

Way of Life Literature

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What About the New King James Version?

Updated January 8, 2015 (first published March 9, 2003) (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org)

The NKJV is by far the best of the modern versions, since it is not based on the critical Greek text. I wish we could recommend it, because I have great sympathy with the plight of those who read English as a second language and have trouble with the antiquation of the King James. As missionaries in South Asia we have worked closely with such people for many years and many personal friends fall into this category, and the difficulty they have with the King James is very real.

Yet I cannot recommend the NKJV for the following reasons. Note particularly point number five.

1. THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NKJV) IS A DECEPTION. The editors and translators of the NKJV claim that they are standing in the tradition of the men who originally produced the Authorized Version and who slightly revised it in the 18th century, that they are only updating outmoded language and that they remain firmly committed to precisely the same Greek and Hebrew text as that underlying the original King James Bible. The advertisements for the NKJV would have readers believe that there are no textual changes and that the men who produced it love the old King James Bible. The Statement of Purpose issued by Thomas Nelson, publishers of the New King James Bible New Testament (1979), makes the following claim:

“Not to add to, take from, nor alter the communication intended by the original translators, but to convey that communication in 20th century vocabulary and usage.”

This says to me that the translators and producers of the NKJV are committed to **PRECISELY** the same text as that underlying the King James Bible, but this is not the case for the translators of the New King James Version were *not* committed to

the Received Text and the KJV.

We have corresponded with the executive editor of the Old Testament portion of the NKJV, Dr. James Price. In April of 1996 he admitted to me that he is not committed to the Received Text and that he supports the modern critical text in general:

“I am not a TR advocate. I happen to believe that God has preserved the autographic text in the whole body of evidence that He has preserved, not merely through the textual decisions of a committee of fallible men based on a handful of late manuscripts. The modern critical texts like NA26/27 [Nestles] and UBS [United Bible Societies] provide a list of the variations that have entered the manuscript traditions, and they provide the evidence that supports the different variants. In the apparatus they have left nothing out, the evidence is there. The apparatus indicates where possible additions, omissions, and alterations have occurred. ... I am not at war with the conservative modern versions [such as the New International Version and the New American Standard Version]” (James Price, e-mail to David Cloud, April 30, 1996).

It is obvious that Dr. Price holds the standard eclectic text position that was popularized by Westcott and Hort in the late 1800s and that he is committed to modern textual criticism. By his own testimony, he has no love for or commitment to the Received Text. He flippantly casts aside this historic, revival-producing text in favor of one that is based only on a handful of manuscripts of dubious authority (i.e., Sinaiticus and Vaticanus and a few others) that were disused by Bible-believing churches for at least 1,500 years. Further, Dr. Price has accepted the myths that are promoted by textual criticism, such as the idea that the Received Text is supported only by a few late manuscripts. (For refutation of that myth, see our article “Is the Received Text Based Merely on a Few Late Manuscripts,” March 16, 2000, which can be found in the Bible Version section of the Apostasy database at the Way of Life web site and also in The Modern Bible Version Question-Answer Database (April 2005). Further, Dr. Price supports the corrupt New International Version, which not only is based on the wrong Greek text but also incorporates the undependable dynamic equivalency method of translation.

With men like this involved; yea in charge; it is not possible that the New King James Bible could be merely a simple revision of the KJV. I do not know of one man involved with the translation of the NKJV who has a conviction about the absolute authority of the Old and New Testament texts underlying the KJV.

Dr. Price told me that the NKJV translators did not solely follow the Masoretic Hebrew text in the Old Testament of the NKJV but that they introduced textual changes. This is born out in the Preface to the NKJV, which says the New King James Bible modifies the Masoretic Hebrew with the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, “a variety of ancient versions,” and the Dead Sea Scrolls (New King James Bible, Preface).

At least some of the editors of the NKJV are committed to the so-called “Majority

Text,” which makes significant departures from the Greek Received Text of the Reformation Bibles.

In 1982, Thomas Nelson published “The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text.” The editors, Zane Hodges and Arthur Farstad, were also key players in the New King James Version project. There are almost 1900 differences between the Received Text and the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text. The deletion of 1 John 5:7 is an example. The translators of the Authorized Version accepted this passage as inspired Scripture and they placed it in the English Bible. The editors of the NKJV, on the other hand, do not believe 1 John 5:7 is Scripture, and they have omitted the passage from the Hodges-Farstad Majority Text, together with dozens of other portions of Scripture and hundreds of words, and they have cast great doubt upon this verse in the NKJV with an inaccurate marginal note. These men are definitely not committed to the Received Text or the King James Bible. Their goal is to modify it to bring it into line with their particular theories of textual criticism, which err by taking into consideration only the Greek manuscript evidence and ignoring the three other important sources of evidence, ancient translations, writings of ancient church leaders (the “church fathers”), and the ancient lectionaries.

