

ASTOUNDING  
FACTS  
*Concerning The*  
KING JAMES  
VERSION  
*of*  
The Bible



*by*  
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Second Printing

## ASTOUNDING FACTS CONCERNING THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE

There are some people who seem to think that the King James Version of the Bible is an infallible translation, and, therefore, any English translation which deviates from the King James must be either spurious or modernistic. However, the very fact there have been so many revisions and new translations produced in the last few years makes it quite obvious that there has been a growing dissatisfaction with the King James Version. Among the many well-known translations are Williams' by Moody Press, Moffatt's, Goodspeed's, Weymouth's, Way's, Montgomery's, Berkeley, the New Catholic Version, Knox of Great Britain, Phillips', the Revised Standard Version, etc. The latest and most popular of these is the Revised Standard Version, which, according to the *Pentecostal Evangel* (Nov. 27, 1955), has had the tremendous sale of over seven million copies since its publication.

Like all other versions and translations, the Revised Standard Version has its enemies. Their attack seems to be against (1) the authorizer, which they say had no authority to authorize the translation; (2) the translators, whom they accuse of being modernists; and (3) the translation, which they maintain contains errors, omissions, and additions. In view of this, we shall consider these three aspects of the King James Version.

### 1. The Authorizer

The authorizer of the King James Version of the Bible was King James I of Great Britain and Ireland, also known as King James VI of Scotland, the only child of Queen Mary. He was proclaimed King of Scotland on July 24, 1567, upon the forced abdication of his mother.

History reveals King James as an **opportunist** who would use any means, including religion, for his political gain. To show to what extent he would go in his political ambitions, he concurred in the **execution of his own mother** that he might become the successor to the throne of England.

"Elizabeth was uncertain how James VI might take the execution of his mother. When Elizabeth discovered that James was much more interested in the succession to the English throne than in **his mother's life**, and that, if he was assured that her trial and condemnation would not prejudice his claim to the succession, he would (in his own words) 'digest' his resentment, she rejected the intercessions made by France and Scotland, and in February, 1587, she signed the death warrant . . . Mary received the announcement with majestic tranquility, expressing in dignified terms her readiness to die, her consciousness that she was a martyr for her religion, and her total ignorance of any conspiracy against the life of Elizabeth." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).

Thus, through the conspiracy to **have his mother murdered**, James became the King of England, and, by the same token, he became the ecclesiastical head of the Church of England.

A few more quotations from the *Encyclopedia*

*Britannica* will give further insight into the character of King James.

"James not only brought his disobedient and intriguing barons to order but also quelled the attempts of Protestants to found what Hallam has well defined a 'Presbyterian Hildebrandism'. He enforced the superiority of the state over the church . . .

"James' methods of achieving ends in themselves honourable and profitable have made posterity unjust to his real merits. He boasted of his 'king-craft' and probably believed that he owed it to his studies. But it was in reality the resource of the weak, the art of playing off one possible enemy against another by trickery . . . He would make promises to everybody, as when he wrote to the pope in 1584 more than hinting that he would be a good Roman Catholic if helped in his need. His very natural desire to escape from the poverty and insecurity of Scotland to the opulent English throne led him to behave basely (shamefully) in regard to the execution of his mother in 1587, taking good care to do nothing to offend Elizabeth. His crafty methods did him harm in England, where his reign prepared the way for the great civil war. In his southern kingdom his failure was complete. Although England accepted him as the alternative to civil war, and received him with fulsome flattery, he did not win the respect of his English subjects. His undignified personal appearance was against him, and so were his garrulity . . . In ecclesiastical matters he offended many, who contrasted his severity and **rudeness to the Puritan divines** at the Hampton Court conference (1604) with his **politeness to the Roman Catholics** . . . His Protestant subjects could not see the consistency of a king who married his daughter Elizabeth to the elector palatine, a leader of the German **Protestant**, and also sought to marry his son to an infanta of Spain (Roman Catholic) . . ."

