by English-speaking Christians. The modern spirit of the age, however, is attempting to lead the people of God to abandon the King James Version in favor of any of the newer versions, the number of which increases every year. A great many are giving in to this modern trend to discard the King James Bible, and in so doing may be in danger of making a mistake as grave as that of Esau, who sold his birthright for a mess of pottage (cf. Gen25:29-34; Heb12:16).

Dispensationalists should use the KJV as English-speaking Bible-believers have for the past four centuries. This booklet has given four good reasons to do so. First, the precision of the English grammar used in the KJV accurately communicates grammatical subtleties inherent in the Hebrew/Greek, most of which are lost in the modern versions. Second, the philosophy of translation used by the KJV translators (i.e., formal equivalence, or word-for-word translation) honors the nature of scripture and stops short of introducing (potentially) biased interpretation into the translation. Third, the English used in the King James Version gives rise to essential doctrines that are absent from many modern versions. And fourth, the Hebrew/Greek textual basis undergirding the King James Version is superior to that used by the modern versions, being based on the textual tradition that has been providentially preserved by God throughout all generations.

>2,000 ancient lectionaries, which are collections of Scripture passages read as part of church services, is 100% Byzantine. See D. A. Waite, *Defending the King James Bible* (The Bible for Today Press, Collingswood, NJ: 2006) p. 54.