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MORE ABOUT THE “KING JAMES ONLY” TEACHING

The following study is the **fifth** in a series I have written regarding the King James ONLY teaching. Printed copies of all five are available, *free* upon request, and are also posted on the website: ralphwoodrow.org under “Articles.”

Much of this is *technical* information and may be **boring** to some. I understand that. *However*, those who choose to dig a bit deeper, may find things here that *are* interesting—perhaps even intriguing!



Seek and you will find. Luke Eleven-nine.

A widely-circulated Bible prophecy paper says: “New versions prepare the apostate churches of these last days to accept the religion of the Antichrist—even his mark!” A woman in New York wrote to me: “...as a Christian you should know that any Bibles other than the Authorized King James Bible...are pure heresy. I am praying that you will take heed as our Lord says, for if you don’t, your name *will be taken out of the Book of Life.*”

It seems the message in some King James ONLY literature is: “Neither is there salvation in any other except the King James Version, for there is none other version under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (cf. Acts 4:12).

Though I never held the King James ONLY teaching, because the King James translation was so widely used, for many years I was prone to use it in preaching and writing. But in time, there were fine students of the Bible (like my friend Greg Sherill in Texas)—people who would *never* want truth watered down—who encouraged me not to feel locked in to the KJV.

In previous articles I have shown that *every single page* of the KJV (having been translated over four centuries ago in 1611 A.D.) uses words that are *now* obsolete: HAST, HATH, SAITH, SHALT, THEE, THINE, THOU, THY, and YE—over **25,000** times. These are not bad words—not necessarily incorrect words—but words we do not use in *normal* conversation today.

Over **3,000** times the KJV uses words that have a now-obsolete ETH ending. Verses like Matthew 7:8—ASKETH, RECEIVETH, SEEKETH, FINDETH, and KNOCKETH—and BELIEVETH in John 3:16!

Shouldn’t a translation of a book—certainly one as highly regarded as the Bible—use correct present-day English?

Suppose a pastor is going to bring a message about the journey of the Israelites from Egypt to the Promised Land. He reads a passage from Nehemiah 9:11-24 in the KJV:

“**Thou didst** divide the sea...their persecutors **thou threwest** into the deeps...**thou leddest** them...**thou camest** down upon mount Sinai, and **spakest** with them

and...**madest** known unto them **thy** holy sabbath, and **commandest** them precepts...And **gavest** them bread from heaven...and **broughtest** forth water for them and **promisedst** them that they should go in to possess the land...**thou forsookest** them not...and **withheldest** not **thy** manna...and **gavest** them water for their thirst...Their children also **multipliedst thou** as the stars of heaven, and **broughtest** them into the land...which **thou hadst** promised to their fathers...**thou subduedst** before them the inhabitants of the land...and **gavest** them into their hands.”

A few folks may think this outdated wording is (somehow) especially *sacred*. But a King James ONLY pastor who insists on this, can cause many to question his intelligence. This is unfortunate, because it can discredit things he stands for that *are* valid.

I have before me a little illustrated, widely-distributed booklet that says the King James Version is “**infallible**”—and that all other translations have been put out by **Satan!** A drawing on one page shows a pastor quoting Luke 2:33 from the *New American Standard Bible*: “And [Jesus’] **father** and mother were amazed at the things that were said about him.” The claim is then made that this translation, by using the word “father” in this verse, “**DENIES THE VIRGIN BIRTH!**” **Not true!**

Mary *herself*, in the *same* chapter—and **that in the KJV!**—referred to Joseph as Jesus’ father. “Thy **father** and I have sought thee sorrowing” (Luke 2:46).

According to Scripture, Joseph was Jesus’ father in the sense he was his adoptive father—though not his biological father. *Every single translation* says Jesus was supernaturally conceived, that Mary was a virgin (Luke 1:34, 35). *None leave this out!*

The claim that translators of newer versions like the NIV, have deliberately left out things that are in the KJV is misleading. It is not quite that simple. It involves variations in centuries-old manuscripts. The fact is, there are also words and phrases in newer translations that are not in the KJV.