This description of King James is a far cry from that of a born-again, evangelical fundamentalist, and yet it was this ungodly and unscrupulous king who gave the authority for the translation which now bears his name.

## 2. The Translators

Any student of church history knows the story behind the King James translation and its translators. Prior to and at the time King James became King of England in the year 1603, the Church of England was in a very corrupt condition. Politics had infiltrated into the church and dominated the church under Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, and continued on during the reign of King James. It was because of this current condition within the Church of England there arose a sect which was nicknamed "the Puritans" because they wanted to purify the church of its corruption and bring it to a fundamental, evangelical basis. "The Puritan clergy were learned and effective preachers, and both clergy and people were willing to suffer for the sake of conscience. There can be no want of approval of the zeal of the Puritans against pluralities and in favor of a stricter discipline in the church, and of an educated, earnest ministry to take the place of the thousands of unworthy and grossly ignorant clergymen." *History of the Christian Church* by George P. Fisher.

The Puritans presented King James with a petition with approximately one thousand signatures stating their grievances against the clergy and the practices of the Church of England. As a result, the Hampton Conference Court was called in January, 1604, for the purpose of determining what was wrong with the church. **King James roughly decided against the Puritans.** Being outnumbered, the Puritans did not have much success.

When the conference failed of its purpose, President John Reynolds of Corpus Christi College at Oxford, an outstanding Puritan, finally moved the king that there might be a new translation of the Bible. Seeing that the movement was growing in behalf of a new translation, the king felt it would be wise to yield to the pressure of the Puritans and ordered a new translation to be made.

King James appointed fifty-four scholars to do the translating. Of this number the majority represented the politically dominated Church of England and were professors from Oxford University, Cambridge University, and Westminster. On the committee there were **no** non-conformists and only a **few** Puritan-minded clergy. President Reynolds, who made the original suggestion, was on the committee, but died a year after it was started.

In the time of King James, there was a controversy as to who should be the head of the church, the pope in Rome, or the royal heads of England. The Church of England had exalted the king to an almost parallel position with the pope. To this, the reformed movement, the Puritans, objected.

The Puritans grew in strength and numbers. They would not admit any authority on religion that was not based upon the Scriptures. The English Parliament of 1661, with the backing of the Church of England, became violently anti-Puritan, and in 1662, passed an Act of Uniformity providing that all ministers not episcopally ordained or refusing to conform to the practices of the Church of England should be deprived on St. Bartholomew's Day, the 14th day of August following. About two thousand ministers were ejected, and in 1665, ejected ministers were forbidden to come within five miles of their former parishes. Non-conformist worship was punished by fine and imprisonment.

In the dedication of the new translation to King James, the translators referred to the king in the following terms: "To the **most high and mighty Prince,**" "**Most dreadful Sovereign,**" "**Most sacred Majesty,**" "**the wonder of the world**". It appears that the translators of the King James were more concerned about giving honor and glory to the unscrupulous King of England than to the **King of Kings, the LORD JESUS CHRIST.**

From this background, could anyone assume that the translators of the King James Version were fundamentalists or evangelicals? According to the record, they were far from being "fundamentalists".

### 3. The Translation

The Greek text used by the King James translators was based upon eight manuscripts, the oldest which was from the tenth century. We now possess about 4,500 Greek manuscripts of the Scriptures of which about two hundred are ancient. Some of the best

manuscripts are from the third, fourth, and fifth centuries. From these ancient manuscripts, scholars are able to detect the errors made in copying and, in most cases, recover the original wording of the Greek text.

We are sometimes led to assume that the King James Version of today is the same as was published in 1611. This, of course, is not true. The 1611 edition was so unsatisfactory that it has gone through a series of revisions and corrections. In addition, in 1613, there were over 300 variations from the 1611 editions. Another revision appeared in 1629 and still another in 1638. An extensive revision was published at Cambridge in 1762, and another at Oxford in 1769, which included modernization of spelling, punctuation, correction of printing errors, etc.

