

King James Onlyism

By Todd Strandberg

Yet Another Distraction

Distraction is one of Satan's favorite tools for hindering the work of God. If he can't pervert or stop the message, he does his best to sidetrack the messenger with trivial debates. After studying the issue of King James Version Onlyism (KJVO), I've concluded that we have yet another prime example of the devil's handiwork.

The advocates of KJVO believe that the King James Version is the only God-inspired translation of the Holy Bible. They insist that all modern translations have been modified to the point that they are unreliable or even dangerous for Christians to use as a resource. One writer claims that these "New Age" translations are somehow preparing the way for the rise of Antichrist.

I have a long list of problems with KJVO folks. First is my inability to find the damage supposedly being caused by all these other translations. I haven't found any major Bible version that contradicts well-established Christian theology.

Some so-called translations do corrupt the Word of God but these versions are best described as revisions rather than translations. For example, the New World Translation Bible, produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses, is more of a rewritten version of the Bible than a translation. The New World Translation renders John 1:1 as: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." Notice that the word "God" has been changed to the phrase "a god." Another example of a version that's been rewritten rather translated is the gender-neutral Bible, which tries to rob God the Father of His masculine nature.

Burden Of Proof

Most who promote the teachings of KJVO avoid personalizing the sinister actions of the translators. If all of these scholars were actively involved in perverting the Holy Bible, they would have to be classified as men of evil intent. The Bible very plainly says that those who tamper with the Word of God are destined for the lake of fire.

Because middle-aged scholars translated most of the Bible versions several years ago, a good percentage of them have now gone on to their eternal reward. If the translators of the New International Version, Good News, Amplified, New English Bible, Living Bible, Revised Standard Version, and many others were actually doing mankind a godly service, anyone attacking them would have to answer to the Lord of heaven.

Because the consequences of being wrong are so high, I think the critics of the new translations should build a stronger case against the non-KJVO crowd. I've yet to find one KJVO person who bothers to speculate about how this massive conspiracy might

have been pulled off.

Validation Is A Two-Way Street

The errors cited by the advocates of KJVO deal mostly with missing or downgraded words. They point to an example of new versions eliminating the name **Jesus** by inserting the pronoun **"he"** in place of the Lord's name. The NIV is repeatedly cited for omitting the name of Jesus, but that version actually uses His name more than the New KJV.

The main problem with these errors is that the KJVO watchdogs only look for examples that have the KJV using a proper name for God, while the same verse in another translation uses a pronoun to represent deity. Error finding needs to be a two-way street. If the KJVO researchers would do even a quick concordance check, they would find the following examples:

"For in **Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form"**
(Colossians 2:9 NIV).

"For in **him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily"** (Colossians 2:9 KJV).

"Who by the **Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy Servant, didst say, why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples devise futile things?"** (Acts 4:25 NASB).

"Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" (Acts 4:25 KJV).

"To the only God our Saviour, **through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now forever. Amen"** (Jude 25 NASB).

"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen" (Jude 25 KJV).

Another good example of the King James Only people failing to cross-check their facts is their claim that the KJV uses the proper name "Jehovah" while the modern versions substitute the word "Lord." They claim the switch is meant to depersonalize God and that it is somehow an attack against the Jews. These statements are ridiculous in light of the fact that the KJV uses the same "Lord" dozens of times where the Hebrew word "Jehovah" ["Yahweh"] is found.

Going Concordance Crazy

Gale Riplinger, in her book *New Age Bible Versions*, takes the practice of one-sided validation to a new height. She makes plenty of comparisons that are intended to show

non-KJV translations in a bad light, but she also draws a comparison between "New Age" writers and the modern Bible versions. Riplinger uses quotes from a wide variety of sources with religious views that conflict with Christianity. She implies by example that the thoughts of evil men have been written into all these corrupted translations.

Her quotes are so extremely brief, I don't understand how Riplinger can dare claim that they are from the sources she cites. For example, she implies that "the Blessed One" of Mark 14:61, NIV, actually refers to some exiled Hindu guru named Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh. Even if a demonic hand were at work in the NIV translation, plenty of other evil men have been called "the Blessed One" at some point.