In Jude 25, *The New International Version* (NIV) has the words “**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**” But the KJV does *not*. In Acts 4:25, the NIV says it was “**by the Holy Spirit**” God spoke through David (Acts 4:25). Those words are omitted in the KJV. Would any accuse the KJV translators of trying to leave out **Jesus** and the **Holy Spirit**?

Psalm 145 is also an example of words left out in the KJV. This chapter is an **acrostic**; that is, each section begins with one of the 22 successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the KJV one section is missing—the 14th which would be designated by the letter *nun*. If a document has sections numbered **1-13** and then jumps to **15-22**, would this not raise the question: “What happened to section **14**?”

But the section beginning with the 14th Hebrew letter is *not* missing in the Septuagint and the Syriac manuscripts, or in the (much older) Dead Sea Scrolls. That portion reads: “God is faith-

ful in his words and gracious in all his deeds.” Consequently, *many* newer Bible translations, such as the ESV, NASB, NLT, and NIV, have included this phrase as part of Psalm 45:13.

So, which is more accurate or complete in this case: the KJV that *unmistakably* has something missing in Psalm 145, or translations that fill in the gap based on more than one manuscript?

In the KJV, there are hundreds of examples of a word being spelled two different ways:

The KJV translators used the word *think* 65 times, but **thinkest** 9 times. They used *may* 1,027 times, but **mayest** 114. They used *can* 235 times, but **canst** 51. They used *would* 451 times, but **wouldest** 38. They used *should* 783 times, but **shouldest** 73. They used *pass* 830 times, but **passeth** 38. They used *make* 1,055 times, but **makest** 26. They used *always* 62 times, but **alway** (without the s) 23 times.

Clearly in these examples, one spelling was preferred, but why spell a word two different ways?

In the KJV names of PLACES are often spelled differently: Canaan / **Charran**, Judaea / **Juda**, Midian / **Madian**, Sodom / **Sodoma**, Tarshish / **Tharshish**, Tyre / **Tyrus**, Zion / **Sion**, etc.

What would we say about a public school that required students to use a history book—or any other book—that is needlessly loaded with hard-to-understand words or words spelled different ways? Suppose a book mentioned Chicago, but in another, place it was spelled **Shekaugo**—or perhaps San Francisco as **Saint Fransizkoe**. Students could probably figure out the meaning, but that school’s *credibility* would be in serious question!

Many of us who grew up with the old English of the KJV, supposed **Savior** is spelled **Saviour**. But in today’s *American* English, the **u** is dropped. Words in the KJV that include **u** include:

Armour (Eph. 6:11); **behaviour** (1 Tim. 3:2); **colour** (Rev. 17:4); **dishonour** (1 Cor. 15:43); **favour** (Lk. 1:30); **honour** (Matt. 13:57); **labour** (1 Cor. 15:58); **neighbour** (Gal. 5:14); **odour** (John 12:3); **parlour** (1 Chron. 28:11); **rigour** (Exod. 1:13); **rumour** (Lk. 7:17); **savour** (Luke 14:34); **succour** (Heb. 2:18).

These words appear *hundreds* of times in the KJV.

What has been said about the letter **u** can also be said about the letter **k**. In the KJV, havoc is spelled **havock** (Acts 8:3); heretic is spelled **heretick** (Titus 3:10); lunatic is spelled **lunatick** (Matt. 4:24); public is spelled **publick** (Matt. 1:19); music is spelled **musick** (Luke 15:25). Does *anyone* suppose “musick” is correct spelling?

When referring to physical afflictions, many words in the KJV are seriously outdated.

“...a man that is...CROOKBACKT [**a hunchback**]” (Lev. 21:20). “The LORD shall smite thee with the BOTCH [**boils**], and with EMERODS [**hemorrhoids**]” (Deut. 28:27). “...in the skin of his flesh a RISING [**swelling**]” (Lev. 13:2). “...breaking forth with BLAINS [**blisters**]” (Exod. 9:10), or “a WEN [**tumor**]...” (Lev. 22:22). “The burning AGUE [**intense fever, malaria**] that shall cause sorrow” (Lev. 26:16).