While it is admitted that no translation in existence is perfect, yet as we carefully analyze the present King James Version, we find it still contains more errors than any other translation—in spite of its many revisions. In fact, the Scofield Bible became a very popular publication because it corrected thousands of erroneous and poor translations as well as archaic words and expressions which are in the King James Version. These are found in the marginal notes.

The following Scriptures are only a few examples of mistranslations in the King James Version which have been correctly translated in the Revised Standard Version as the comparison will show:

1. **Genesis 36:24:** KJV—"...this was that Anah that found **mules** in the wilderness..." It was not **mules** but **hot springs** which Anah found as translated in the RSV: "...he is the Anah who found **hot springs** in the wilderness..."
2. **I Kings 10:28:** KJV—"And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and **linen yarn**: the king's merchants received the **linen yarn** at a price". Linen yarn is an incorrect translation. It has been corrected in the RSV to read: "And Solomon's import of horses was from Egypt and Kue, and the king's traders received them from Kue at a price."
3. **Psalms 1:3:** KJV—"...Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper". It is not "whatsoever" that prospers but "he" as translated in the RSV: "...In all that he does, **he** prospers".
4. **Psalms 92:10:** KJV—"But my horn shalt thou exalt like the horn of an **unicorn**..." The unicorn is a mythical animal and thus has no meaning for us. The RSV reads: "But thou hast exalted my horn like that of the **wild ox**..."
5. **Ezekiel 27:25:** KJV—"The ships of Tarshish did **sing** of thee in thy market..." Certainly ships cannot "sing." Note the correction in the RSV: "The ships of Tarshish traveled for you with your merchandise..."
6. **Daniel 7:9:** KJV—"I beheld till the thrones were **cast down**..." This prophecy refers to Jesus Christ when He returns to sit on His throne. How could He sit on thrones if they were cast down? The RSV corrects thus: "As I looked, thrones were **placed**..."
7. **Daniel 11:30:** KJV—"...he shall ever return, and have **intelligence** with them..." The word "in-

telligence" is incorrect. The RSV reads: "He shall turn back and **give heed** to those who forsake the holy covenant."

8. **Matthew 26:27:** KJV—"And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them saying, Drink **ye all of it**". This sounds as though Jesus meant for them to drink **all** of the wine. The RSV has made the meaning clear: "Drink of it, **all of you**".
9. **Matthew 26:69:** KJV—"Now Peter sat without in the palace..." How could Peter be "without" and "in" the palace at the same time? The RSV also makes this clear: "Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard..."
10. **Mark 14:36:** KJV—"And as Peter was beneath in the palace..." How could Peter be under the palace? The RSV corrects this: "And as Peter was below in the courtyard..."
11. **Luke 22:55:** KJV—"And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall..." Does this mean that a fire was built in the hall of the palace? It is clear in the RSV: "And when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard..."
12. **Matthew 27:9:** KJV—"Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by **Jeremy** the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was **valued**, whom they of the children of Israel did **value**." First, the prophet Jeremy is unheard of in the Bible. Second, if the children of Israel **valued** Christ, why did they crucify Him? The RSV states: "Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel'."
13. **Mark 14:41, 42:** KJV—"Sleep on now, take your rest: It is enough, the hour is come... Rise up let us go..." Did Jesus want them to sleep or to get up? The RSV clarifies this: "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough; the hour is come... Rise, let us be going..."
14. **Luke 22:51:** KJV—"When one of them cut off the ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus said, "Suffer ye thus far". The meaning is far from clear. The RSV makes it plain: "No more of this!"
15. **Romans 8:16, 26:** KJV—"The Spirit itself". Certainly, fundamentalists do not think of the Holy Spirit as being "it", but rather as a person as so stated in the RSV: "The Spirit **himself**".
16. **Romans 8:28:** KJV—"All things work together for good..." It is not "**things**" which work together for good, but **God** who works through things as the RSV so states: "...in everything **God** works for good..."
17. **I Corinthians 10:24:** KJV—"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." This leaves the impression that one has license to take another's property. The correct meaning is in the RSV: "Let no one seek his own good, but the **good** of his neighbor."
18. **II Corinthians 5:21:** KJV—"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin..." This



