

Why We Use the King James Version (KJV)

By: Dr David Sorenson

As a pastor, I write this for the people in our church. On occasion, I have been asked why we, in our church, use the *outdated* King James Version. To answer that, we must touch on some complex and technical subjects. I, accordingly, have attempted to simplify the matter to a degree that most can understand.

In Proverbs 22:28 the Bible says to "**Remove not the ancient landmarks which thy fathers have set.**" A landmark is a surveyor's term and refers to a benchmark or property marker. Today, in most jurisdictions, it is against the law to move or alter a survey landmark.

Christianity has its foundations in an authorizing and governing document. That document is the Bible. Any attorney will understand the critical nature of altering an authorizing and governing document. Because the Bible is in every sense the final and absolute foundation of what we as Christians believe and practice, it only is prudent that we be concerned that the foundation is sure and the benchmark has not been altered

For almost two millennia the church of Jesus Christ accepted a set of Greek and Hebrew texts that were received by virtually all gospel preaching, Bible believing churches of whatever group. This text was called the Received Text (or Textus Receptus in Latin). Down through the centuries biblical scholars and church leaders had assembled the existing Greek and Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible. From that compilation, the *vast* majority were in virtual agreement. These formed the basis of the Received Text.

In the year 1611 A.D., King James I of England was influenced to provide a common Bible for the English speaking world. Hence, he authorized a translation of the Bible into English that came to be known as the Authorized Version or as it is more commonly known, the King James Version. King James selected a committee of Greek and Hebrew scholars from the Church of England. Some of these men were individuals with ties to the Puritans and later the Pilgrims who emigrated to America. They worked from the text of the Greek and Hebrew testaments that had been "received" or accepted by virtually all branches of gospel preaching, Bible believing Christianity from the apostolic era to that time. Their product, the King James Version of the Bible, has been until just recently the universal standard for Bible believing Christians of the English speaking world.

Enter Textual Criticism

Textual criticism is an academic discipline in which scholars study existing Greek and Hebrew biblical manuscripts. Prior to the advent of the moveable type printing press in 1455 by Gutenberg, all copies of the Bible were hand copied by scribes and were called manuscripts. Because they were individually produced by human hands, they were prone to mistakes in manual copying.

Textual critics study the various extant (existing) manuscripts and note any discrepancies which may have occurred between different copies. Then, by comparing them, a majority consensus is established. Should a misspelled word be found, or should a word have been accidentally added or omitted from a given manuscript, the textual critic endeavours to by consensus establish the correct reading.

A major *theory* of textual criticism is that since later manuscripts were copied from earlier ones, therefore, the earlier manuscripts are presumed to be a more accurate source of the Scriptures. (The presumption is how scribal errors would accumulate in later copies). Hence, textual critics give much more credence to early manuscripts than to later copies even if the latter be greater in number.

The problem with this theory is that the early church had great reverence and respect for their “accepted” or “received” manuscripts of the Scriptures. Accordingly, when a given copy of the Scriptures became tattered and worn, it was carefully copied and then *burned*. Hence, there are virtually no copies of the earliest manuscripts used by the churches.

However, there is evidence how certain cults and at within early Christianity followed the opposite practice. They preserved they manuscripts regardless of condition. Therefore the crucial premise of textual criticism – that the oldest manuscripts are always to be preferred to more recent copies is *critically flawed*.

Manuscripts Aleph (א) & B

In the latter half of the 19th century when textual criticism perhaps was at its zenith, two ancient manuscripts were found in the Mediterranean world which would come to revolutionize the work of the textual critics. A manuscript was found in a monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai in the Sinai desert. It came to be known as Manuscript Aleph (א) and it also was known as Codex Sinaiticus (“codex” is the Latin word for a bound volume).

About the same time, another ancient manuscript was “found” in the library of the Vatican. It became known as Manuscript B or Codex Vaticanus. Both of these manuscripts were determined to have come from the 4th century A.D. and are considered the oldest basically complete copies of the New Testament to exist.

Hence, they were considered by the textual critics to be the mother lode of ancient Bible manuscripts.

It is noteworthy how Vaticanus was found in the Vatican library. (The Roman Catholic Church historically has never given great credence to the Scripture or its teachings). Moreover, the Codex Sinaiticus had been produced by scribes of the Alexandrian sect in early church history. Some Alexandrians held views heretical similar to the modern Jehovah Witnesses. Some held major doctrinal deviations pertaining to the person of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding the questionable source of Codex Sinaiticus, it became the premiere source for future textual criticism.

Drs. Westcott and Hort

Two British textual critics championed these newly found manuscripts. Their names were Dr. B. F. Westcott and Dr. F. J. A. Hort. They represented a branch of the Church of England which was enamoured with the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. Westcott and Hort in their writings showed a keen friendliness to Roman Catholic theology, occult spiritism and German Rationalism otherwise known as modernism. They, by no stretch of the imagination, could be considered fundamentalists as the term was later coined and used. Rather, if they lived today, their theology and philosophy (as evidenced by their writings) would be called liberal, humanistic, sacramental and even have occult overtones.

