

~Which Bible version?~

Within this issue we will be discussing 3 different views by 3 differing groups of Christians. **1)** Those who espouse the KJV only, **2)** those who prefer the KJV but use others and **3)** those who use the KJV as one of many translations but prefer the more modern versions such as the New International Version, New American Standard Version. All see quality and value in the KJV.

In the ongoing debate as to what version is the 'true' one, I would like to take an approach that does not condemn any of the groups! In this hot topic, the 'KJV-only' folks tend to demonize those who read and enjoy versions other than the KJV. On the other hand, the 'other-than-KJV' folks, tend to be more tolerant and accepting. We must treat each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Let our love for God, and for His people, guide us!

Before we get into the heart of the matter, some prefatory remarks are necessary. We, as ordinary folks, tend to believe and lean toward those we love. In fact, if listening to a debate between 2 opponents, most people will 'want' to believe someone they love and trust and, conversely, will NOT want to believe those whom they do not love and trust. It is human! We are likely to believe the preferred speaker even if they are telling us untruths and tend not to want to believe the non-preferred speaker--*even if he is speaking the truth!* Shocking as that sounds it is true.

Seldom are we convinced by the facts **alone!** In fact, most of us have neither the time, resources nor training to search the facts on things like Textual Criticism. Those of us who do take the time to study these issues are usually at the mercy of the authors of the books we read, as most of us are not scholars. How could we refute them? Do we know more than they? Are we more learned in this particular field of study than they? Men and women who have spent many years of their lives in the study of the texts differ one from another in their conclusions. One says the text underlying the KJV is the best while the other says the opposite.

It does no good to say that the KJV has been the dominant Bible in the past 300+ years. The question is then asked: "Where was it during the 1600 years prior to it's printing?" There have been numerous Bibles throughout the centuries and there is no positive proof, to date, that the text underlying the KJV is the oldest. It is conjecture, at best, to say it was. We simply do not have a complete Bible of the Majority Text type that is ancient. The oldest mss. we have of the complete text are Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, those that underlie the modern versions.. We simply do not have the same thing with the Majority Text, which underlies the KJV. It also does no good to state that because there are many more copies of the Majority Text extant and they are more widespread, it proves it is the most accurate. Again, that is conjecture.

The KJV-only folks assume that the text upon which the KJV is the right one and so, when they see the NIV saying something different in some verse, they condemn it as a 'per-version'. Think about it for a moment: "Is this not a case of circular reasoning?"

Let us assume, for a moment, that the NIV text is more accurate than the KJV. Therefore, where the 2 versions disagree, we would state that the KJV is wrong in that verse, would we not? It all depends on

what version we *assume* is the correct one to begin with. It is as simple as that. The KJV-only folks accuse all others of removing verses from the text while the NIV folks accuse the KJV of adding them. Because we do not have the original autographs, how is one to know??

I have studied this issue quite intensively for years. During this time, I have read classic works on both sides of the issue. In other words, 'for and agin'! I have read (among others) scholars Gordon Fee and David Otis Fuller (all 3 books) on the KJV side and Bruce Metzger and Don Carson on the NIV side--all of these men are highly trained and respected for their knowledge of the Bible. Most of us could not understand a fraction of what they know about the text and it's transmission. These 2 groups of men have come to different conclusions! How are *we* to know who is right?

Unlike one brother who made a lot of tapes on why the KJV was the superior text, I read *both* sides. This brother stated to me that he did NOT study the facts on the other side of the issue because he trusted the source that was KJV-only!

Folks, that is like a man being accused of a crime and brought before a Judge and the defense gives it's story. After the Judge hears the defense, he pronounces the man: 'not guilty!' What would you say about this Judge? You would probably say: "Stop, Judge, you must listen to the other side of this issue and not just the defense. *You cannot make a correct judgment on just one side of a case study!*"

You would be correct, and yet, that is exactly what many have done. They have either been raised in the KJV tradition and have listened *only* to those who prefer that version or have *only* read books or articles that espouse the KJV. As I said earlier, most people will listen and believe those whom they trust. Many are afraid to look outside their denominational biases and teachings. Every case sounds logical if the other side is not represented. At least look at both sides of this issue if you are to understand it intelligently! I cannot say that I have spoken to a person who preferred the KJV who had read *equally* about the other side of this issue!

After my years of research on this issue, I confess that I cannot state that the KJV is better or worse than the NIV. They are just 2 versions of the one Bible, both with qualities of their own. I do not see them as 2 Bibles. They are 2 versions of the same Bible. I use them both. I have been raised on the KJV and naturally, I have memorized most of my verses in that version. However, I rely on other translations because the KJV is weak (as others are) on a number of verses. I take advantage of many translations to get a better understanding of what is being said in any particular verse. Many issues are cleared up by the newer translations.

