

LESSON 7: A CRITIQUE OF THE KJV ONLY MOVEMENT

THE TEXTUS-RECEPTUS ONLY POSITION:

Defined by D.A. Waite (a TR-Only Advocate): “It is my own personal conviction and belief, after studying this subject since 1971, that the words of the Received Greek and Masoretic Hebrew text that underlie the King James Bible are the very words which God has preserved down through the centuries, being the exact words of the originals themselves.”

Our Beliefs:

- All the words of Scripture have been preserved (as Jesus promised).

- We do not believe that it has been preserved through a particular manuscript or set of manuscripts.
 - There is not a set or line of manuscripts that are in complete 100% agreement with each other.
 - We must allow for historical and archeological fact to help our understanding of Scripture.
 - The facts are that there is not a manuscript line that is completely and totally without any change whatsoever in it.

- We believe that God has preserved his word through the 5,800 manuscripts available to us.

A History of the development of the Textus Receptus

- 1516-Erasmus' first edition
- 1519-Erasmus' second edition (over 400 changes)
- 1522-Erasmus' third edition (over 100 changes, addition of 1 John 5:7-8)
- 1527-Erasmus' fourth edition (over 100 changes, 90 of them in Revelation)
- 1546-Stephanus' first edition (he has 4 different editions over the next 5 years)
- 1565-1604—Beza's editions (11 different editions)
- 1633—Elziver's second edition (This line of manuscripts is first called the Textus Receptus in this edition, which came out 22 years after the KJV was first published)

Problems with the TR-Only position:

1. Which edition of the TR should you use?
2. How is it that the TR, which is a compilation of 7 incomplete Greek Manuscripts which were 900 years removed from the originals can be said to be “the very words which God has preserved down through the centuries”?

THE KING JAMES ONLY POSITION:

KJV-Only Position: The KJV is the inspired and inerrant Word of God in the English language and every other version is a perversion because it changes the KJV which is the Word of God.

Six Objections to this Position:

1. The translators of the KJV were not KJV-only!

*“...we do not deny, nay, we affirm and avow, that the very meanest [worst] translation of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession...containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God: as the King’s speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, every where.”
(Preface to the 1611 KJV)*

“Truly, good Christian Reader, we never thought from the beginning that we should need to make a new translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one;...but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one, not justly to be expected against; that hath been our endeavour, that our mark.” (Preface to the 1611 KJV)

2. If the 1611 is inspired, why has it changed so much?

REFERENCE	KJV 1611	KJV (AV)
Gen 39:16	until <u>her</u> lord came home	until <u>his</u> lord came home
Num 6:14	and one <u>lamb</u> without blemish	and one <u>ram</u> without blemish

2 Kgs 11:10	that <i>were</i> in the <u>Temple</u>	that <i>were</i> in the <u>temple of the Lord</u>
1 Chr 7:5	<i>were</i> men of might	<i>were</i> <u>valiant</u> men of might
2 Chr 28:11	fierce wrath of <u>God</u> <i>is</i> upon you	fierce wrath of the <u>Lord</u> <i>is</i> upon you
Job 39:30	where the slain <i>are</i> , there <i>is</i> <u>he</u>	where the slain <i>are</i> , there <i>is</i> <u>she</u>
Jer 38:16	So the king sware secretly	So <u>Zedekiah</u> the king sware secretly
Jer 49:1	why <i>then</i> doth their king inherit <u>God</u>	why <i>then</i> doth their king inherit <u>Gad</u>
Ezek 3:11	unto thy people	unto <u>the children</u> of thy people
Joel 1:16	Is not the meat cut off before <u>you</u> eyes	Is not the meat cut off before <u>ou</u> eyes
Matt 12:23	Is this the son of David?	Is <u>not</u> this the son of David?
1 Cor 15:41	another of the moon	<u>and</u> another <u>glory</u> of the moon
2 Cor 11:32	the King, kept the city with a garrison	the king kept the city <u>of the Damascenes</u> with a garrison
1 Tim 1:4	rather than edifying	rather than <u>godly</u> edifying
1 John 5:12	he that hath not the Son, hath not life	he that hath not the Son <u>of God</u> hath not life

3. The problem of time

The most dangerous theology is new theology! If you have theology that nobody has ever heard of or thought of for the first 1800 years of church history, then you are probably not the discoverer of new theology. You are most likely the discoverer of bad theology.

