



Bible Student's NotebookTM

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 121

The Plowboys's Bible

The Story of God's Amazing Book

Part V

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

NON-ISSUES

Many non-issues are raised by King James-Only proponents in an attempt to defend their position. These “issues” have been used to help keep us bound to a very old and outdated version of the Bible.

These “issues” hinder many from embracing Tyndale's concept of a true Plowboy's Bible. In this section we will deal briefly with a few of these “issues.” What we clearly will see is that in fact these are **not** really “issues” at all. They only manage to muddy the waters for those who are sincerely trying to get to the truth.

Copyright

Modern Bibles are often criticized for having copyrights. The superiority of the *King James Version* is emphasized by the contention that it does not have a copyright upon it. After all, it is argued, “How can God's Word have a copyright?”

When reading the “copyright page” of a current printing of a Cambridge *King James Version* you will find the following:

JAMES) VERSION OF THE BIBLE ARE VESTED IN THE CROWN. THIS BIBLE IS PUBLISHED BY CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, THE QUEEN'S PRINTER, UNDER ROYAL LETTERS PATENT.”

The “rights” of the “Authorized” *King James Version* are clearly vested in the British Crown and is printed under a Royal Patent.

The fact is, simply, the *King James Version* had a copyright upon it when it was published, and that copyright still holds, at least within the British Empire.

Cambridge University is “The Queen's Printer” and is thereby authorized to publish the *King James Version*.

The very first crown copyright of the *King James Version* clearly belonged to Robert Barker.¹

Listen to some of the historians concerning this copyright.

“The King James Bible does have an ancient copyright possessed by the Crown

“RIGHTS IN THE AUTHORIZED (KING

1. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, Page 199.

(continued next page)

of England until this very day. It is illegal to print the King James Bible without a license or letters patent in England. By virtue of the American revolution, American printers have taken advantage and printed the King James text without license.”²

“The new translation [KJV] would have to be funded by venture capitalists.”³

“Robert Barker paid 3,500 pounds for the copyright of the KJV and ... [his] firm held the rights to print the KJV until 1709.”⁴

“It had not been legal to publish any English Bible in North America while it was a British colony.”⁵

“Before the Revolutionary War, the publication of English-language Bibles was prohibited in America, since the King’s printers in England enjoyed an exclusive copyright to printing the KJV.”⁶

“The *King James Bible* could not be produced legally in America, but had to be imported from England. Production could be carried out only at authorized centers in London, Cambridge, and Oxford.”⁷

“After the Revolution American printers felt no compulsion to heed the British monopoly on the printing of the King James Bible.”⁸

“The King James [Bible] still enjoys copyright protection in Britain.”⁹

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God’s abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God’s purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “church,” “denomination,” “movement,” “organization” or “mission.”

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Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God’s Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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2. Ross Purdy, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, 2006.
3. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, Page 197.
4. Rick Norris, *The Unbounded Scriptures*, page 28.
5. Christopher De Hamel, *The Book*, page 259.
6. *Dictionary of Christianity in America*, page 132.
7. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, Page 294.
8. Margaret Hills, *English Bible in America*, page xvii.
9. Jack Lewis, *The English Bible from KJV to NIV*, page 107).

Textus Receptus Translation

Another argument is that the *King James Version* is the only translation currently in print from the Textus Receptus (or the “Received Text”). This is plainly not the case either.

In 2002 Ross Purdy put together a list of 32 currently available New Testaments, other than the *King James Version*, that are based upon the Textus Receptus.

1. Modern King James Version
2. Literal Translation Version
3. The Interlinear Bible
4. 21st Century King James Version
5. Third Millennium Bible
6. 1833 Noah Webster Revision of the KJV
7. Revised Webster Bible
8. God’s First Truth Bible
9. Tyndale’s New Testament
10. Matthew’s Bible
11. Geneva Bible.
12. Word of God
13. King James 2000
14. American King James Version
15. King James Version Clarified
16. Modern American English Vernacular
17. Noli New Testament
18. Orthodox New Testament
19. Young’s Literal Translation
20. Revised Young’s Literal Translation
21. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament
22. New Scofield Reference Bible
24. Urim-Thummim Version
25. Voice in the Wilderness
26. 1841 English Hexapla
27. New King James Version

So we have at least 27 Textus Receptus based New Testaments currently available that are not *King James Versions*!

