

Should we dump the King James Bible Because of "old-fashioned language?"

One of the objections that we get is, "Nobody can understand it. Nobody can understand the King James Bible. The words are too difficult."

David Daniels: That's so funny! Because people take college classes all the time, and they learn new vocabulary words. You pay a lot of money to a college for a company to employ you, and they teach you new vocabulary words.

The vocabulary of the whole King James Bible, is the amount of vocabulary of a five and a half year old. My children were reading the King James Bible at that age. My friends' children actually learned to read off the King James Bible. One of my children also did. It's not a matter of difficulty of words. It's just a matter of learning them, just like anything else.

Jack: Well now, I have another question. What about the modern versions, like the NIV, or the New King James? Those are pretty popular. The ESV is another popular version now. Are there any difficult words in those?

David: There are. There's a book called "Archaic Words and the Authorized Version" (by Laurence M. Vance). You can still get a copy of it, I'm sure. And it will show you that all the Bibles have these kind of words in them - pretty much - and you have to learn them in any Bible. It's really a fake argument to get you to say, "Oh, it's too hard!" Again, my children would say, "No, it's not." And it's really sad when a little child can put a scholar with a Ph.D to shame, by understanding the Bible better than he does.

Jack: Interesting. And you know it's true, even when you play sports, you have to learn a position. Don't you have to learn the names of a position? Or if you're a carpenter, don't you have to know what a soffit, a fascia, or ridge, any of these things is?

So it's not surprising that if you're going to learn something as important as the Bible, that you're also going to have to learn some vocabulary words. We learn vocabulary words in business. No matter what business you're in you get trained and you learn the language of that particular business. So what a surprise that you have to learn it for a Bible that's more important than any of the other things that we do; something that affects your Eternal Destiny!! You'll pick up the words really quickly, anyway.

Discover the King James Bible's Built-in Dictionary

- The King James Bible contains God's built-in dictionary, defining each word, in its context, using the very words of the Webster's and Oxford English Dictionaries!
- The King James Bible has a vocabulary and reading level which slowly builds progressively from Genesis to Revelation.
- The King James Bible uses words with the appropriate sound symbolism. It has a vocabulary that phon-aesthetically [pleasant sounding] fulfills the Bible's own description of itself as "powerful."
- The King James Bible is the only extant access we have to the pure language lexicons of the 16th and 17th centuries.
- The King James Bible gives a transparent view of the Greek and Hebrew vocabulary, grammar and syntax.
- The King James Bible has internationally recognizable vocabulary and spelling.

- The King James Bible uses literary devices which enhance doctrinally important concepts and memorability.
- The King James Bible has a sentence structure which enhances accurate doctrinal interpretation.
- The King James Bible's words and sentences are patterned and woven through its fabric so as to provide a consistency of form and content.
- The King James Bible has the precision and longevity of the legal document that it is.
- In Many places the King James Bible will have a word in one verse and goes on to say the same thing with different words shortly after, from this it is easy to learn the meanings of the words you may not know!

Are We Really Too Dumb to Read the King James?

When people tell you that the King James Version of the Bible is hard to understand, can you believe them? Although you can generally trust them, is it possible that they have bad information? Shouldn't you find out for yourself? After all, we are talking about important words that our Creator chose for us to know. These weren't just random words.

If you learned that the secrets of the ages were contained in a book, but you didn't know some of its words, what would you do? I know what you would do: you would go get all the reference books that you needed to decipher that book and its language. You would quickly try to learn whatever you could from that precious book.

Well guess what? God has decided to put His precious words for us in one language for both the Old and New Testaments. And He did this around 1611. That's over 400 years ago. God placed His riches into this language, English, which has become universal.

One third of the nations in the world speak English either as a first or second language. When English made its march to domination, one book set the standard for classic English, the new Bible authorized by King James. 400 years later, modern English contains over 200 figures of speech traceable to the King James English. There is no other world language competing against English. God appears to have set His words in this language until Jesus returns. I believe that it is the final end-times language for God's words.

Modern scholars love to disagree with God's Words and substitute their own. Which do you prefer? Would you rather learn a few words that are a little difficult at first, and then get the riches that come from having the exact words of God? Or would you rather take the easy way out, and risk getting nothing but the opinions of a few self-professed scholars? The choice is yours. Jesus warned, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Matthew 15:9.