The Hodges-Farstad textual modifications were not actually introduced into the text of the New King James Bible, but the fact that such men are its authors is a loud warning to those who believe the KJV Received Text is the preserved Word of God.

(A list of the omissions and changes proposed by the “majority text” view can be found in the back of the *Interlinear Bible* by Jay Green. A good refutation of the majority text position is available in Jack Moorman’s book *The Majority Text*, which is published by Bible for Today, Collingswood, NJ, 800-564-6109.) See also our report “Examining the Hodges-Farstad Majority Greek Text” at www.wayoflife.org

2. THE NKJV MAKES THOUSANDS OF UNNECESSARY CHANGES.

There are an estimated 100,000 changes, averaging 80 per page. This was probably done for copyright purposes.

3. THE NKJV MAKES MANY ERRONEOUS DEPARTURES FROM THE KING JAMES BIBLE. Following are some examples:

MATTHEW 7:14

KJV “Because STRAIT is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

NKJV “Because narrow is the gate and DIFFICULT is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The word “difficult” in the NKJV (and “narrow” in the KJV) is a translation of the Greek word “thilbo.” Strong’s Concordance defines it as “to crowd (literally or figuratively).” In the KJV, this Greek word is translated “afflict,” “narrow,”

“throng,” “suffer tribulation,” “trouble.” When referring to a path, it means that one’s way is restricted. Regardless of what it could be translated in other passages, it is the context of a word that always defines its meaning, and the context of Matthew 7:14 is salvation. We know from other passages that salvation is not difficult. Jesus said that to be saved one must come as a child (Lk. 18:17), but if salvation were difficult, as the NKJV says, it would not be possible for a little child to be saved. The Bible describes salvation in terms of coming (Mat. 11:28), drinking (Jn. 4:10), eating, (Jn. 6:35), and taking a gift (14 times in N.T., Eph. 2:8-9). These are not difficult things.

As the KJV rightly says, the gate to salvation is strait and narrow. The terms are basically synonyms, referring to the truth that the sinner must humble himself and put his trust in Jesus Christ alone, that there is only one narrow way to God. The world at large despises this One Way and follows the broad road to destruction.

The NKJV translation creates doctrinal error by making the reader think that salvation is a difficult thing. That fits in with the false gospels that are preached by so many groups today. They teach that the sinner must trust Christ PLUS do many other things. Contrary to the warning in Romans 11:6, they intermingle works with grace, law with faith. That does indeed create a difficult salvation, because the sinner must do many things or he will not ultimately be saved, but it is a false gospel. The door that Jesus opened for us with His own death and blood is strait and narrow, but praise God, not difficult. All the sinner must do is enter in by faith; he must simply reach out his hand and receive the lovely Gift (Eph. 2:8-9) that the Savior has purchased for him. The erroneous NKJV translation also fits in with a Lordship Salvation doctrine that confuses justification with practical sanctification, salvation with discipleship.

MATTHEW 20:20

KJV “Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, **WORSHIPPING HIM**, and desiring a certain thing of him.”

NKJV “Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, **KNEELING DOWN** and asking something from Him.”

In this connection, the translators of the NKJV commit the same error as the translators of the NIV. The Greek word translated worship in this verse is “proskuneo,” which is the same word translated “worship” in other passages referring to the worship of Jesus Christ. In the KJV, it is never translated anything other than worship. Eleven times in the KJV, the Gospels tell us that Christ was worshipped (Mt. 2:11; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9,17; Mk. 5:6; Lk. 24:52; Jn. 9:38). This, of course, is indisputable evidence that Jesus Christ is God, because only God can be worshipped (Ex. 34:14; Is. 42:8; Mt. 4:10; Acts 14:11-15; Rev. 19:10). (There are two verses in the KJV that say that someone “knelt before” Christ--Mt. 17:14; Mk. 1:40)--but in those verses a different Greek word is used, the word “gonupeteo.”)

The modern versions weaken this testimony to Christ’s deity by translating only

some of the “proskuneo” passages with the term “worship.” The NIV, for example, removes almost half of this witness to Christ’s deity, changing “worship” to “kneel before” in Mt. 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 20:20; Mk. 5:6. The NKJV does not go as far, only removing one of these witnesses to Christ’s deity. But WHY, WHY, WHY remove any of them? It is the same Greek word. It means to worship! This change in the NKJV is unnecessary and wrong and is a move toward the undependable and weaker direction of the modern versions.

HEBREWS 2:16

KJV - “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16).

NKJV - “For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham” (Hebrews 2:16).