Drs. Hort and Westcott together collated and edited the Aleph (א) & B manuscripts into one Greek Text of the New Testament. This "new" Greek text was in contrast with and in distinction to the text which had been received by virtually all Bible believing churches for the preceding 19 centuries. In the last 100 years it has been re-edited by Nestle, Aland, Metzger and others, and today is generally referred to as the **critical or eclectic text**. It represents less than 1% of existing manuscripts.

From this critical text and its direct predecessor, the Westcott and Hort Text, virtually all modern translations and versions of the Bible have been translated into English.

WE BELIEVE THE CRITICAL TEXT IS CORRUPT! Not only are its origins and associations suspect, the actual text itself is full of deletions and dilutions of the time honoured Scripture received by the church of Jesus Christ. Hence, all of the modern translations based upon the critical text have diluted reference to the blood of Jesus Christ (e.g. Romans 3:25, Colossians 1:14, Revelation 1:5, Luke 22:20 et al), the Deity of Christ (e.g. Jude 4, Revelation 1:11), the inspiration of the Scriptures (e.g. II Timothy 3:16), and salvation by faith (e.g. John 3:36) to mention a few. Space does not allow us to list the

numerous instances of serious dilution or deletions of major doctrinal truth in modern versions, but it is lengthy. There are thousands of textual changes.

If a survey benchmark has been moved or altered, all surveying after that point will be distorted. And because the critical text is in our view corrupt, any version of the Bible translated from it is suspect.

The Modern Versions

The venerable King James Version of the Bible is not copyrighted in the United States. It is considered a public domain publication of the Word of God. However, virtually all modern versions are copyrighted. Authors or publishers understand a copyright is for protection of *commercial* rights. It means that no one else may *market* their Bible without paying the publisher or at the least receiving written permission to do so. Does not the Apostle Peter refer to some in the last days "**making merchandise of you**" regarding the things of God (II Peter 2:3)?

Moreover, a number of the modern versions (based upon the critical text) have used less than precise methods for translation. Some have used a literary device known as "dynamic equivalence." This is a fancy term which essentially means some translators have taken the liberty to come up with what *they think* are modern equivalents for specific words in the manuscript text rather than precisely translating the specific words of the text. In effect, this is a running commentary on the part of the translators, injecting into the translation what *they think* a given passage means, rather than rendering a precise translation of what the scriptural writers actually wrote. There is nothing wrong with Bible commentaries. However, to insert personal bias under the guise of translation is not only less than a faithful rendering of the text, it is deceptive.

In at least one case, a popular version has had the honesty to indicate in its subtitle that it is a paraphrase. Unfortunately, unwary minds often look at such a Bible paraphrase as the Bible nevertheless. Some versions have used vulgar and crude terms in their translations. They have seemed oblivious to the unique purity of purpose of the Scripture.

As mentioned above, cardinal New Testament doctrine such as the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Deity of Christ and the inspiration of Scripture is routinely diluted in recent translations based upon the critical text. That should give pause for concern!

The Godly Heritage of the KJV

In viewing the distortions, deletions, corruptions, dilutions, changes and questionable associations of the critical text and its resultant modernist

translations, we will stick to the venerable King James Version of the Bible that our forbearers so faithfully used. It is an ancient landmark.

Down through the centuries, it has been the Bible used for every major revival to sweep across portions of the English speaking world. It was the Bible used by the founding fathers of this nation. And, it has been God blessed wherever it has been used. It is based upon the ancient text which has been, until just recently, the universally accepted text of the Scriptures from the time of the apostles.

Modern versions have been *marketed* extensively as being easier to read than the archaic, old fashioned KJV Bible. However, recent computerized document analysis programs have objectively revealed how the King James Version of the Bible is in fact easier to read than the NIV or the NASB. The Fleisch-Kincaid research firm has through computerized analysis shown how the KJV vocabulary has fewer syllables per word than the NIV or the NASB. Furthermore, the KJV has less complex sentences than the NIV or NASB. In reality, the KJV is easier to read than its modern counterparts in the matter of vocabulary and syntax.

Dr. Frank Logsdon

Dr. Frank Logsdon was the co-founder of the New American Standard Bible (NASB). He since has renounced any connection to it.

"I must under God renounce every attachment to the New American Standard Version. I'm afraid I'm in trouble with the Lord... We laid the groundwork; I wrote the format; I helped interview some of the translators; I sat with the translator; I wrote the preface... I'm in trouble; I can't refute these arguments; its wrong, terribly wrong... The deletions are absolutely frightening... there are so many ... Are we so naive that we do not suspect Satanic deception in all of this?

Upon investigation, I wrote my dear friend, Mr. Lockman, (*editors note: Mr. Lockman was the benefactor through which the NASB was published*) explaining that I was forced to renounce all attachment to the NASV (*editors note: This is the same as the NASB*).

You can say that the Authorized Version (KJV) is absolutely correct. How correct? 100% correct..." - Dr. Frank Logsdon

We have determined not to remove the ancient landmark in a matter so crucial as the foundation of our faith... the Word of God. And what withal the deletions, dilutions and questionable origins of the modern versions, we will stick to the King James Version!