I believe the King James is the end times Bible in English. After the invention of the movable type printing press, God began to prepare a world Bible. Throughout the 1500s, the Roman Catholic system suppressed God's words in many nations. But God miraculously defended one country: England. And from 1604-11, two opposing Christian groups, the Puritans and the Church of England, came together to produce a single translation they all could agree upon. In 1611 God's words were cemented in one language, and its fruit stunned the world. Its words brought such faith that they started revivals, as well as world-wide missions. If God did all that to preserve His words for us, shouldn't we put out a little effort to learn to read it?

What About these People Who claim they "Can't Understand the KJV?"

Question: I know some people who basically refuse to read the KJV because they claim they don't understand it. However, they are willing to read the NIV. I feel bad recommending the NIV to them if they aren't willing to read the KJV because I do feel that the KJV is the word of God. But in a case like this, is it better to have them read the NIV over nothing at all?

Answer: A false Bible is not the truth. It's that simple. I am a kind and soft-hearted person. I would love to tell people it was okay to read other Bibles and just as good for them. That's my personality. But I cannot. I cannot compromise the truth and tell people that a Bible that is missing or adding or changing the truth is STILL the truth. False Bibles are not "The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing but the Truth."

I have to tell people the truth. I myself found it out at 17 when I started reading a King James Bible and needed to understand it. This truth is simple: It is by the Holy Ghost that we understand the King James Bible. Look at these scriptures.

Luke 24:45: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,"

1 Corinthians 2:12-16: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

Acts 17:11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." This is interesting too because the scriptures back then were in Hebrew, and that was not the native language of the people of Thessalonica!

It is by God's great grace that we can understand His words. Here is what I did. Just as the Bible says, I pray to the Father (Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 1:17) in the name of Jesus, God the Son (Matthew 18:20; John 14:13-14; 15:16), and ask that the Holy Ghost reveal the scriptures to me (John 14:26; 15:26; 1 Corinthians 2:12-16). Since the first day I prayed that way to God, even though I was still involved in the occult, the Lord began to show me His truth as I read His words in the King James Bible. Two weeks later I was [converted]!

What's more, I was amazed to find out two years later in Bible college that what God had shown me about the Bible was correct. What a blessing! And God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34) so I believe what He did for me He will also do for you, or anyone who asks Him.

If we need help with words we do not understand, we use a Bible dictionary. But when we do not understand Bible teaching, we pray to our God, in Jesus' name, who by the Holy Ghost richly supplies "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). May God bless us all as we read and trust God to understand His preserved words in English, the King James Bible.

Is The King James Too Hard?

So many Bible ads over the last 50 years have claimed that the King James Bible is just "too difficult." "They must simplify the words to make it easy for the common man to understand." In fact, that belief

is part of what fueled the modern Bible translation movement under Eugene Nida. Is the King James Bible really all that difficult?

Hi, I'm David Daniels from Chick Publications. The King James Bible only has a vocabulary of about 8,000 words. Now, some people will say, "No, that's 12,843." That's because they count in a different way. Take the word "LOVE:" Love, lovest, loveth - they count that as 3 words, but it's really just one vocabulary word, LOVE. So in actuality, the King James Bible only has about an 8,000 word vocabulary. 8,000 words is not very much.

Educators know that when a child enters kindergarten he has a vocabulary of about 2,100 words. By the time that child reaches age 6, that "commonly used" vocabulary will go up 500 words to about 2,600. But they will understand 20,000 to 24,000 words. That's up 10 times from the year before. God designed it like that.

So like I've said since I was a kindergarten teacher, and studied linguistics, the King James Bible has the vocabulary of a 5 1/2 year old. There are about 2,600 proper names and place names in the Bible, over 120 animals to account for, and about 40 terms for weights and measures in the Bible. So that's 2,760 terms that every Bible has to account for. Subtract that from the 8,000 and you get 5,240 words. That's not very many. Even a child can learn that limited a vocabulary.

In fact, my children learned the Bible at a very early age, starting in Genesis. A number of you have told me that you guys did, too. Even a child with some guidance can learn to read the King James Bible with amazing understanding. And many do. Some of you will say to me, "Yes, they learned vocabulary, but not THOSE words." Well, let me tell you a secret. All Bibles have new words for you to learn. All that stuff about "simplified vocabulary" is just a lot of advertising hype. We know the child has the vocabulary, and the ability to learn words at a quick pace. Could it be that "vocabulary" is not the issue, at all?