This change weakens the doctrine of Christ. The Greek says nothing about giving aid to. The Greek word is *epilambanomai*, which means to lay hold of, to seize, to catch, to take.

HEBREWS 3:16

KJV “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.”

NKJV “For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?”

This change in the NKJV creates an error in the Bible, because the Old Testament plainly teaches that not all of the Israelites rebelled and provoked God. The KJV is right in its teaching here and the NKJV is wrong.

REVELATION 1:18

KJV “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of HELL and of death.”

NKJV “Re 1:18 “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of HADES and of Death.”

This is one of the strangest changes that have been made in the NKJV. In 11 different verses, the NKJV replaces the word “hell” with the word “hades,” as follows:

Mat. 5:22 -- hell fire (gehenna)

Mat. 5:29 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 5:30 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 10:28 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 11:23 -- Hades

Mat. 16:18 -- Hades

Mat. 18:9 -- hell fire (gehenna)

Mat. 23:15 -- hell (gehenna)

Mat. 23:33 -- hell (gehenna)

Mk. 9:43, 45, 47 -- hell (gehenna)

Lk. 10:15 -- Hades
 Lk. 12:5 -- hell (gehenna)
 Lk. 16:23 -- Hades
 Acts 2:27 -- Hades
 Acts 2:31 -- Hades
 1 Cor. 15:55 -- Hades
 James 3:6 -- hell (gehenna)
 2 Pet. 2:4 -- hell (tartaroo)
 Rev. 1:18 -- Hades
 Rev. 6:8 -- Hades
 Rev. 20:13 -- Hades
 Rev. 20:14 -- Hades

The latter is simply a transliteration of the Greek word, of course. It can be argued that it is not an error to use the actual Greek word instead of translating it, but that is not the point. The point is that there is no reason to change the word from *hell* to *hades*. English people know very well what hell, is but far fewer of them know what *hades* is. The word “hades” has been translated “hell” in the standard Received Text English Bibles since the days of John Wycliffe in the late 1300s. The change to “hades” does not make the Bible clearer. In this connection, the NKJV is certainly not easier to understand or read than the KJV. The New Testament uses three terms for hell, *gehenna*, *tartaroo*, and *hades*. *Gehenna* is figurative reference to the burning of garbage in the valley of Hinnom, a valley of Jerusalem. *Tartaroo*, which is used only in 2 Pet. 2:4, refers to a chamber of hell in which rebellious angels are incarcerated, “the deepest abyss of Hades” (Strong). *Hades*, the most common New Testament word for hell, can refer to the grave (Acts 2:27, 31; 1 Cor. 15:55) but also refers to hell, as is evident in Luke 16:23, when the rich man died and “in hell [*hades*] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

Why did the NKJV translators change every reference to *hades*? It appears to be a change for change sake. Perhaps it falls into the category of changes that must be made in order to obtain a copyright for a new work. But it certainly plays into the hands of those who are watering down the doctrine of eternal, fiery hell. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, for example, who deny that hell is a place of eternal fiery punishment, prefer the term *hades*. So do the Seventh-day Adventists. In fact, many “evangelicals” are also denying or questioning the doctrine of hell. In 1993 Billy Graham said: “When it comes to a literal fire, I don’t preach it because I’m not sure about it. When the Scripture uses fire concerning hell, that is possibly an illustration of how terrible it’s going to be not fire but something worse, a thirst for God that cannot be quenched” (Graham, interview with Richard Ostling, *Time* magazine, Nov. 15, 1993). Robert Schuller says: “And what is ‘hell’? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God--the ultimate and unfailing source of our soul’s sense of self-respect” (Schuller, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, 1982, pp. 14-15). Others who deny the biblical doctrine of hell are Clark Pinnock, Herbert Vander Lugt of the Radio Bible Class (*What Does the Bible Say about Hell*, 1990), F.F. Bruce, Richard Quebedeaux, Kenneth Kantzer, former editor of *Christianity Today*, John R.W. Stott, George Ladd of Fuller Seminary,

and J.I. Packer.

These are only a few examples of the significant changes that have been made throughout the New King James Version.

4. THE NKJV DELETES THE IMPORTANT DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE SECOND PERSON PRONOUN SINGULAR AND PLURAL (THEE, THOU, THY, THINE VS. YE, YOU). Therefore, the NKJV gives up accuracy for modernity.

The Hebrew and Greek languages has a distinction between the singular and plural of the second person pronouns. The King James Bible maintains this distinction by the consistent use of “thee, thou, thine, ye and you.” The pronouns beginning with “T” are always singular (i.e., thee, thou, thine), and the pronouns beginning with “Y” are always plural (i.e., ye, you).

