

# **The King James Bible:**

**The Sword of the King**

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The King James Version is the Bible of the people, but it has received short shrift among the academic elite. The Authorized Version (KJV) is demonstrably superior to all late-modern translations and critical Greek texts such that no Christian should use any other Bible as sacred scripture. An exhaustive proof of this claim is beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, this paper is a call to action. The debate over which Bible we read is depicted as a simple matter of personal choice, but it is of grave importance. The modernism that leads us to produce “modern” translations allows for the postmodern idea that which Bible we read is subjective, i.e. truth is subjective. The Christian faith is in one God. God has one Son, one Spirit, and one Bible: The Authorized Version.

### **Authorized Bibliology**

“What has Jerusalem to do with Athens, the Church with the Academy, the Christian with the heretic?” wrote 3rd century church father Tertullian. He’s talking about Greek philosophy, the symbolic seat of which was “the Academy,” a school Plato founded in Athens. As Western philosophy has long been understood to be a series of footnotes to Plato,<sup>1</sup> Tertullian’s question still has relevance. Today we call all institutions of higher learning “the Academy,” and the philosophy of Socrates and Plato is still the fundamental basis for higher learning in the West and around the world. Tertullian saw philosophy as the basis for all heresy and he may have

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<sup>1</sup> “The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato.” A wry comment by Whitehead, but not untrue, if we are talking about the European tradition post-Anselm. Anselm of Canterbury probably represents the height of Western philosophy. Once we get to Aquinas things start going left and we can really see the Platonic influence that Whitehead is talking about taking shape. Anselm answered Plato’s most enduring question, what is justice? No Western thinker can disprove the logic of the Ontological Argument and so it will remain, because philosophy without God is just spinning its wheels, adding footnotes to Plato. This has negative effects on the whole academy because the philosophers are the thought leaders.; Ronald Desmet and Andrew David Irvine, “Alfred North Whitehead,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2018 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/whitehead/>; Wayne J. Hankey, “Aquinas, Plato, and Neoplatonism,” *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, January 25, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195326093.013.0005>.

followed Paul in this line of thought: “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Col 2:8; cf. Jer 10:2). The Athenian philosophers were fascinated by Paul, because like many academics today, they “spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing” (Acts 17:21). He told them in no uncertain terms that they were a superstitious lot (vv. 22). Not much has changed in 2000 years. “Superstition” comes from the Latin *super* “above” + *stare* “to stand.”<sup>2</sup> We might say it is the opposite of understanding. The superstitious stand over the truth rather than understand. They impose their beliefs onto the truth, suppressing it rather than uplifting it. Another word which comes from “standing over,” this time from the Greek, is epistemology, which is the academic study of knowledge.<sup>3</sup> What does this tell us about modern academic epistemology?

If the KJV is the Authorized Version, the question is, Authorized by whom? The theology turns on two doctrines: inspiration and providence.<sup>4</sup> The more shallow arguments focus on the doctrine of inerrancy. Most evangelicals accept that the Bible is the inspired word of God, inerrant in all that it teaches and that God’s providence controls human history to conform to His will.<sup>5</sup> But these facts are understood differently by different Christians.<sup>6</sup> The classical theistic

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<sup>2</sup> “Superstition | Origin and Meaning of Superstition by Online Etymology Dictionary,” accessed December 8, 2018, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/superstition>.

<sup>3</sup> “Epistemology | Origin and Meaning of Epistemology by Online Etymology Dictionary,” accessed December 8, 2018, <https://www.etymonline.com/word/epistemology>.

<sup>4</sup> Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th ed (Des Moines, Iowa: CRP, 1984), 1ff..

<sup>5</sup> “Mission & Statement of Faith | Tyndale,” accessed October 1, 2018, <https://www.tyndale.ca/about/mission-statement-of-faith>.

<sup>6</sup> The Muratorian fragment (c. 190C E) reads: “although there are various ideas taught in the main books of the gospels, it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since all things are set out in each of them, by the one Spirit.” While the Roman Catholic church held that the Bible was perfectly inerrant in the Latin Vulgate, humanist scholarship of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century showed that Jerome’s translation contained errors. Pressure began to build for revisions in doctrine. Calvin was not concerned about inerrancy, because he felt that God inspired scripture so that it would appeal to humans in their fallen, ignorant states.<sup>6</sup> The doctrine of inerrancy arose in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century in America, but while it was late in its present articulation, it has always been present in the church. Paul wrote to Timothy, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for

God, “a God both beyond and within the world, a Creator and Sustainer who sovereignly controls the world and supernaturally intervenes in it”, collapses without inerrancy.<sup>7</sup> In order to save it in spite of their support for multiple, mutually contradictory Bibles, scholars argue that inerrancy only applies to the original text. The *autographs* were inerrant, but since then errors were produced in the sacred text. The objection to this view is that the autographs no longer exist therefore we have faith in nothing.<sup>8</sup> By trying to claim inerrancy only applies to the autographs, they have unwittingly switched to the deistic metaphysical worldview, where God does not play an active role in the world, but rather sets down uniform natural laws which we can rationally determine.<sup>9</sup>

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correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). Some have argued from inspiration that the scriptures are objectively the word of God, while others felt there was also a subjective element to inspiration, such that God would inspire the biblical authors to write and the audience so that they can understand and appreciate what they are reading.<sup>6</sup>; Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 5th ed (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K. ; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 105-6; McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 136-7, 77.