leaves the impression it is we who knew no sin, whereas it is Christ who knew no sin as clearly stated in the RSV: "For our sakes he made him to be sin who knew no sin..."

19. **Revelation 17:8: KJV**—"... when they behold the beast that **was**, and **is not**, and **yet is**." This is a contradiction: "is not" and "is". The RSV makes it clear: "... because it **was** and **is not** and **is to come**."

Can we consider the outright contradiction between II Kings 8:26, "Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign...", and II Chronicles 22:2, "Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign..." inspired by God? The Norwegian, Knox, etc. translations have "Twenty-two years was Ahaziah when he began to reign" in both Scriptures.

Can we say that the translation of the word "pascha", which is the Greek spelling of the Aramaic word for "the passover", from the Hebrew word "pasach", to the word "**Easter**" in Acts 12:4 is inspired by God? "Easter", a survival from old Teutonic mythology, is derived from "eostre" or "ostara", the Anglo-Saxon "Goddess of Spring". It is this abominable translation in the King James Version which has brought about the corruption of the glorious Passover Feast of the Christian Church. **Easter** was a **pagan** festive day honoring a pagan goddess. This mistranslation of the word "pascha" to "Easter" was introduced into the apostate western religion as part of the attempt to adopt pagan festivals into Christianity. The King James Version is the only Bible which has this corrupt translation. All other translations refer to this feast by its proper name, the **Passover Feast**. Can we say that this gross error was God-inspired? God forbid. The Revised Standard Version has the correct word "**Passover**".

How much more sacred and meaningful it would be, if instead of "Easter," we would say "THE PASS-OVER"; and rather than saying "Easter Sunrise Service", we would say "CHRIST'S RESURRECTION SUNRISE SERVICE". Instead of a union Easter "Good Friday" service, when seven ministers are each assigned to bring a brief sermonette on the "seven last sayings on the cross", there should be a celebration of the "CHRISTIAN PASSOVER" (the Lord's Supper) with hymns and a sermon on Jesus Christ our Passover.

Further, can we say that the translation of the Greek word "kranion" into the word "calvary" (Luke 23:33) was inspired by God when the word "calvary" means "the skull" in English? "Calvary" is from the Latin (calvaria). The translation should not be from Greek to Latin, but from Greek to English. In Matthew, Mark, and John we find the word "golgotha" with an explanation that it means "a place of the skull". If the Greek word "kranion" and the Aramaic word "golgotha" had been properly translated "the place of the skull", I am sure many of our churches would never have used the Latin word "calvary" as a name. Can we conceive of a church calling itself "The Place of the Skull Lutheran Church", or "The Place of the Skull Baptist Church"?

Sometimes we find cemeteries named "Calvary", "a place of the skull", and that would be quite proper.

Bible loving Christians often become sentimentally attached to the Bible, and rightly so, because it is the beloved Word of God. However, the tragedy is that

in this way they may become sentimentally attached to words which are wrongly translated. Because of the sentimental feeling built around a Latin word (calvary), which few people know the meaning of, it has been exalted to a place of reverence almost equal to the cross itself. Nowhere in the Scriptures do we find any reference to "the place of the skull" (calvary) being of any spiritual or theological value or significance. The Revised Standard Version properly translates it "the place which is called The Skull".

While the enemies of the Revised Standard Version are very emphatic in stating their belief of not adding to or taking away from the Word of God (Rev. 22:18, 19), yet they will accept the King James Version as absolutely infallible with its many errors and additions which are not found in the ancient manuscripts. The following are only a few examples of additions contained in the King James Version which are not in the ancient manuscripts.