A Word-For-Word Translation

Then there is the argument that the *King James*

Version is superior because it is a word-for-word translation of the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Do you remember our look at Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38? Both were identical in the Greek, but were each translated differently by the *King James Version* translators.

Since the Greek of both verses are identical, which of the translations from the *King James Version* is the word-for-word preservation of the Word of God? Obviously they can’t both be word-for-word. In fact, neither of the verses are word-for-word translation of the Greek; neither would we want a word-for-word translation of them. We would want an *English* translation of them – in our own common, everyday language!

Here is an interlinear (with English) of the Greek verse of Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38.

gregoreuo kai proseuchomai hina-me
watch and pray not

eiserchomai eis peirasmos
enter into temptation

men pneuma proqumon
really spirit ready

deh sarx asthenes
but flesh weak

Here is the word-for-word breakdown:

gregoreuo = watch
kai = and
proseuchomai = pray
hina-me = not
eiserchomai = enter
eis = into
peirasmos = temptation
men = really
pneuma = spirit
proqumon = ready

deh = *but*
sarx = *flesh*
asthenes = *weak*

Now let's see the English words without the Greek ones. Here is an example of a word-for-word translation of the Greek text (with no punctuation, just as in the Greek):

"Watch and pray not enter into temptation really spirit ready but flesh weak"

The point is this: a word-for-word translation is a non-issue. No English Bible is a word-for-word translation. As you can see in our example above, no one would even want a word-for-word translation, because it would be of little value.

Superior Translators

The last non-issue that we will now consider is the argument of the scholastic superiority of the *King James Version* translators.

The believer needs to be careful here.

How did we become the worshipers of scholarship?

Did we learn this from the Lord Jesus Christ?

"The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man [Jesus] letters, having never learned?" (John 7:15).

Did we learn this from Peter and John?

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Is world wisdom a guarantee of God's work?

"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? ... Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (I Corinthians 1:20).

"... Not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought" (I Corinthians 2:6).

"The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Corinthians 3:19).

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent" (I Corinthians 1:19).

How did we come to elevate men and their abilities?

"There is no respect of persons with God" (Romans 2:11).

"Whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person" (Galatians 2:6).

As dealt with earlier, the scholarship of the translators of the *King James Version* actually is handicapped by the fact that:

- ◆ They were unaware and untrained in Koine Greek.
- ◆ They were unaware of the Synoptic Gospels.
- ◆ They were the theologically trained Clergy.

Koine Greek

They were ill-equipped to translate the New Testament. Although they were skilled in Classic Greek, they were ignorant to the actual Greek of the New Testament.

SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

Their ignorance of the nature of the Synoptic Gospels speaks to the advancement of Bible study since 1611.

Their extensive theological, religious, and ecclesiastical training, profession, and livelihood speaks to their highly prejudiced mindset.

MORE HISTORY

In the next issue of the *Bible Student's Notebook* we will carry an excellent work concerning the history surrounding the *King James Version*. This is a rich work written by our dear brother Ross Purdy; but before closing this section of the series, we would like to briefly revisit the issue of history surrounding the *King James Version* ourselves.

What follows here is a sampling from Ross Purdy, as well as short collection of quotations from the outstanding British historian Alister McGrath.

Ecclesiastical Version

“By 1600, the Geneva Bible had become the Bible of choice of English-speaking Protestants.”¹⁰

“The new king of England had no interest in promoting the Geneva Bible. His secret agenda was to destroy, discredit, or displace it – whichever could be achieved more rapidly.”¹¹

“By January 1604, it had become clear that James had taken an intense personal dislike to this Bible. The reason for his dislike is not difficult to discern ... The ultimate grounds for James’ hostility toward the Geneva Bible was the challenge its marginal notes posed to his passionate belief in the doctrine of the “divine right of kings.”¹²

“King James, while on the throne of Scotland wrote works in support of the doctrine of the “Divine Right of Kings.” These works were, *True Law of Free Monarchies* and *Basilikon Doron*.