Could it be that they don't want to appear "old-fashioned," to someone else? They don't want to seem "behind the times"? Could they be seeking the approval of men? Let me get this straight. New Bibles are changing or missing hundreds of words, phrases, and verses. And they're upset over a little Thee and Thou? Give me a break.

Which is more important: to have man's approval? Or the pure words of the Living God in your language? Think about that, the next time somebody offers you a "new and improved," or a "simplified" Bible. God bless you, and have a wonderful day.

Anything You Don't Already Know Can Seem Hard.

Anything can be too hard when you don't know it, but nothing is too hard once you've learned it.

Proverbs 14:6 says: "A scorner seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not: but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth."

You cannot be a scorner and learn wisdom. But if you are open, you can build upon what you know and ascend to new heights of understanding.

This principle applies to any discipline. If you want to get a degree in any subject, there are new concepts you're going to have to learn about, and you will learn new words to describe those concepts.

Perhaps you will even learn to use familiar words in unfamiliar ways. Well, guess what? People who have not studied the subject that you have, will be unfamiliar with that vocabulary.

If a person becomes an apprentice to become a stonemason, he will have to learn all sorts of techniques and skills, and they will all have names that people unfamiliar with stonemasonry won't know.

A student of any subject will most likely have to learn new terms in order to understand and communicate it to others, and to work efficiently in that discipline.

But reading the Bible isn't anywhere near as difficult as studying for a degree or learning stonemasonry. All you need to do is give God your time and a little bit of effort. If you start as I did, in Genesis and Matthew, and just work your way through the Old Testament and the New Testament, you will gain a progressive understanding of what the words mean and how they are used.

There are not as many unfamiliar words in the King James Bible as you may think. Some of the words that appear to be more complex in the King James Bible are actually shorter words that you already know, stuck together to make longer words. Some common examples are words like "therein", "howbeit," "howsoever" and "moreover". You learn these as you go, because the sentences where you find them tell you what they mean.

The meaning of any word can generally be understood by its context. Read the entire verse or sentence. Then look at the words before and after a new word. They will help you understand it and how it is used.

2nd Corinthians 6:11-13

Parts of the King James can seem confusing the first time you read them. An example that has been often cited by critics, including one of my professors at Fuller Seminary, is 2nd Corinthians 6:11-13.

But the unusual language that is used here was specially chosen by the translators to convey exactly the same ideas Paul expressed in Greek. If you take the time to learn the meanings of a couple of the English words used in the King James, you will gain a deeper appreciation of what is being said in this passage. Let's take a look at 2nd Corinthians 6:11-13:

(11) O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. (12) Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. (13) Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.

It's clear that verse 11 is not talking about hearts that have increased in size, because then they'd have to have an operation or something. That wouldn't fit the context of the passage very well! Yet this is exactly the expression Paul uses in Greek. He has to be saying something that goes together with "our mouth is open unto you." Once again, context is our friend.

Paul has been talking in this vein all through this chapter: "Look, we're not trying to lift ourselves up above you. We really do care. Look what we've gone through for you."

He mentions all the stripes, and the imprisonments, the floggings, everything that's happened. "We... beseech you... receive not the grace of God in vain," it starts out in Chapter 6. Then he says, "O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened..."

“Straiten,” like the Straits of Magellan, means “to narrow, or tighten up.” What happens when you feel your insides tightened up inside you? It makes it hard to think about others and their feelings. Try it. You think about yourself and your own feelings. I’ve had that feeling before. I bet you have, too.

Paul means, “We’re not closed off to you. We’re not straitened inside. You don’t make us feel that tight feeling inside. We’re open and enlarged toward you, not closed off.” “Enlarged” is the opposite of “straitened.”

Then it says, “... but ye are straitened in your own bowels.” Which means, “You guys are the ones who are holding back from us. You are the guys who are feeling all tightened up inside. See, these words are emotion words. “Bowels” means your insides and “straitened” means tightened up. When you feel tightened up, you’re feeling stingy or closed off. You’re not feeling good about somebody else. You’re certainly not going to open your heart to him or her.

“Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged.” Recompense is a response in a similar manner. Loosen up yourselves toward us, in the same way. We’re loosened up for you and our hearts are enlarged. In other words, open up your heart to us. We’re opening up our hearts to you.