1. The word "blood" in Col. 1:14.
2. "The great God" in Prov. 26:10.
3. "Of his flesh and of his bones" in Ephes. 5:30.
4. "I trow not" in Luke 17:9.
5. "Openly" in Luke 6:4, 18.
6. "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." Matt. 6:13.
7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." I John 5:7.

What authority did the King James translators have, may I ask, to make these additions? You will not find them in other translations.

Further, the King James Version with its archaic words and expressions tends to defeat its very purpose—to convey God's truth in the most accurate, simple and understandable way. Much of the lack of "Bible reading interest" can be contributed to the difficulty which the ordinary person has in understanding the archaic phrases as they appear in the King James Version. That is one of the reasons, and a good one, that we have so many new translations written in the language of today. There is no doubt that this is at least part of the reason for renewed interest in Bible reading. It certainly is a serious mistake to allow God's truth to be hidden behind the archaic words and expressions of the Elizabethan era. Let me give you a few examples of the archaic words in the King James Version:

"Pillid", "tache", "ouche", "clouted", "scrabbled", "neeing", "besome of destruction", "husbandman", "bolloed", "knop", "hoised", "marishes", "divers", "bewray", "ambassage", "anon", "bowels", "privily", etc.

Words like the above partial list, as well as expressions such as "I trow not" (Luke 17:19), and "He who letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" (II Thes. 2:7), are difficult for the average person to understand. It is hardly practical for the modern reader to keep beside him a dictionary for such words as he reads in the King James Version, and yet that is what a reader would have to do, if he would know just what the translators of the King James Version intended to say.

In view of the above facts concerning the King

James Version of the Bible, it is amazing that some people refer to it as "beloved" and "infallible", and, at the same time, criticize the Revised Standard Version which has a far better background as to authorizer, translators, and translation. The Revised Standard Version may not be perfect, but it is certainly a great improvement over the King James Version.

The eminent and internationally famous fundamentalist, Bible teacher, and radio preacher, Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, editor of *Eternity*, says: "Anyone who is totally unfamiliar with Elizabethan English, and who cannot bring himself to read the Bible in the King James Version, should have a RSV in order to introduce him to the Word of God. Young people brought up in our pagan America, outside the bounds of rich Bible study and thus deprived of a close acquaintance with the Word of God, may catch on fire from studying this version." (*Eternity*, June, 1953).

It is misleading to convey the idea that the King James Version, or any other translation, is absolute and infallible. No translation is in itself infallible. It is the **truth** which a translation contains which is infallible. All translations contain God's infallible truth, God's word in its fulness. It is remarkable that regardless of errors and shortcomings which we find in all translations, God's infallible truth has always been retained in its entirety. This is because God has determined that His truth shall **endure forever and forever**.

We should be thankful to God for every effort put forth to give to the world the most accurate translation from the ancient manuscripts in the most simple and understandable language. Why should it be necessary for a preacher or Bible teacher to constantly have to refer to the "original" Hebrew or Greek, or to explain the meaning of archaic words and phrases when it is possible to have the "original" properly translated into our everyday language?

No doubt there will be other translations and revisions forthcoming. The Jewish Publications Society of America has undertaken a new translation of the Old Testament into modern English, which they expect to have completed by 1963. The Protestant bodies of Great Britain, Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Protestant Independents, have united in a committee to make a new translation of the whole Bible into modern English. According to Archbishop Soderblom, the Swedish Bible is revised every fifteen years. Just off the press is a very excellent translation by J. B. Phillips entitled "The Young Church In Action, A Translation of the Acts of the Apostles", published by Macmillan Company.

We trust there will be continuous endeavor to produce the best possible translations of the Bible in the most clear and understandable language for the salvation of the lost and for the edification and blessing of believers.



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