“James became persuaded that his role as the new Constantine could be exercised only with the support of the bishops.”¹³

“Richard Bancroft was one of the most relentless opponents of Puritanism in England ... He declared that the Puritans were ‘false prophets’ who were threatening to destroy the fabric of church and nation. For Bancroft, the facts of the matter were simple. God meant the Church of England to be governed by a monarch and bishops, and that was the end of the matter.”¹⁴

“James had every reason to hope that his new translation of the Bible would be a powerful factor in creating a cohesive English national identity ... The production, at the king’s initiative, of a new English translation of the Bible would reinforce the image of the king as the political and spiritual leader of his people.”¹⁵
 “The King James Bible is an outstanding example and embodiment of the ideas of its own period.”¹⁶

“It is impossible to overlook the fact that the King James translators did not begin to translate with blank sheets of paper in front of them.”¹⁷

“A number of scholars have suggested that what was actually delivered to the printer was a copy of the Bishop’s Bible, with the alterations entered directly into the text of the work.”¹⁸

13. *Ibid*, Page 154.

14. *Ibid*, Page 152.

15. *Ibid*, Page 171.

16. *Ibid*, Page 177.

17. *Ibid*, Page 176.

18. *Ibid*, Page 196.

10. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, Page 129.

11. *Ibid*, Page 129.

12. *Ibid*, Page 141.

“Bancroft ... reserved for himself the privilege of making revisions to what all had hitherto thought of as the final draft.”¹⁹

“[Miles] Smith complained loudly to anyone who would listen that Bancroft had introduced fourteen changes into the final text without any consultation.”²⁰

“The new Bible, which came to be known as the Authorized (or King James) Version, eliminated the alleged threat to national security ...”²¹

“One Parliamentary group, meeting in 1652-53, argued that the King James Bible used ‘prelatical language’ – in other words, the traditional church terminology, such as ‘bishop’.”²²

“The evidence strongly suggests that the first English Bible to be brought to the New World was the Geneva Bible.”²³

“King James came to the throne of England preaching what he called ‘The Divine Right of Kings’ which said in essence that God chooses the king, and therefore his subjects owe their complete allegiance and obedience to the king whether the king was good or wicked.”²⁴

“Rather than reform any further, the English Establishment wanted to see uniformity of practice and doctrine in the realm which would be good for stability. Those who were not satisfied with this status quo were

looked upon as agitators who threatened the peace and stability of the kingdom. They were considered as enemies even.”²⁵

[King James clearly stated his purpose of heart when he wrote:] “I will have one doctrine and one discipline, one religion in substance and ceremony ... I shall make them conform themselves, or I will have them out of the land or else do worse. If any would not be quiet, and show his obedience, he were worthy to be hanged.” – King James VI of Scotland, I of England at Hampton Court²⁶

“Modern American independent churches would not have been comfortable under the power and influence of either Scotland’s or England’s state churches because they controlled as much what you did outside the church as in!”²⁷

“Buying it [KJV] was the only patriotic thing for English citizens to do. He asked how could loyal Englishmen buy a Bible produced by foreigners and printed by foreigners in a foreign land? Rather they should buy Bibles produced in England in support of the local English printers. Of course, he did not tell them that he was responsible for preventing English printers from printing the popular Geneva Bible, which also would have supported them nicely, nor was the Geneva allowed on the English market that demanded it. Yet people continued to buy imported Geneva Bibles. But Laud managed to arrest the importation of the popular Geneva, and English people were forced eventually to buy the King James Bible.

19. *Ibid*, Page 178.

20. *Ibid*, Page 188.

21. Peter J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures*, Page 29.

22. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, Page 286.

23. *Ibid*, Page 293.

24. Ross Purdy, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, 2006.

25. *Ibid*.

26. *Ibid*.

27. *Ibid*.