“They brought to Jesus a DUMB MAN [**a man unable to speak**]” who was healed (Matt. 9:32). The word “dumb,” as used here, does not mean *stupid*.

“Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is LUNATICK [**has epileptic seizures**]” (Matt. 17:15). “Lunatic,” derived from *luna*

(meaning **moon**), is probably not the best word choice. It reflects a primitive belief that epilepsy was caused by the moon!

Where more recent translations of Leviticus 15:33 use wording like “a woman in her monthly period” or “a woman during her menstrual period,” the KJV says “her that is sick of her FLOWERS.” That is *not* the way the word “flowers” is used today!

Martha, the sister of Lazarus who had died, said to Jesus: “Lord, by this time he STINKETH: for he hath been dead four days” (John 11:39). As a boy, I recall some neighbor kids giggling upon finding “stinketh” in the Bible.

Young men were cruelly made into eunuchs, often to serve as slaves in the harem of kings (Isa. 39:7; Dan. 1:7). The KJV describes it this way: “He that is wounded in the STONES, or hath his PRIVY member cut off” (Deut. 23:1).

“Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession” and lied about the amount received, “his wife also being PRIVY to it” (Acts 5:1, 2 KJV). Newer translations do not use “privy” which, today, is a word used for an **outhouse**!

When Jehu overthrew Baal worship, to show their repulsion for Baal, the Israelites used Baal’s temple for a “DRAUGHT HOUSE [**public outhouse, latrine**]” (2 Kings 10:26-28).

The words “whore” and “whorish” (Lev. 21:7; Prov. 6:26, etc.), “whoremonger” and “whoremongers” (Eph. 5:5; Heb. 13:4, etc.), “whoredom” and “whoredoms” (Gen. 38:24; Ezek. 16:25; etc.) are used in the KJV a total of 77 times. In today’s English, **prostitution** would be a better word choice for these activities.

“CHAMBERING” and “CONCUPISCENCE” (Rom. 13:13; Col. 3:5) are old English words related to **immorality** and **lewd behavior**.

An unfaithful wife “who played the harlot with many lovers” had been “LIEN with” many places (Jer. 3:2 KJV). The intended meaning is clear enough. But that is not how we use the word “lien” today. A lien is a legal hold placed upon a property for the satisfaction of a debt.

We may speak of **leasing** a house. But when the KJV was translated, leasing meant **lying**! “Them that speak LEASING [**lies**] the LORD will abhor” (Psa. 4:2; 5:6).

Someone may RENT a *house*. But compare Jeremiah 4:30 in the KJV: “Though thou RENTEST thy *face* with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair.”

Where the KJV says “camel’s FURNITURE” (Gen. 31:34), we would use the word **saddle**. We may purchase furniture for our *house*, but not for a *camel*!

Ezra spoke to the congregation as he “stood *upon* a PULPIT of wood” (Neh. 8:4 KJV). Today a preacher stands **behind** a pulpit, but not **upon** the pulpit! The word here is better understood as simply a raised *platform*.

Today the word “passengers” refers to a people who are being transported, as in an automobile, train, or plane. But the word “passengers” in the KJV simply meant people who were *passing through* (Ezek. 39:14, 15, etc.)

“...we took up our CARRIAGES and went up to Jerusalem” (Acts 21:15). Today, “carriage” is defined as a four-wheeled vehicle pulled by horses. No one supposes Paul (and those with him) tried to carry *carriages*! What they carried was their *baggage*.

“The shipmen...when they had let down the boat into the sea, under COLOUR [**pretense**] as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship...” (Acts 27:30 KJV).

The saying, “He showed his true **colors**,” apparently has a nautical origin, “colors” referring to the flag on a ship at sea. Sometimes pirates would “sail under false colors” by flying a friendly flag. Once they were close enough, they would *reveal their true colors*.

“At Tyre...the ship was to UNLADE [**unload**] *her* BURDEN [**cargo**]” (Acts 21:3).