Consider the following testimony about this:

“It is often asserted or assumed that the usage of the AV represents the speech of 300 years ago, and that now, three centuries later, it should be changed to accord with contemporary usage. But this is not at all a correct statement of the problem. The important fact is this. **THE USAGE OF THE AV IS NOT THE ORDINARY USAGE OF THE EARLY SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: IT IS THE BIBLICAL USAGE BASED ON THE STYLE OF THE HEBREW AND THE GREEK SCRIPTURES.** The second part of this statement needs no proof and will be challenged by no one. It is undeniable that where the Hebrew and Greek use the singular of the pronoun the AV regularly uses the singular, and where they use the plural it uses the plural. Even in Deuteronomy where in his addresses, and apparently for rhetorical and pedagogical effect, Moses often changes suddenly, and seemingly arbitrarily, from singular to plural or from plural to singular, the AV reproduces the style of the text with fidelity. **THAT IS TO SAY, THE USAGE OF THE AV IS STRICTLY BIBLICAL**” (Oswald T. Allis, “Is a Pronominal Revision of the Authorized Version Desirable?” See the Bible Version section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Literature web site -- <http://www.wayoflife.org>).

We can see the importance of this with the following example from the New Testament:

JOHN 3:7

KJV “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

NKJV “Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'”

In the KJV, the English reader can discern that both a singular and a plural Greek pronoun are used in this verse. Jesus was saying, “Marvel not that I said unto thee [singular, referring to Nicodemus], Ye [plural, referring to all of the nation Israel and all people in general] must be born again.”

Because of the changes that were made in the NKJV toward the end of sounding contemporary, this meaning is lost to the English reader in both the Old and New Testaments.

See the question, “Shouldn’t we remove the old language such as thee, thou, and thine?”

5. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM THAT WE HAVE WITH THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION IS THAT IT IS A BRIDGE TO THE MODERN VERSIONS.

In reality, therefore, the New King James Version is simply a bridge to the modern versions. Those who move away from the standard King James Bible to the New King James are lulled into a sense of security that they have moved merely to an updated and improved King James, but actually they are being brainwashed to be weaned away from the King James and to accept the modern versions.

Kirk DiVietro, Pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Franklin, Massachusetts, was in one of the Thomas Nelson planning meetings that prepared the way for the publication of the New King James. He testified to me that the Thomas Nelson representative plainly stated that their goal with the NKJV was to create a bridge to the modern versions, to break down the resistance of those who still revere the KJV. Following is Bro. DiVietro’s testimony as he gave it to me by e-mail on January 9, 2005: “Over 20 years ago I attended a pre-publication meeting of the NKJV held by the Thomas Nelson People and hosted by the Hackman’s Bible Bookstore in Allentown, PA. I am personal friends with the owners who took great delight in seating me next to the brother of the main translator of the NIV. The meeting was attended by over 300 college professors and pastors. At the meeting we were treated to a slide presentation of the history of the English bible and in particular the King James Bible and its several revisions. During the presentation of the NKJV the Thomas Nelson representative made a statement which to the best of my memory was, ‘We are all educated people here. We would never say this to our people, but we all know that the King James Version is a poor translation based on poor texts. But every attempt to give your people a better Bible has failed. They just won’t accept them. So we have gone back and done a revision of the King James Version, a fifth revision. Hopefully it will serve as a transitional bridge to eventually get your people to accept a more accurate Bible.’ Because of the years, and because I did not write it down, I cannot give you the speaker’s name and I cannot promise you that this is word for word correct, but the meeting so seared my spirit that I have never picked up and opened a NKJV. I can tell you that this is absolutely the substance and nearly the exact words of what was said.”

The footnotes in the NKJV are based on the Nestle-United Bible Society critical Greek text and thus create exactly the same kind of doubt you find in the modern versions. It tempts the readers to discount the authority of the passages questioned in footnotes. It also accustoms Bible students to the philosophy of textual neutrality, of picking and choosing between the readings of competing texts and versions.

The Nestle-Aland United Bible Societies critical Greek text (NU) follows the Westcott-Hort text of 1881 in removing or questioning dozens of entire verses and thousands of words that are in the Received Text. It is shorter than the Received Text by the equivalent of the entire books of 1 and 2 Peter. Those who believe the Received Text underlying the Authorized Version and other revered Protestant versions is the preserved Word of God reject the NU text as corrupted.

Though the editors of the NKJV claim they are honoring the Received Text with their New King James Bible, they have given credibility to the corrupted UBS text by placing its doubt-producing readings in the margin of their version.

(The following study is based on the margin of the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson, copyright 1984.)