<sup>7</sup> Geisler, Norman L., *Christian Apologetics*. (Washington D.C.: Baker Academic, E-Book Edition, 2013), 125; Geisler, *Defending Inerrancy: Affirming the Accuracy of Scripture for a New Generation*. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 185-200

<sup>8</sup> Geisler feels this is unreasonable because we have excellent copies and can reconstruct the originals with accuracy. He notes that we have more, earlier, and better copies of the Bible than any ancient text, so if we can “know” what Aristotle and Plato taught, we can know what the Bible originally said. The debate over variation is only with regard to insignificant portions, and has no effect on any important doctrines. Furthermore, if we lost the Declaration of Independence we would be fine, as long as we had good copies, similarly the Bible.<sup>8</sup> Scholars may claim to have recovered almost all of the original text, but this is an appeal to the authority of scholars. How do we know that is true? The scholars said so. Suddenly our faith is not in God, but text criticism. The fact that scholars think they know what Aristotle taught is irrelevant. As Christians, we do not care very much if the product of Aristotelian text criticism indicates that A=A was written in by a scribe, but we do care if the *pericope de adultera* is claimed to be a later interpolation, or the last 12 lines of Mark’s gospel.<sup>8</sup> Carson’s example is Shakespeare ironically, as if no controversy exists over who wrote that.<sup>8</sup> On losing the autographs of the Bible, as equivalent to losing the original Declaration of Independence, Geisler compares apples to oranges. The laws of man are mere formalities, but the Word of God concerns eternal life and absolute morality, requiring much more exactitude than any document of the world.; Geisler, Norman L., *Defending Inerrancy*, 282-3; Carson, *The King James Version Debate*, 73; “The Shakespeare Authorship Controversy: The Case Summarily Stated”, Daniel Wright, Shakespeare Authorship Research Centre, <http://authorshipstudies.org/articles/controversy.cfm>; *Holy Bible, New International Version.*, 2013; Here we are informed via the apparatus that these sections are not included in the “earliest manuscripts.”

<sup>9</sup> Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 125, 139-59.

Some claim that these minor quibbles over translation do not matter theologically, but consider Deuteronomy 22:28-29, “If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.” Where the KJV gives “and lay hold on her”, many new translations render the word *ū-tā-pā-sāh* תַּשְׂפֹּתָהּ as “rapes.” This contradicts the immediate context, where the penalty for rape is death (vv. 25-27). Some argue that this is seduction and not rape,<sup>10</sup> which is consistent with vv. 25-27 and a parallel passage Exodus 22:16-17, where the crime is explicitly about seduction (“entice” - KJV). If seduction and not rape, this is an Israelite “shot-gun wedding.” The lovers get a chance to correct things, the rule against divorce prevents the man from leaving the girl in a difficult position.<sup>11</sup> But if this is about rape, then God is commanding that a virgin marry her rapist as long he pays her father. The word is often translated as “seizes” (NAS, INT, NRSV) and refers to taking something violently, like a fortress. But in other contexts, it is grasping in order to “wield skillfully,” things such as a sword (Ezek 21:16; 30:21) or even the law (Jer 2:8).<sup>12</sup> This is a euphemism for seduction, stated explicitly in Exodus 22:16-17. The “seizes” translation is an understandable error (NRSV). But

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<sup>10</sup> Gerbrandt, Gerald Eddie. 2015. *Deuteronomy*. Believers Church Bible Commentary. Harrisonburg: Herald Press. <https://ezproxy.mytyndale.ca:2443/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=1114645&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

<sup>11</sup> The practice of giving *mohar*, which is commonly translated as bride-price (“dowry” – KJV), is more like a “marriage present.” Some jewelry and money were the bride’s and it was considered poor form for the husband to take it.<sup>11</sup> Thus Leah and Rachel accuse their father of having “used up our money” (Gen 31:15). If the father refuses the marriage, the man must still pay the bride price, protecting the father and the girl from the negative consequences of her impropriety, since it would be difficult to marry her off at that point. These laws are about protecting women, but instead they are mistranslated as draconian and inhumane. The Father of Jesus Christ would not command a virgin to marry her rapist. He commands the execution of rapists, but even this must be understood within its cultural context and cannot be used as a justification for the death penalty today.; Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, eds., *The IVP Women’s Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 80.