King James Only theology is new doctrine. The first glimpses of it were in a book written by Dean Burgon in 1883 in response to the publication of the Revised Version. There was not a great deal of movement until the mid 1950's.

This is not the only "time problem" that the KJV-Only movement faces. It also must answer the question of what the church did for 1500 years without an inspired Bible until the King James Version was translated.

4. The problem of location

Major theological issues and debates are never relegated to one country. When there is a theological awakening by the Spirit of God, it grips the hearts of the children of God and spreads like wildfire.

The KJV-Only movement started in England in the 1880's and then was transplanted to America where it has sat ever since. If the KJV-Only argument is true, wouldn't you expect that the Holy Spirit of God would be sweeping the globe with it? Instead, you see a very small percentage of Gospel-preaching churches in America debating this with the vast majority of Christians across the globe unaware that this debate is even happening.

5. The problem of language

Why English?

What about other languages?

Why not German (the language the reformation started in)?

Why not Chinese (the most spoken language today)?

What about translating the Bible into another language?

6. The Apocrypha

The 1611 KJV contained the Apocrypha. If the 1611 is inspired, wouldn't that mean that the Apocrypha is also inspired?

A WORD (OR TWO) FROM SPURGEON:

Sermon #1604: "Heart Disease Curable" (Preached on June 19, 1881):

I intended to have preached from these words in Luke 4:18, but when I looked at the 1881 English Revised Version and found that the words were not there at all I was somewhat startled. I began to ask whether the omission was a correct one or not; and, without a making pretence to

scholarship, I feel convinced that the revisers are acting honestly in leaving it out. It was not in the original manuscript of Luke, but probably some pious person added it with the intention of making the quotation more complete. Whatever the intention may have been and however natural the added words may appear, it is a pity that the unknown brother ventured to improve what was perfect from the beginning...

Concerning the fact of difference between the Revised and the Authorized Versions, I would say that no Baptist should ever fear any honest attempt to produce the correct text, and an accurate interpretation of the Old and New Testaments. For many years Baptists have insisted upon it that we ought to have the Word of God translated in the best possible manner, whether it would confirm certain religious opinions and practices, or work against them. All we want is the exact mind of the Spirit, as far as we can get it. Beyond all other Christians we are concerned in this, since we have no other sacred book; we have no Prayer-Book or binding creed, or authoritative minutes of conference; we have nothing but the Bible; and we would have that as pure as we can ever get it. By the best and most honest scholarship that can be found we desire that the common version may be purged of every blunder of transcribers, or addition of human ignorance, or human knowledge, so that the word of God may come to us as it came from his own hand. I confess that it looks like a grievous thing to part with words which we thought were part and parcel of Luke; but since they are not in the oldest copies, and must be given up, we will make capital out of their omission, by seeing in that fact the wisdom of the great Preacher, who did not speak upon cheering truths when they were not needed, and might have blunted his seasonable rebuke.

“Commenting and Commentaries” (written one year before he died):

Do not needlessly amend our authorized version. It is faulty in many places, but still it is a grand work taking it for all in all... (emphasis mine)

Spurgeon’s Autobiography-Volume 2, Page 327:

"Greek is the sacred tongue, and Greek is the Baptist's tongue; we may be beaten in our own version (the KJV), sometimes; but in Greek, never."

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE KJV-ONLY MOVEMENT

1. Their passion and zeal for the Word of God is unmatched. Oh, that we would be that passionate about God and his Word.
2. Their desire that God’s Word not be tampered with and changed to suit man’s purposes but rather that we would pursue God’s holiness is a good and right desire and one that we can learn from.
3. Understand that secondary issues are just that, secondary. They do not warrant separation and calls of damnation and heresy on those who would disagree.

4. We must maintain open and honest dialogue with those who disagree with our theology. We should not just hold a view because we think it is right and we must not be afraid of those who would challenge our beliefs. Rather, we test the spirits and hold fast to what is good.