44 ENTIRE VERSES ARE QUESTIONED IN THE MARGIN OF THE NKJV ON THE BASIS OF THE UNRELIABLE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES TEXT

Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 21:4; 23:14; 24:6

Mark 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20

Luke 17:36; 22:43; 22:44; 23:17

John 5:4; 7:53-8:11 Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29

Romans 16:24

1 John 5:7

PORTIONS OF 95 OTHER VERSES ARE QUESTIONED IN THE MARGIN OF THE NKJV ON THE BASIS OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETIES TEXT

MATTHEW

5:22 NU omits "without a cause"

5:27 NU omits "to those of old"

6:13 NU omits "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

9:13 NU omits "to repentance"

9:35 NU omits "among the people"

10:3 NU omits "Lebbaeus, whose surname was"

10:8 NU omits "raise the dead"

12:35 NU omits "of his heart"

13:51 NU omits "Jesus said to them"

15:8 NU omits "draw near to Me with their mouth, And"

18:29 NU omits "at his feet"

19:20 NU omits "from my youth"

20:7 NU omits "and whatever is right you will receive"

20:16 NU omits "For many are called, but few chosen"

20:22 NU omits "and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with"

20:23 NU omits "and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with"

22:13 NU omits "take him away, and"

23:3 NU omits "to observe"

25:13 NU omits "in which the Son of Man is coming"

26:60 NU omits "false witnesses"

27:35 NU omits "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."

MARK

1:2 NU omits "Isaiah the prophet"

1:14 NU omits "of the kingdom"

2:17 NU omits "to repentance"

3:5 NU omits "as whole as the other"

3:15 NU omits "to heal sicknesses and"

4:4 NU omits "of the air"

6:11 NU omits "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city"

6:36 NU omits "bread; for they have nothing to eat"

7:2 NU omits "they found fault"

9:29 NU omits "and fasting"

9:45 NU omits "into the fire that shall never be quenched"

9:49 NU omits "and every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt"

10:24 NU omits "for those who trust in riches"

11:10 NU omits "in the name of the Lord"

12:4 NU omits "and at him they threw stones"

12:30 NU omits "This is the first commandment"

12:33 NU omits "with all the soul"

13:14 NU omits "spoken of by Daniel the prophet"

14:19 NU omits "And another said, 'Is it I?'"

14:27 NU omits "because of Me this night"

14:70 NU omits "and your speech shows it"

LUKE

1:28 NU omits "blessed are you among women"

1:29 NU omits "when she saw him"

1:78 NU omits "shall visit"

4:4 NU omits "but by every word of God"

4:8 NU omits "Get behind Me, Satan"

4:18 NU omits "to heal the brokenhearted"

4:41 NU omits "the Christ"

5:38 NU omits "and both are preserved"

6:10 NU omits "as whole as the other"

6:45 NU omits "treasure of his heart"

7:10 NU omits "who had been sick"

7:31 NU omits "And the Lord said"

8:45 NU omits "and those with him"

8:45 NU omits "and You say, 'Who touched Me?'"

8:54 NU omits "put them all out"

9:54 NU omits "just as Elijah did"
 9:55 NU omits "and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of'"
 9:56 NU omits "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them"
 10:35 NU omits "when he departed"
 11:2 NU omits "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven"
 11:4 NU omits "But deliver us from the evil one"
 11:11 NU omits "bread from any father among you, will he give you a stone? Or if he asks for"
 11:29 NU omits "the prophet"
 11:44 NU omits "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites"
 11:54 NU omits "that they might accuse Him"
 17:3 NU omits "against you"
 17:9 NU omits "him? I think not"
 19:5 NU omits "and saw him"
 20:23 NU omits "Why do you test Me?"
 20:30 NU omits "took her as wife, and he died childless"
 22:30 NU omits "in My kingdom"
 22:31 NU omits "And the Lord said"
 22:64 NU omits "struck Him on the face and"
 22:68 NU omits "Me or let Me go"
 22:23 NU omits "and of the chief priests"
 23:34 NU omits "Then Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do"
 23:38 NU omits "written and in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew"
 24:1 NU omits "and certain other women with them"
 24:42 NU omits "and some honeycomb"

JOHN

3:13 NU omits "who is in heaven"
 3:15 NU omits "not perish but"
 4:42 NU omits "the Christ"
 5:3 NU omits "waiting for the moving of the water"
 5:16 NU omits "and sought to kill Him"
 6:11 NU omits "to the disciples, and the disciples"
 6:22 NU omits "which His disciples had entered"
 6:47 NU omits "in Me" 8:6 NU omits "as though He did not hear"
 8:9 NU omits "being convicted by their conscience"
 8:10 NU omits "and saw no one but the woman"
 8:59 NU omits "through the midst of them, and so passed by"
 9:11 NU omits "the pool of"
 10:26 NU omits "as I said to you"
 11:41 NU omits "from the place where the dead man was lying"
 12:1 NU omits "who had been dead"
 17:12 NU omits "in the world"
 19:16 NU omits "and led Him away"