When I say 'translations' I am not including 'paraphrases' (which are what the author 'thinks' the Bible says rather than what the Bible actually says).

ALL translations 'paraphrase' to a greater or lesser extent. I am cautioning on the use of complete paraphrases when studying the Bible. Sometimes they can be good aids, but certainly not main study Bibles.

The term 'literal translation' is not an accurate description. One can only say that 'such and such' a translation is MORE literal than another translation. KJV-only folks state that only the KJV is literal. Well, one need only look at 2 glaring examples to see that that just isn't so!

1) The KJV has Paul using the the term "God forbid" in numerous places in the Bible. However the Greek words are: "Mee genoito" which literally means "let it not be" or "may it not be". This term has absolutely

nothing to do with God. In fact, the word "God" isn't even in the Greek text!!

2) The KJV has the word "**Easter**" in Acts 12:4 where the Greek word 'pascha' appears which literally mean "passover". Easter, when Luke was writing the book of Acts, wasn't even known or celebrated then and is an incorrect translation of the word 'pascha' anyhow.

Could we believe God guided men to insert the name of a pagan goddess (Ashtoreth-Easter) into the text to describe one of His holy days??

These are 2 of **many** such mis-translated words within the KJV. In both cases, the translators of the KJV have 'paraphrased' these words. So much for literal interpretation!

NOTE: Both the NIV and NASB, and even the New King James, have corrected these errors and have rightly translated these words.

The point is not to berate the KJV, but to show that their argument against the other versions is also true about theirs--namely, that NO translation is 100% literal. In fact, if it was, it would make no sense at all. Word structures in other languages do not always translate literally or understandably into proper English.

Another one of the arguments made by the KJV-only folks is that the NIV denies or diminishes the Deity of Jesus.

In NO way, is this true. I give a standard test to prove this. I take the **5** clearest verses in the New Testament that deal with the Deity of Jesus. These verses are:

- 1) John 1:1-----" In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the **Word was God.**"
- 2) Romans 9:5----" And from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, **who is God over all...**"
- 3) Titus 2:13-----" The glorious appearing of our great **God and Savior, Jesus Christ**"
- 4) Hebrews 1:8---" But about the Son he says, "Your throne, **O God**, will last for ever and ever..."
- 5) 2 Peter 1:1b----" To those who through the righteousness of our **God and Savior Jesus Christ...**":

Compare the KJV and the NIV in these 5 verses and the **clearer** Christology is given by the NIV. In other words, the Deity of Jesus is clear in **ONLY 3 of the 5** verses in the KJV whereas it is clear in **ALL 5** verses in the NIV. Check it out, yourself!

This, once and for all, dispenses with the idea that Satan influenced the translation of the NIV (which the 'KJV-only' folks contend). If Satan influenced the NIV with the purpose of denigrating the Deity of Jesus, he did a terrible job of it. The result was just the opposite! If I were to make a case for Satan influencing either one of those versions based on those **5** texts, guess which one I would choose?!

The next thing the KJV-only folks will do is state that the newer versions are based on corrupted texts and that the perpetrators of these texts (Westcott and Hort) are actually **2** 'closet Roman Catholics' whose goal was to destroy the KJV. In fact, Westcott and Hort were Anglicans (Anglicans were also on the KJV translation committee) and if this condemns them, then it must also do the same to the Anglicans on the KJV translation committee as well!

Also, little mention is made of the person who translated the text underlying the King James--Desiderius Erasmus who never became a Christian and remained a Roman Catholic Humanist all his life!!

Let us look, together, at this Bible issue and ask ourselves if there are:

1) 2 or more different Bibles?

OR

2) 2 or more different *versions* of the same Bible?

Scholars tell us that only 2% of the texts (KJV and NIV) differ from each other and NO doctrine is affected. *In other words, we are in agreement for 98% of the text, folks!* That, in any endeavor of human intercourse, is enough for us to get along.

If the scholars cannot agree amongst themselves as to what text is the most accurate, are we to go on fighting-forever? If, and until, a complete 1st century text appears, it seems this argument will go on ad infinitum with Christians being (once again) divided over issues.

Let us agree that there is sufficient evidence on the table to call a fairly accurate 'draw' as to both texts being sufficient for Christians to follow after holiness, love one another, and serve God. You will find sufficient material for this in either version!