A careful reader will notice that this (above) verse referred to a ship as “HER.” Present-day English, however, has largely dropped the complex grammatical gender system. But in the old English of the KJV, over and over and over, objects—though not actually male or female—are designated as “his” or “her.”

In the KJV a fruit tree was called “his” (Gen. 1:11); a city gate was called “his” (Acts 12:10); a seed was called “his” (1 Cor. 15:38); the Ark of the Covenant was called “his” (1 Sam. 5:11). The sun was called “his” (Isa. 13:10). A candlestick was called “his” (Exod. 25:31), *etc.*

The earth was called “her” (Gen. 4:11,12); a fig tree was called “her” (Joel 2:22); a fruit-producing vine was called “her” (Mal. 3:11); many cities and towns were called “her” (Zech. 12:6; Jer. 6:3; Joshua 21); the moon was called “her” (Isa. 13:10); the sea was called “her” (Jonah 1:15). In the KJV, even Hell was called “her”! “Hell hath enlarged HERSELF, and opened HER mouth without measure” (Isa. 5:14).

Using “his” or “her” about things that are neither male nor female does not provide clarity; it tends to subtract from it!

Among the many obsolete words in the KJV, consider the word WOT. “I WOT not who has done this thing” (Gen. 21:26). “We WOT not what has become of him” (Exod 32:1). “Whither the men went I WOT not” (Jos. 2:5). “What I shall choose I WOT not” (Phil. 1:22), *etc.* Does anyone really believe that “I WOT not” is better than saying “I KNOW not”?

When Potiphar was not home, his wife tried to seduce young Joseph. He refused her advances, saying that Potiphar “WOT-TETH not what is with me in the house” (Gen. 39:7, 8).

Or consider the word WONT used 9 times in the KJV (not to be confused with the word “won’t”): “They were WONT to speak in old time” (2 Sam. 20:18). The fiery furnace “was WONT to be heated” (Dan. 3:19). Paul and Silas attended a meeting “where prayer was WONT to be made” (Acts 16:13), *etc.* The obsolete word “wont” meant that which was **customary**.

The word “WHITHER” occurs 124 times in the KJV. The first occurrence is Genesis 16:8: “**Whence camest thou and whither wilt thou go?**” In this quotation, six out of eight words are considered archaic. Why not just say: “Where did you come from and where are you going?”

Instead of the word “show” (as we would say), the KJV uses “SHEW,” “SHEWED,” “SHEWING,” and “SHEWETH”—a total of 398 times! “I will SHEW mercy on whom I will SHEW mercy” (Exod. 33:19). “He will SHEW you things to come” (John 16:14). “Behold, I SHEW you a mystery” (1 Cor. 15:51). “Study to SHEW thyself approved unto God” (2 Tim. 2:15), *etc.*

In the wording of the KJV, David called his riches “MINE own PROPER GOOD” (1 Chron. 29:3). Better wording would be “**my goods owned as property**.”

Notice the word “**mine**” in this verse. It is used 650 times in the KJV: “**mine** hand,” “**mine** eyes,” “**mine** ears,” “**mine** mouth,” “**mine** house,” “**mine** city,” “**mine** enemies,” “**mine** mule,” “**mine** iniquity,” “**mine** answer,” *etc.* The word “**my**” is used 4,367 times in the KJV. It is unclear why “my” would not be used throughout.

This is not to say there is anything wrong with a song having words like “**Mine** eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord...” or “How great **Thou Art**.” Sometimes old English like this has a certain poetic quality. But for a standard biblical text, up-to-date English is preferable.

The word “wax,” as in Psalms 68:2, is a familiar word: “...as WAX melteth before the fire.” But many times, the KJV uses the word in an entirely different way:

wax hot anger, **wax** rich, **wax** poor, **wax** fat, eyes **wax** dim, faces **wax** pale, hands **wax** feeble, love of many shall **wax** cold, young widows **wax** wanton, seducers **wax** worse and worse, earth will **wax** old as a garment, **waxing** confident, Lord’s hand not **waxed** short, **waxen** cry, **waxen** shoes, **waxen** clothes, covenant **waxeth** old, *etc.*

These are all examples of a now-outdated word which meant to *grow* or *increase*.