ACTS

2:23 NU omits "have taken"
 2:37 NU omits "to the church"
 7:30 NU omits "of the Lord"
 7:37 NU omits "Him you shall hear"
 9:5 NU omits "It is hard for you to kick against the goads"
 10:6 NU omits "will tell you what you must do"
 10:21 NU omits "who had been sent to him from Cornelius"
 10:32 NU omits "When he comes, he will speak to you"
 15:24 NU omits "saying, 'You must be circumcised and keep the law'"
 17:5 NU omits "who were not persuaded"
 18:21 NU omits "I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem"
 21:8 NU omits "who were Paul's companions"
 21:25 NU omits "that they should observe no such thing, except"
 22:9 NU omits "and were afraid"
 22:20 NU omits "to his death"
 24:6 NU omits "and wanted to judge him according to our law"
 24:8 NU omits "commanding his accusers to come to you"
 24:15 NU omits "of the dead"
 24:26 NU omits "that he might release him"
 25:16 NU omits "to destruction"

ROMANS

1:16 NU omits "of Christ"
 3:22 NU omits "and on all"
 8:1 NU omits "do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit"
 8:26 NU omits "for us"
 9:31 NU omits "of righteousness"
 9:32 NU omits "of the law"
 10:15 NU omits "preach the gospel of peace"
 11:6 NU omits "But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work"
 14:6 NU omits "and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks"
 14:21 NU omits "or is offended or is made weak"
 15:24 NU omits "I shall come to you"
 15:29 NU omits "of the gospel"

1 CORINTHIANS

5:7 NU omits "for us"
 6:20 NU omits "and in your spirit, which are God's"
 9:18 NU omits "of Christ"
 10:23 NU omits "for me"
 10:28 NU omits "for 'The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness'"

11:24 NU omits "Take, eat"
11:29 NU omits "in an unworthy manner"
15:47 NU omits "the Lord"

2 CORINTHIANS

8:4 NU omits "that we would receive"
12:11 NU omits "in boasting"
13:2 NU omits "I write"

GALATIANS

3:1 NU omits "that you should not obey the truth"
3:17 NU omits "in Christ"
4:7 NU omits "through Christ"

EPHESIANS

3:9 NU omits "through Jesus Christ"
3:14 NU omits "of our Lord Jesus Christ"
4:17 NU omits "rest of the"
5:30 NU omits "of His flesh and of His bones"

PHILIPPIANS

3:16 NU omits "rule, let us be of the same mind"

COLOSSIANS

1:2 NU omits "and the Lord Jesus Christ"
1:14 NU omits "through His blood"
2:2 NU omits "both of the Father and"
2:11 NU omits "of the sins"

1 THESSALONIANS

1:1 NU omits "from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"

2 THESSALONIANS

2:4 NU omits "as God"

1 TIMOTHY

2:7 NU omits "in Christ"
3:3 NU omits "not greedy for money"
3:16 NU replaces "God" with "Who"
4:12 NU omits "in spirit"

5:4 NU omits “good and”
 5:16 NU omits “man or”
 6:5 NU omits “from such withdraw yourself”
 6:7 NU omits “and it is certain”

2 TIMOTHY

1:11 NU omits “of the Gentiles”

HEBREWS

1:3 NU omits “by Himself”
 2:7 NU omits “And set him over the works of Your hands”
 3:6 NU omits “firm to the end”
 8:12 NU omits “and their lawless deeds”
 10:9 NU omits “O God”
 10:30 NU omits “says the Lord”
 11:11 NU omits “she bore a child”
 11:13 NU omits “were assured of them”
 12:20 NU omits “or thrust through with an arrow”

JAMES

4:4 NU omits “adulterers and”

1 PETER

1:22 NU omits “through the Spirit”
 4:1 NU omits “for us”
 4:14 NU omits “On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified”

1 JOHN

2:7 NU omits “from the beginning”
 4:3 NU omits “Christ has come in the flesh”
 5:13 NU omits “and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God”
 5:7 NU, M “omit the words from in heaven (v. 7) through on earth (v. 8). Only 4 or 5 very late mss. contain these words in Greek.” This footnote does not present the truth about this text. The Trinitarian statement is found in roughly 20 Greek manuscripts. Further, it is found in the vast majority of the Latin manuscripts. It has also been in the Waldensian Bibles (the Italic, the Romaunt, and the Tepl, for example) throughout the church age, and it has been in the English Bible for 620 years. This is a crucial point, for it is through the Bible believing churches and through the process of the Great Commission that God has preserved the Scriptures in this age (Mat. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2).