“There was no other choice if they wanted to replace their old ones. Only King James Versions were permitted to be produced and sold. By means of this campaign the Geneva was finally squashed. Contrary to what is often mistakenly repeated, the King James Version gained ascendancy not by any virtue or merit of its own, but rather by virtue of there being no competition or any choice ... folks had no choice but to buy a King James Version. One that was under the King’s copyright and printed under the monopoly of a single printer whose family held it for over a hundred years. It is to be noted that such a printing monopoly and long held copyright has never been matched by any modern version as of yet.”²⁸

“Another irony is that those who promote the King James Bible as the only Bible that English speaking people should use owe their heritage to the nonconformists and independents that King James and his bishops persecuted. These “King James Bible-Only” folk would find themselves scorned by King James and punished for not submitting to sacraments and attending worship services that they probably would not be able to distinguish from that of the Roman Catholic Church. Sure, the Church of England is “reformed” per se, but relative to where the American fundamental independent local assembly sits on the spectrum, the Anglo-Catholic Church of England is on the opposite end of the spectrum quite near the Roman Catholic Church. The heritage of the American fundamentalist is far closer to those whom King James persecuted for nonconformity to his Church’s doctrine and practice. These same nonconformists rejected the Church of England and its Bibles in preference to

the Geneva Bible. Otherwise, the Pilgrims would have been Episcopalians and would never have left England!”²⁹

“What is transparent is that King James and his Church prelates were influenced far more by their ambition than by the reading of God’s Word. Their judgment upon the Geneva was due to their close attention to the notes rather than the text. What is also apparent today is that the age and idiosyncrasies of the King James Version makes it susceptible to being used by those who would abuse spiritual authority and teach false doctrine. This is a great and growing problem as time marches on and more generations are confused. The agenda of King James and his Church has affected considerable damage in the most subtle of ways and it has been by God’s grace that it is not more serious.”³⁰

“There are many who have learned King James Version English in addition to the normal English vernacular they speak, but they have had to spend many years and much effort learning it.”³¹

“That is exactly what King James and his bishops intended to do with their new Bible. They believed that it would promote their agenda of uniformity to the religion of the Church of England. They were hostile to the Puritans and any other nonconformists and separatists [who] were a political threat to the English Monarchy and Episcopacy! Again, if King James were alive today, how he would mock the American groups calling themselves fundamental and independent where they also promote the King James Bible as the only English Bible we ought to use.”³²

29. *Ibid.*

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

28. *Ibid.*

“The King James Bible is a revision that was guided by those with an evident agenda to preserve monarch and bishops in a governing position of power over other competing polities. This is plainly evident in the Dedicatory penned by the translators to King James! To deny this is to deny the historical facts and circumstances. The King James Bible has lent itself to be used by authoritarian groups and cults who demand uniformity and conformity to their authority just like old King James!”³³

Initial Acceptance of the King James Version

“The irrefutable evidence is that far from rushing out to buy or make use of this new translation, people preferred to use an English translation from fifty years earlier – the Geneva Bible.

“The King James Bible of A.D. 1611, that monument of dignity and reverence, has not always been as beloved as some people would like to think ... In fact, it was so objectionable to many people of its time they would have nothing to do with it. The Pilgrims, for example, would not even allow it onboard the Mayflower, preferring instead the Geneva Bible of 1506 (which was also the Bible of William Shakespeare).”³⁴

“The simple truth is that the ‘new Bible’ was initially regarded with polite disinterest. Nobody at the time really liked the new translation very much. Even some of those who were prominently involved in the translation of the King James Bible seemed hesitant to use it, preferring to cite from the Geneva Bible instead – hardly a

commendation for their work. The King James Bible might be the Bible of the English religious and political establishment; but it had a long way to go before it became the Bible of the English people.”³⁵

“To support the Geneva Bible, he [William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury] argued, was unpatriotic.”³⁶

“Samuel Johnson once remarked that ‘patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.’”³⁷

“The King James Bible was now seen as a pillar of Restoration society, holding together church and state, the bishops and the monarch, at a time when social cohesion was essential to England’s future as a nation.”³⁸

“The ‘new translation’ – as the King James Bible was still termed even late in the seventeenth century – was still regarded with some misgivings at the opening of the eighteenth ... The first 150 years of its history were encumbered with hints of discontent, criticism, and suspicion ...”³⁹

“The new Bible [KJV] did eventually replace the Geneva through aggressive campaigning of the Church. It really did not come into its own until some forty years later.”⁴⁰

(To be continued ...)

33. *Ibid.*

34. Eugene H. Glassman, *The Translation Debate*, 1981, page 14-15.

35. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, Page 277, 278.

36. *Ibid*, Page 282.

37. *Ibid*, Page 284.

38. *Ibid*, Page 288.

39. *Ibid*, Page 289, 290.

40. Ross Purdy, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, 2006.