

Why the King James Version?

People often ask “Which Bible version is the best?” But a better question is “Which Bible version has the fewest problems?” All English Bible versions have problems but, in my humble opinion, the King James Version (KJV) has the fewest. Of course, the KJV has the unique and glaring issue of the Johannine Comma—a Trinitarian phrase added within First John 5:7-8. But this should simply be recognized for what it is and overlooked. The fact is, other Bible versions have far worse problems.

Another surprisingly good question to ask is “Which Bible version gets mocked the most?” That the KJV is the frequent object of ridicule by Christ’s enemies is a good sign in its favor. “Knowing this first, that there shall come **in the last days scoffers**, walking after their own lusts” (2Pe 3:3), “How that they told you there should be **mockers in the last time**, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts” (Jde 1:18). The ungodly scoff, mock, belittle, and make fun of things that threaten their agenda. It’s quite a good indicator of its reliability when we hear educated ministers mocking the KJV. They employ such tactics as ridiculing its archaic “thee,” “thou,” and “verily” language, and stereotyping its users as “King James only people.”

Most problems with Bible versions deal with the New Testament. One thing many ministers don’t want people to know is that there are two main Greek manuscript traditions or texts behind our New Testament translations—Alexandrian and Byzantine. Most modern versions are derived from the Alexandrian while relatively few (JUB, KJV, MEV, NKJV, WEB, YLT) are from the Byzantine. Ministers and scholars tout the Alexandrian as superior because it’s older even though the majority of manuscript evidence supports the Byzantine. The biggest issue is that the Alexandrian came from an area where false teachers abounded and edited the text by truncating many statements. Thus, modern Bible versions such as RSV, NIV, and NASB are missing many phrases and statements found in the KJV.

Many examples could be cited of missing text in the Alexandrian but here are just three. First, the entire resurrection account recorded in Mark 16:9-20 is missing. Second, Christ’s current position in heaven is omitted in this verse, “he that came down from heaven, *even* the Son of man **which is in heaven**” (Jhn 3:13 KJV), “the Son of Man has come down from heaven” (NLT), “the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man” (NIV). And third, the latter half of these two verses are

missing, “*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, **who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit***” (Rom 8:1 KJV), “And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. **But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**” (Rom 11:6 KJV).

Another problem with modern Bible versions is they take advantage of our legitimate desire for a modern, fluent, and readable translation to slant the message being communicated in favor of their theological bias. Although bias certainly crept into the KJV, it’s not nearly as prevalent as many of the more modern versions. The KJV is more of a literal, word-for-word translation. And although it’s more difficult to read, the rewards far outweigh the effort. A good rule of thumb is that the easier a version is to read, likely the less worthy it is to be read.

All Bible versions, including the KJV, are guilty of translating certain words incorrectly or with meaningless generic words into which different meanings are instilled: *charis* as “grace” instead of “favor,” *ekklesia* as “church” instead of “assembly,” *eklektos* as “elect” instead of “chosen,” *ergon* as “works” instead of “actions,” *hagios* as “holy” or “saints” instead of “separated,” *pisteuo* as “believe” instead of “trust,” *pistis* as “faith” instead of “faithfulness,” and *pneuma* as “spirit” instead of “breath” or “wind.”

Besides the aforementioned problems, many modern versions go even farther in their brazenness of mistranslation. One prominent example is that the most beloved verse “For God so loved the world, that he gave **his only begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (Jhn 3:16 KJV), has been corrupted to “his one and only Son” (NET, NIV). This changes what Christ Himself said about His begetting and His beginning in support of the Trinitarian view that He has always existed as God Himself. This is very dangerous.

The last reason that the KJV is the best version to use is that it’s in the public domain. Many modern versions carry all sorts of copyright baggage requiring us to jump through hoops just to use it. We received the Scriptures at great cost but completely free, so there shouldn’t be any stipulations at all on using it as much as we want, “freely ye have received, freely give” (Mat 10:8). The KJV is great because we’re allowed to quote it in writing to our heart’s desire with never a thought of legal consequence. That’s how God intended it should be.