REVELATION

1:8 NU omits “the Beginning and the End”
 1:11 NU omits “I am the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, and”
 1:11 NU omits “which are in Asia”
 1:20 NU omits “which you saw”
 4:3 NU omits “And He who sat there was”
 5:14 NU omits “Him who lives forever and ever”
 11:1 NU omits “And the angel stood”
 11:17 NU omits “and who is to come”
 14:8 NU omits “is fallen, that great city, because”
 14:12 NU omits “here are those”
 15:2 NU omits “over his mark”
 16:5 NU omits “O Lord”
 16:7 NU omits “another from”
 16:14 NU omits “of the earth and”
 19:1 NU omits “the Lord”
 21:6 NU omits “It is done”
 21:24 NU omits “of those who are saved”

The following 45 entire verses are questioned in the margin of the NKJV on the basis of the unreliable United Bible Societies text:

Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 21:4; 23:14; 24:6
 Mark 7:16; 9:44; 9:46; 11:26; 15:28; 19:9-20
 Luke 17:36; 22:43; 22:44; 23:17
 John 5:4; 7:53--8:11
 Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29
 Romans 16:24
 1 John 5:7, 8

Portions of 95 other verses are also questioned in the margin of the NKJV!

Those who use the New King James Bible are therefore subjected to the same onslaught of potential doubt as those who use the New International Version or some other modern edition of the Bible. Many claim that the critical notes that question the authenticity of the Bible text are not harmful to readers. We believe this is nonsense. I saw the fruit of this questioning in my own life before I was grounded in the issue of God’s Preserved Scripture and before I understood the unbelieving foundation of modern textual criticism. Before I went to Bible School I read my Bible carefully, word by word, and I did not doubt or question even one tittle. After I completed a course in New Testament Greek and was taught by a professor that the Received Text and the KJV “are not based on the most dependable scholarship,” I found myself questioning large portions of the Bible.

I would like someone to explain to me how such confusion builds strong Christian lives and churches.

WHAT ABOUT THE MARGIN IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE? Some modern

version defenders point to the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV and claim that it is inconsistent for King James Bible defenders to make something of the critical textual notes in the modern versions while ignoring the ones in the original KJV. James White does this in his popular but misguided book *The King James Only Controversy* (p. 77). This is a comparison of monkeys and trees, though. Both the 1611 KJV and the modern versions have marginal notes, but the nature of those notes is very different. The textual notes in the 1611 KJV were not critical after the fashion of the ones in the modern versions. The marginal notes in the 1611 KJV did not cast continual doubt upon the text, as do those in the modern versions. In testifying of the marginal notes in the modern versions, Jay Green, a biblical scholar and Bible translator, says:

“Deceitful footnotes often throw doubt on the words of the text, such as may be found at Mark 1:1; Romans 9:5, etc. Worse, yet, in other places when words that witness to the Godhead of Christ are removed from the text, seldom is there a footnote to call attention to it. And when there is a footnote purporting to give evidence for the change, a false impression is often given by an incomplete presentation of the facts” (Jay Green, Sr., *The Gnostics, The New Versions, and the Deity of Christ*, Lafayette, Indiana: Sovereign Grace Publishers, 1994, p. 5).

To pretend that the marginal notes in the 1611 KJV are the same in nature as those of the modern versions is to confuse the issue.

Thus, the New King James Version is simply a bridge to the modern versions.

The New King James Version is not an improvement over the King James and is not merely another slight revision after the fashion of earlier revisions. Be wise and beware and stand by the old KJV. It's hard to read, you say? It's really not that hard. Most of the words are one or two syllables, and it has a very small vocabulary. The reading level of the King James Bible, in fact, is not that much different from that of the New International Version. If you will devote to the KJV the serious study that it deserves, you will soon find that it is not that difficult.

As the late Evangelist Lester Roloff said, “We don't need to re-translate the Bible; we need to re-read and re-study the excellent one we have.” Amen.

WHAT ABOUT ALL OF THE THOUSANDS OF CHANGES THAT WERE MADE IN THE KJV ITSELF?

The defenders of the NKJV argue that the original King James Bible has been revised in tens of thousands of places and that they are merely following that pattern by moving on to the NKJV.

It is true that the King James Bibles that are published today are not exactly like those that first came off the press. The KJV was completed in 1611 but was updated four times between then and 1769 to produce the existing edition. The changes were largely simple things, such as correcting printing errors, replacing old English print style with modern English style, updating spelling (such as

replacing “blinde” with “blind”), and updating the italics and marginal notes.

Of the thousands of changes that were made in the KJV between the original 1611 and that in common use today, only 136 were substantial changes that involved replacing a word with a different word. This was discovered by Dr. Donald Waite who painstakingly compared the present day Old Scofield King James Version by Oxford University Press with the original 1611 (see Dr. Waite's *Defending the King James Bible*, pages 243,244; Bible for Today, 900 Park Ave., Collingswood, NJ 08108).