Riplinger goes totally overboard in her "new age," "new world," "new order," "old order," and "former order" examples. Of course, these words are all highly satanic (I'm being sarcastic) and any appearance of them in a Bible translation confirms its evil origin. She put together a nice little list of how these praises appear in non-KJV Bibles. To assemble this list, she needed to reference 18 translations, and in most cases the offending praises only appear once in the various translations.

Her absurdity reaches its peak with her claim that the word "age" in Matthew 28:20 has a sinister meaning. The King James Version says that Jesus will be with us until "the end of the world." The NIV says the Lord will be with us "to the very end of the age." Because the Bible informs us in Isaiah 45:17 that the world will never end, the NIV translation is probably a better interpretation of Matthew 28:20.

"But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation: ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end" (Isaiah 45:17).

The King James Version is the only major translation that contains the word "gay." Does this give someone the right to claim that the KJV was written by homosexuals to plant the seeds of the "gay movement?" The answer would be "yes" if we employed the same type of logic as the KJVO crowd.

The Snail Pace Conspiracy

One of the most widely quoted verse used by the folks who argue for the King James version's supremacy is Colossians 1:14. A comparison is made to all the modern translations has them omitting the blood of Christ from this passage. If no one bothered to investigate why those three words were deleted, it would be very easy to conclude that skullduggery was at work.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14 KJV).

"In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14 NIV).

There is a very simple explanation why the scholars who produced the NIV did not include the words "through his blood." When the passage was translated into English, the words did not come from the early Greek manuscripts. The phrase was most likely borrowed from Ephesians 1:7, which happens to be a parallel passage to Colossians 1:14.

The King James translators got a little wordy in their translating. The NIV translators simply corrected what should not have been added to the passage. The KJVO crowd, however, says that we should trust their favorite translation over manuscripts that date back to the third century.

There is a lot of talk about the removal of the phrase "through his blood" as being some sort of conspiracy to destroy the doctrine of the blood atonement of Jesus Christ. If the devil were working to corrupt the Bible, this would have to be his slowest-moving scheme of all times. It makes no sense to do this with only one verse while leaving dozens of other verses untouched. Here are a few examples:

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." (Ephesians 1:7 NIV)

"But with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect" (1 Peter 1:19 NIV).

"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood" (Revelation 1:5 NIV).

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13 NIV).

"How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that led to death, so that we may serve the living God!" (Hebrews 9:14 NIV).

English Bias

Supporters of the King James Only doctrine often claim that Elizabethan English translation is superior to Hebrew and Greek manuscripts upon which it is based. They take this step to try to defend themselves against the contradictions the early translations create for their exclusive view. If the KJV has no source document, it has to be a new revelation from God.

Because we have the original Hebrew and Greek, we don't need to rely on an English translation that was written 1600 years after the fact. If the original Greek was good enough for the scholars who produced the King James Bible, it should be good enough for us. Even Jesus said, **"I am Alpha and Omega"** (Rev. 1:8). He didn't say, "I am the A and Z."

If KJVO proponents are right, where does that leave the 2,000 non-English translations? German-speaking people have the same right to claim their version of the Bible as the one and only "infallible translation." The only way to resolve differences between the translations is by checking the ancient original Hebrew and Greek.

Errors In The KJV

Many people believe that the King James Bible is infallible. They boldly claim the translation is so blessed by God that it is 100-percent free of errors. This kind of talk is just bluster because there are several minor translation errors in the KJV.

As the marginal notes indicate, the King James translators did not regard their work as perfect or inspired, but they did consider it to be a trustworthy reproduction of God's Holy Word.

In Hebrews 10:23, the word "faith" is erroneously substituted for the word "hope." All of the source documents use "hope." It is very obvious that Paul meant to use faith, hope and love in verses 22, 23, and 24.

"10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of **faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our **faith** without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 10:24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto **love** and to good works."**

In Revelation 22:19, the scholars made the mistake of thinking Jesus was speaking of the "Book of Life." Researchers have found 99% of all Greek manuscripts reading "tree of life." The context of verse 14 verifies that the Lord was speaking of the "tree of life."