Modern Bible scholars act like they fixed the passage by taking all the emotion out. It seems like they can think, but they can’t feel. When they choose unemotional words, they miss something important that God wants us to know. And what it says in the King James is what it says in Greek. If you want accuracy, this is what Paul wrote. It says our mouth is open, our heart is enlarged. You are not straitened in us, you are straitened in your own bowels. That’s exactly what Paul was writing under inspiration of God.

Are the other versions going to talk in generalities, or will they convey the feeling behind the meaning? Let’s see. Here’s 2 Corinthians 6:11-13 in the NRSV. “We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. There is no restriction in our affections, but only in yours. In return, I speak as to children, open wide your hearts also.”

That’s analytical, not emotional. It sounds as dry as a doctor diagnosing postnasal drip.

It’s close. But it’s not what Paul said. We’re talking a physical feeling. A restriction, a tightness inside your gut, not a restriction in your affections. That’s a metaphorical paraphrase, but it’s not what Paul wrote. If you want to know what Paul wrote, he wrote what it says right here in the literal translation, the King James.

If you learn a few words and read out loud a phrase at a time, and feel what it feels like inside you, you’ll understand exactly what he’s saying.

What a feeling letter! Paul keeps stepping up the emotional context of the letter, until he says something like, “Look, I’m just going to jump into the highest level of exaggeration now: I’m going to boast about myself.” His heart’s just ripping apart because the Corinthian Christians accepted these false apostles who are taking advantage of the Corinthians, putting down the real apostles. All the while they are claiming they’re sent from Peter, James, and John. Paul’s really hurting over this.

The bottom line is this: The King James Bible makes clear to us that Paul felt strong emotions. It doesn’t hide the emotional words under a layer of “scholarliness.” It really is “the people’s Bible.” God intended for common folk to grab hold of His holy words and have them affect them on a daily and very personal basis.

The “big lie” is the story that the King James Bible is just some old book in outdated language. The truth is God picked words, in Hebrew and Greek, to communicate His purpose for His people. It was not made for priests. It was made for common folk.

Even when the Hebrews were gone for over a generation in the Babylonian Captivity, those words from God were not changed. Nehemiah 8 shows us that God instead moved His educated believers to help the common folk to understand those same words. The scholars didn’t get to change them.

PART 2 – Why You Should Read the King James Bible

In Part 1 you learned that the King James Bible is not really that hard to read. Like every other serious book, you need to put in a little work to understand the words. But with an ordinary Webster’s Dictionary and The King James Bible Companion, the average 5th grader will have no difficulty deciphering the words.

However, the other objection we face when we attempt to read the King James in public is that we should NOT read it.

Some say it has antiquated or outdated language. Others claim it was made from lesser-quality manuscripts. Or how about these? “My pastor uses something else.” “My friends think I am [fill in the blank].” Or maybe you’ve heard some other reason. So, how do I deal with that?

Without getting into all the details, the simple answer is: “This is the only English Bible that is a true and reliable translation, that faithfully passes down God’s preserved words.”

A True and Reliable Translation

The King James Bible was translated by men whose agenda was to give the exact English meaning of the Greek or Hebrew originals, without injecting their personal biases. Amazingly, Puritans and members of the Church of England (who disagreed on almost every denominational issue) had to come together and agree on every verse of 1,189 chapters of the Bible, going over the text no less than 14 times. God used that process to take out personal and denominational bias. What was left was a true translation, stripped of personal opinions or interpretations.

Most other modern versions are not based on the reliable copies of the originals used for the KJV. They are the product of unreliable manuscripts containing man’s opinions. I tell about this in ‘Look What’s Missing’ and ‘Did the Catholic Church Give Us the Bible?’

Although most modern Bibles are called “translations,” they are really more like commentaries, colored by the personal interpretations or preferences of the “translators.” God said to Moses:

“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Deuteronomy 4:2).

God is concerned about exact words. He knew that Satan would try to get man to add to or take away from His words. He said through Solomon: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.” (Proverbs 30:6).

When God spoke to the prophet Jeremiah, He said: “Thus saith the LORD; Stand in the court of the LORD’S house, and speak unto all the cities of Judah, which come to worship in the LORD’S house, all the words that I command thee to speak unto them; diminish not a word:” (Jeremiah 26:2).

God could not be any clearer. In order for a Bible to be a true and reliable translation, it must preserve the exact meanings of the original.