WHAT ABOUT THE ANTIQUATED LANGUAGE IN THE KJV?

I have a great sympathy with those who have a difficult time with some of the antiquation in the King James Bible. Past generations of English speaking people, even those who were not saved grew up with the King James English. In America, for example, even the public schools used passages from the King James Bible in their curriculum even as late as the 1950s. Furthermore, the majority of English speaking churches used the King James Bible prior to then, so that most people with practically any sort of church background would have some familiarity with the KJV English. None of this is true today, of course. People growing up today, even English speaking people, are not usually familiar with the beautiful, simple, but somewhat antiquated language of the KJV. This is doubly true of the millions of people around the world who speak English as a second language.

There are two reasons why the KJV is not as simple to understand as some of the modern versions. First, the KJV was translated almost four centuries ago and it does contain a certain amount of antiquation. That is only a part of the reason, though. The second reason the KJV is not “as easy to read as the morning newspaper” is that it is a faithful, literal translation of the Hebrew and Greek text of the Scripture. The method of translation used by the King James translators is called “formal equivalence” in the terminology of our day. While not mechanical or woodenly literal, it takes into consideration every word and nuance of the original language.

Dr. Donald Waite's comment on this is helpful. Dr. Waite is a Baptist scholar and man of God who defends the KJV through his Bible for Today ministry in Collingswood, New Jersey:

“Some people say they like a particular version because they say it's more readable. Now, readability is one thing, but does the readability conform to what's in the original Greek and Hebrew language? You can have a lot of readability, but if it doesn't match up with what God has said, it's of no profit. In the King James Bible, the words match what God has said. You may say it's difficult to read, but study it out. It's hard in the Hebrew and Greek and, perhaps, even in the English in the King James Bible. But to change it around just to make it simple, or interpreting it, instead of translating it, is wrong. You've got lots of interpretation, but we don't want that in a translation. We want exactly what God said in the Hebrew or Greek brought over into English” (Waite, *Defending the King James*

Bible, p. 242).

Dr. Waite made another excellent comment on this as follows:

“The Bible is not a first grade primer. It is God’s book. It is a book that must be diligently read. It is only by ‘searching the Scriptures’ that we find what pertains to life and death. It tells of creation, of the mighty universe, of the future or the past, of the Mighty God and His wonders, of the Holy Spirit’s ministry among Christians, of the Son of God’s great sacrifice for sin, of home in Heaven for the believer, and of a fiery hell for the unsaved. How dare we assume that His Word can be capsulated in a comic book [or a version that reads ‘like the morning newspaper’].”

Linguistic scholar A.T. Robertson made the following important observation about the King James Bible: “No one today speaks the English of the Authorised Version, or ever did for that matter, for though, like Shakespeare, it is the pure Anglo-Saxon, yet unlike Shakespeare IT REPRODUCES TO A REMARKABLE EXTENT THE SPIRIT AND LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE” (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 56).

What we want and need above all else in a Bible translation is accuracy and faithfulness, and that is what God, in His grace, has given the English-speaking people in the King James Bible. Friend, you can depend on it through all of the trials of this life all the way to Heaven!

WE DON’T NEED A NEW TRANSLATION; WE NEED TO STUDY THE ONE WE HAVE

We do not believe the English-speaking people need a new translation of the Bible today. Even if it were desirable, it is not the right time. The King James Bible was produced in an hour of spiritual revival and blessing. Our day, however, is an hour of horrendous apostasy and incredible spiritual compromise and confusion. Even many of the “evangelical” scholars today do not believe that Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale or that Job was a real man or that the flood of Noah’s day was worldwide. (See our book *Evangelicals and Rome* for documentation of this.) The Christian world is literally awash in unbelief and rationalism today.

In such an hour we believe that it is doubly important that our churches retain one Bible and not be divided by a multiplicity of versions.

What about the difficulties of the KJV, then? The linguistic difficulties of the King James Bible can be overcome without reference to new version (which introduces its own set of problems and difficulties).

The difficulties of the KJV can be overcome with a little STUDY!

As the late Evangelist Lester Roloff said, “We don’t need to re-translate the Bible; we need to re-read and re-study the excellent one we have.” Amen.

Two solutions to the antiquation problem are the *CONCISE KING JAMES BIBLE DICTIONARY* and the *WAY OF LIFE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY* by Way of Life Literature.

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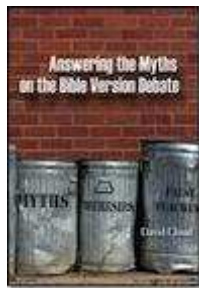
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