In the KJV, “QUICK” refers to *living* people as compared to those who are *dead*—“the QUICK and the dead” (2 Tim. 4:1).

“And they were INSTANT [**insistent**] with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified” (Luke 23:23).

“SUFFER [**allow**] little children...to come unto me” (Matt. 19:14). Of the 96 times the word “suffer” appears in the KJV, only a few, like Matthew 16:21, actually have the meaning of **suffering** as understood today.

A famine was so intense in Samaria that “an ass’s head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver and the fourth part of a CAB of dove’s dung for five pieces of silver” (2 Kings 6:25 KJV). For readers today, using “cab” as a measure is unclear. We think of a **cab** as a **taxi**!

Leaving on a journey, a man gave money to his servants, and said: “OCCUPY till I come” (Luke 19:13 KJV). “Occupy” might cause us to think of a military leader **holding** the fort until help comes. But that is not the meaning here. The word translated **oc-occupy** was more closely related to our word *occupation*. Other translations have “invest this for me while I am gone,” “put this money to work until I come back,” *etc.*

The word SUBSCRIBE causes us to think of subscribing to a magazine. But the word translated “subscribe” in the KJV (Isa. 44:5; Jer. 32:10, 12, 44) simply meant “to **write**,” and is usually so translated.

Spiritual gifts are provided by the Holy Spirit, “dividing to every man SEVERALLY as he will” (1 Cor. 12:11 KJV). The word “severally” has caused some to suppose the Spirit gives each believer *several* gifts. This might be, but the word “severally” is an old word meaning **individually**, as the NKJV says: “...distributing to each one **individually** as He wills.”

“...he would not ADVENTURE himself into the theatre” (Acts 19:31). In today’s English, we would simply say *venture*, not **adventure**, which conveys a different meaning.

The word **COULTER** in the KJV, unfamiliar to most readers, was the cutting portion of a plow (1 Sam. 13:20, 21). In other places it is translated “plowshare” (Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3; Joel 3:10). Newer translations clarify the meaning.



Jesus “**UPBRAIDED**” certain cities that were unrepentant (Matt. 11:20). Instead of using **upbraid**, an obsolete word, newer translations have *reprimand* or *denounce*.

“**FENCED** cities” are mentioned **57** times in the KJV (Num. 32:17; Deut. 3:5, *etc.*). We usually think of a “fence” made of wire or wood. But the meaning here is that these cities had *protection*, a **defense** against attack, often because of a surrounding wall.

Among challenges translators face is when a word can (correctly) be translated two different ways. The word translated JOSHUA, for example, can also be translated JESUS!

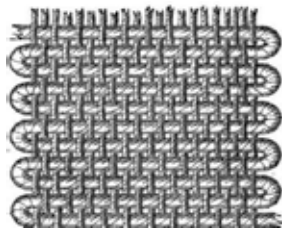
Consider Hebrews 4:8 in the KJV: “For if **JESUS** had given them rest...” And also Acts 7:45: the tabernacle in the wilderness was “brought in with **JESUS**” to the Promised Land. It is acknowledged on all sides that these verses refer to **Joshua** the son of Nun, *not* Jesus Christ! The KJV failed to make this distinction in these two verses, but newer translations do.

Other times in the KJV, the **same** Greek word was translated **two** different ways—for no apparent reason—even in the same verse! In Acts 2:4, for example, the word translated **Ghost** is also translated **Spirit**. “They were all filled with the Holy **GHOST** and began to speak with other tongues, as the **SPIRIT** gave them utterance.” Newer translations, including the NKJV, have “Spirit” in both places.

