

Why I Have Stopped Using the King James Version as the Default Bible on this Site

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Beginning in January 2013, I stopped using the King James Version as the standard Bible on wordofhisgrace.org. I have several reasons for this change, and I want to briefly point them out.

The Pluses of the KJV

First, I want to point out some positive things about the King James Version.

1. The King James Version is the most widely owned English-language Bible. The average English-language speaker is more likely to have a King James Version in the house than any other version. But, I do wonder whether the King James Version is still the most widely *read* Bible.
2. The King James Version remains unmatched in literary beauty and grace. But literary beauty and grace are not substitutes for clarity, and we read the Bible to know what it's saying.
3. Taken as a whole, the King James Version is usually as accurate as many modern translations.
4. The New Testament of the King James Version is based on the Greek Textus Receptus. The Textus Receptus is somewhat similar to the Majority Text, which I consider to be the best text. This is a positive. But why use a Bible that only comes close? Why not use a Bible that really is based on the Majority Text? (See below.)

The Minuses of the KJV

1. We cannot avoid the fact that the King James Version is written in outdated language. Over four hundred years have passed since it was translated and published in 1611. Let's face it, when was the last time you met someone new and he or she asked you, "Whence art thou?" instead of, "Where are you from?"

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[kjvnomore.pdf](#)

If you were brought up on the King James Version or you have been reading it for years, you might not quite realize how totally foreign-sounding the King James Version is to modern readers. Estimates are that the King James Version uses 827 words and phrases that have since changed their meaning or are not used at all. It is a book that is so different from what people today are used to that it is practically an indecipherable code to them.

Even those experienced in the King James Version might do a double take at this verse: "The God of my mercy shall prevent me: God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies" (Psalm 59:10, KJV). Which is it? Will God prevent me, or will He let me? One has to know that archaically, "prevent" meant "to go before." The *World English Bible* (WEB) makes it clear: "My God will go before me with his loving kindness. God will let me look at my enemies in triumph." This is just one verse among many that could be cited.

We must face it, time moves on, and the language of the King James Version is now antiquated. To continue using it in an internet ministry is to risk possibly confusing people or even to muddy the Gospel.

2. The King James Version never was easily understood by the common people. It was written in the pulpit language of the High Church, which the common people found hard to understand. It took a long time for the King James Version to become popular as the people preferred the simpler versions that preceded it.

The New Testament was written in Koiné or common Greek, the language of the common people. The Old Testament commonly used in the time of Christ, and often quoted in the New Testament, was the Septuagint. This was also written in Koiné. Koiné was not a street slang, but it was the everyday language of the marketplace and was understood by the average reader throughout much of the western civilized world. I am convinced that God wants the Bible to be in the language of the common people.

3. Scholarship has continued since 1611 (or 1769, which is the date of the revision that most King James Bibles now in print are based on). The original languages are now better understood than they were at that time, thus enabling good (certainly not all) modern translations to be more accurate than the King James.

4. The King James Version contains purposeful mistranslations designed as a stacked deck for the established church. At the Hampton

Court Conference of 1604, in which he proposed the new Bible, King James I said, "...we acknowledge the government ecclesiastical, as it now is, to have been approved by manifold blessings from God himself.... I approve the calling and use of Bishops in the Church, and it is my aphorism, 'No Bishop, no King'.... I will have one doctrine, one discipline, one religion, in substance and in ceremony.... If you aim at a Scottish presbytery, it agrees as well with monarchy as God and the devil. Then Jack, and Tom, and Will, and Dick, shall meet and censure me and my Council.... If this be all your [Puritan] party has to say, I will make them conform themselves, or else I will harry them out of the land, or else do worse."

The upshot was the issuing of a set of rules to the translators. They were not allowed to honestly translate certain words. They would have to force the translation to reflect the episcopal structure of the Church of England and its ideas concerning a clergy, and, "The old ecclesiastical words to be kept, viz, the word Church not to be translated Congregation, & c." To put it bluntly, in the area of ecclesiology, the King James Version is a dishonest translation.

5. The King James Version is based on the Textus Receptus, not the Majority Text. I believe that the Textus Receptus is better than the NU-Text that is used for most modern English translations. But, being compiled from a very few manuscripts, the Textus Receptus is not as good as the Majority Text. In fact, they differ from each other in 1,838 readings. Most modern translations are based on the NU-Text, but the translation I will be using on wordofhisgrace.org is based on the Majority Text.

I believe that the minuses concerning the King James Version outweigh the positives.

What about Thee and Thou?

Before continuing, I want to address an objection that I know some will have: Any translation that doesn't follow the King James Version using "Thee" and "Thou" when addressing God is irreverent.

"Thee" and "thou" are not special pronouns for God. "Thou" is the archaic, second person singular nominative (subject) pronoun; e.g. Thou shalt go to the store. "Ye" is the plural of it; e.g. Ye (all) are going to the store. "Thee" is the second person singular objective pronoun; e.g. I say unto thee, arise and go to the store. "You" is the plural of it; e.g. I say unto you (all), arise and go to the store.

These words have no special connection with God whatsoever. They are not respectful forms of address. The King James Version has Jesus using "thee" to address Satan (Matthew 4:10), and Paul using "thou" to address Elymas as "thou child of the devil" (Acts 13:10).

Bible translations that don't use "thee" and "thou" are not being disrespectful to God (and, by the way, neither are these words necessary in praying to God).

The *World English Bible* (WEB)

I use several Bibles in my personal studies. But the best I have so far found as an all-round reading Bible that balances being literal with being easily readable, and is also based on the Majority Text, is the *World English Bible*, abbreviated as WEB. The *World English Bible* is a non-copyrighted translation of the Bible. This description is from the *World English Bible's* website:

The World English Bible is an update of the American Standard Version (ASV) of the Holy Bible, published in 1901. A custom computer program updated the archaic words and word forms to contemporary equivalents, and then a team of volunteers proofread and updated the grammar. The New Testament was updated to conform to the Majority Text reconstruction of the original Greek manuscripts, thus taking advantage of the superior access to manuscripts that we have now compared to when the original ASV was translated.

"Preface to the World English Bible" (<http://www.ebible.org/web/FRT01.htm#V2>)

Is the WEB perfect? No. I know of no translation that is. In fact, it is not really possible to have a perfect translation of a book from one language to another. When using it in articles, if there is a particular verse that I think has a problem in the WEB, I will explain it. But, for the reasons given above, I believe using the WEB is better than continuing to use the King James Version.

Of course, I am not saying anything against your continuing to use the King James Version, if it is your personal preference. But if you believe in what is called King James Onlyism, please know that I will not respond to tirades damning me because I do not use only the King James Version. I will, of course, appreciate, read, and give

consideration to all other comments and questions, although time and circumstances will dictate whether I can personally answer you.*

* I will continue to occasionally cite the King James Version, just as I might any other version. Also, for consistency, I will continue using the King James Version for any series of articles that I started while still using the King James Version.