"22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the **tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."**

"22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the **book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."**

One of the most obvious errors in the KJV is the word "at" in Matthew 23:24. It's not grammatically proper to say, "**Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.**" The translators should have used the word "out." The most common English translations that pre-date the KJV bear this out:

"Blinde leders; clensenge a gnat, but swolowyng a camel."--(Wyclif, 1380.)

"Ye blinde gydes, which strayne out a gnat, and swalowe a cammyll."--(Tyndale, 1534.)

"Ye blynde gydes, which strayne out a gnat, and swalowe a camell."--(Cranmer, 1539.)

"Ye blynde gydes, which strayne out a gnate, and swallow a cammel."--(Geneva, 1557.)

"Blinde guides, that strain a gnat, and swallow a camel."--(Rheims, 1582.)

There Is No 1611 King James Bible

For many people, it is not enough to just have any King James Bible. They take the extra step of proclaiming the Authorized 1611 KJV translation to be the only true Word of God. Because the King James used today has been revised several times, they don't feel it can be trusted.

I have some bad news for these 1611 KJVO folks: There is no existing copy of the original manuscript produced by King James' faithful translators. The pre-print text and the original autographs confirming the validity of the translation have all been lost to history. There is no way the KJVO advocates can be certain that the 1611 translation has not been tampered with.

According to a pamphlet written in 1660, the king's printers possessed the finished product five years before it was published. Because the KJVO camp is fond of conspiracies, the time gap should cause great concern. After all, they have no way of knowing if the original KJV translation made it to the print press.

The 1611 KJV Bible has indeed seen several revisions - 1613, 1629, 1638, 1644, 1664, 1701, 1744, 1762, 1769, and the final one in 1850. The concern over the validity of the modern KJV Bible is silly because the vast majority of the changes were simply spelling changes or single word updates.

The Need For Clarity

Language is always in a constant state of change. A word may mean one thing one year and have an opposite meaning a year later. If the Bible is not periodically translated into the language of the common person, the meaning of the original text becomes lost to the reader. Just consider the following KJV words:

Almug, algum, chode, charashim, chapt, earing, gat, habergeon, hosen, kab, ligure, leasing, maranatha, nard, neesed, pate, pilled, rabboni, raca, ring-straked, stacte, strake, sycamyne, thyme wood, trode, wimples, ouches, tatches, brigandine, ambassage, occurrent, purtenance, bruit, fray, cracknels, nusings, mufflers, anathema, corban, talitha cumi, ephrata, aceldama, centurion, quarternion, delectable, sanctum sanctorum, carriage, wot, trow, sod, and swaddling clothes. (1)

Dr. Jack Lewis put together a good example of how the KJV has changed. His original writing goes on for several pages. Here is small excerpt that gets his point across:

"Sith the noise of the bruit of this school hath reached to thee-ward, we trust that our concourse liketh you well-particularly those who blaze abroad that there is error here. Whoso setteth thee against us-whoso saith we offend all-speaketh leasing. We be not affrighted, but withal, we are straightened in our bowels. We knoweth well that what thou wilt hear straightway wilt fast close up thy thoughts. With some we be abjects, some have defied us; but there has been no daysman betwixt us. They subvert the simple!" (2)

I'm sure Satan would love to keep the Bible shrouded in mystery. When the King James translation came out, many church leaders complained that it was too easy to read.

We've forgotten that church leaders once tried to keep the public in the dark by opposing all efforts to modernize the Bible.

The best way to show how the new translations can help clarify the meaning of the Bible text is by example. Listed below are comparisons between the King James and the New King James Version produced by Thomas Nelson Publishing:

Matthew 10:42

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (KJV).

"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" (NKJV).

Matthew 17:25

"He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon?" (KJV).

"He said, 'Yes.' And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, 'What do you think, Simon?'"(NKJV).

Matthew 18:32

"I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst me" (KJV).

"I forgave you all that debt because you begged me" (NKJV).

Mark 8:33

"For thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men" (KJV).

"For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (NKJV).

John 8:46

"Which of you convinceth me of sin?" (KJV).

"Which of you convicts Me of sin?" (NKJV).

1. Jack Lewis, The English Bible From KJV to NIV (Baker Book House, 1981)
2. Jack Lewis, Questions You've Asked About Bible Translations (ISBN 0-945441-04-5)

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