This brings to mind something a woman said to a pastor I knew years ago: “You may have received the Holy *Spirit*, but if you get the Holy **GHOST**, *that’s really good!*”

“**Toward**,” “**forward**,” and “**backward**” are normal words used **411** times in the KJV. But consider the following archaic words: “**REReward**” (Josh. 6:13); “**Froward**” (1 Peter 2:18); “**USWARD**” (2 Peter 3:9); “**THEE-WARD**” (1 Sam. 19:4); “**THITH-ERWARD**” (Rom. 15:24); and “**SEATWARD**” (Exod. 37:9)!

Describing curtains in the tabernacle, “the **SELVEDGE** in the coupling” is mentioned (Exod. 26:4). Most are not familiar with the word “selvedge.” It refers to the edge of a fabric, tightly woven to prevent fraying. Nine verses in Leviticus 13 (KJV) use the words “**WARP**” and “**WOOF**.” These are technical weaving terms, the “warp” being the vertical strands, the “woof” being the horizontal strands of a fabric.



Our word “**CURIOS**” describes someone who is eager to know more about people or things. But in the KJV it was used of artistically woven portions of priestly garments (Exod. 29:5, *etc.*).

It is no surprise that names for various clothing styles have changed in 400 years. What the King James translators called a “**STOMACHER**” would not be called that now! Isaiah 3:24 referred to an ornate garment that covered the stomach and chest.

We talk about being *careful* when crossing a street, *careful* when driving, *careful* concerning all kinds of things—and **rightly so**. But the KJV says, “Be **careful** for nothing” (Phil. 4:6). Back

then this simply meant **don’t worry** or be **anxious** about anything (NKJV, *etc.*, cf. verse 7).

In the following short sentences, obsolete words in the KJV are given in CAPS, with the way we would say it now in [brackets]:

“If I cause **NOISOME** [**harmful, deadly**] beasts to pass through the land...” (Ezek. 14:15).

Wild beasts shall devour “and none shall **FRAY** [**scare**] them away” (Jer. 7:33).

“Behold a man gluttonous, and a **WINEBIBBER** [**heavy drinker, a drunkard**]” (Matt. 11:19).



“Whatsoever is sold in the **SHAMBLES** [**meat market**], that eat, asking no question for conscience sake...” (1 Cor. 10:25).

“...all manner of **BAKEMEATS** [**baked food**]” (Gen. 40:17).

“In the temple whither the Jews always **RESORT** [**gather**]” (John 18:20).

Ezekiel described a temple: “...the **GOINGS OUT** [**exits**] and the **COMINGS IN** [**entrances**] thereof” (Ezek. 43:11).

“Wherefore doth the wicked **CONTEMN** [**despise**] God?” (Psa. 19:13).

“The **TIRE** [**attire, turban**] of thine head” (Ezek. 24:17). Obviously, Ezekiel did not wear a rubber automobile tire on his head!

“A **RAILER**” (1 Cor. 5:11) was one who used **abusive language**—not a laborer working on the Santa Fe Railroad!

“He sendeth an **AMBASSAGE** [**delegation**] and desireth conditions of peace” (Luke 14:32).

“My heart is **INDITING** [**composing, writing**] a good matter” (Psa. 45:1).

What we would call prison **cells** were called “**CABINS**” in Jeremiah 37:16.

“**PERADVENTURE** [**perhaps**] it will please God...” (Num. 23:27; cf. Rom. 5:7). Used **32** times in KJV.

The shepherds were “**SORE** [**extremely**] afraid” (Luke 2:9). The two words “**sore afraid**” appear **14** times in the KJV.

“God at **SUNDRY** [**different**] times and in **DIVERS MANNERS** [**diverse ways**] spake...by the prophets...” (Heb. 1:1).

When Hannah was praying, “Eli **MARKED** [**observed**] her mouth...only her lips moved” (1 Sam. 1:12).

Finally, this study must come to a close. Much more could be written. The King James Version tells about Jesus, His supernatural birth, His sinless life, His atoning death, His resurrection, His ascension, and His return. **And, gratefully, so do all the other Bible translations!** It is not my intent to put down any Christian who may prefer the KJV. But my suggestion would be to *also* consult a more up-to-date translation, as we seek to understand “the way of God more perfectly” (cf. Acts 18:26). **6 / 2026**

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