<sup>12</sup> “Strong’s Hebrew: 8610. תַּשְׂפֹּתָהּ (Taphas) -- to Lay Hold of, Wield,” accessed December 9, 2018, <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/8610.htm>.

“rapes” contradicts Christian ethics for no reason (NIV, HCSB). This word is not translated as “rapes” anywhere else in the Bible or in any Jewish literature I have seen. This mistranslation is absurd, imposed from on high even against internal biblical data, casting aspersions on God and concealing the gospel.<sup>13</sup>

### **Authorized Text Criticism**

“Since its completion in 1611, the King James Version of the English Bible has dominated the field,”<sup>14</sup> says *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*. However, the KJV is not recommended for serious study because its source texts, the Byzantine text-type comprising the vast majority of extant NT manuscripts, do not agree with the oldest, “best” copies. Some go so far as to call KJVO proponents heretics. Many so-called KJV-Onlyers bring such accusations on themselves, with puerile insults, poor scholarship, and conspiratorial accusations, although valid points are raised.<sup>15</sup> These most strident voices get the most press, bringing disrepute to the more

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<sup>13</sup> This feeds into the widespread, misandrist belief that because ancient Israel was a patriarchy, it was therefore also sexist and oppressive towards women and men controlled every sphere of society. The view that ancient Israel was a patriarchal society where women were subordinate to men is axiomatic in biblical studies,<sup>13</sup> but some feminist biblical scholars have strongly resisted these ideas.;<sup>13</sup> Griffin, Gabriele. "patriarchy." In *A Dictionary of Gender Studies*. : Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.mytyndale.ca:2048/view/10.1093/acref/9780191834837.001.0001/acref-9780191834837-e-287>; Frymer-Kensky, Tikva Simone. 2006. *Studies in Bible and Feminist Criticism*. Vol. 1st ed. JPS Scholar of Distinction Series. (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society), 160-1; John Scott, “Sexism,” in *A Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. John Scott (Oxford University Press, 2015), <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199683581.001.0001/acref-9780199683581-e-2080>; Ronald A. Simkins, “Gender Construction in the Yahwist Creation Myth,” in *Genesis*, ed. Athalya Brenner, *The Feminist Companion to the Bible 2. Series 1* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 33; Meyers, Carol L. "Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 1 (2014): 8-27. doi:10.15699/jbibllite.133.1.8, 25-7; Carol L. Meyers, *Rediscovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 200-1; “STEINBERG, N., Kinship and Marriage in Genesis: A Household Economics Perspective (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), Pp. Xiii + 162. Cloth, n.p. ISBN 0- 8006-2703-2,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 19, no. 63 (1994): 124, <https://doi.org/10.1177/030908929401906315>, 2.

<sup>14</sup> William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard. *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation: Revised and Updated*. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1993, 2004), 127.

<sup>15</sup> Ruckman, Peter S., *The “Errors” in the King James Bible*. (Pensacola, FL: BB Bokstore, 1980); Gail Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions*, (A.V. Pubns, 1993).

scholarly arguments.<sup>16</sup> Assertions that the KJV is superior to modern translations, that it is a providentially guided blessing from God, undermine the intellectual reputation of many elite academics. They also undermine many income streams, as the market for critical editions, new translations, and new interpretations is massive.

The most recent and substantive scholarly treatment has been Edward F. Hills' *The King James Version Defended*. Hills delivers a complete articulation of the failure of late-modern text criticism.<sup>17</sup> Text criticism, specifically *lower criticism*, studies the manuscripts of ancient documents such as the Bible, purportedly in an effort to reconstruct the original, although the sheer impossibility of this goal has led many to ask whether it is valid.<sup>18</sup> Introductory editions on text criticism will generally apply some caveats to the notion that older texts are better. Texts are to be weighed in terms of various factors: internal evidence such as style and grammar, external data such as provenance, etc.<sup>19</sup> For the most part, however, in late-modern text criticism, older is better, which is the main source of their error. This trend began in earnest with Westcott and Hort (W&H), two Cambridge professors who published a new edition of the Greek NT in 1881.<sup>20</sup> This was the first major break from the received text, launching the new era of multiple, mutually contradictory Bibles.

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<sup>16</sup> Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*. (Christian Research Press, 1997); Ed. David Otis Fuller, *Which Bible, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*. (Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids International, 1972).

<sup>17</sup> Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 62.

<sup>18</sup> Wegner, *A Student's Guide*, 37

<sup>19</sup> Wegner, *A Student's Guide*, 231-8.

<sup>20</sup> Bart Ehrman, *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 14; Klein et al., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, 128; W&H focused on classifying manuscripts by text type. They identified strongly with the most ancient texts, the source of most new versions, now known as the Alexandrian text type, including the codices *Vaticanus* and *Sinaiticus*, as well as older texts from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. They argued against what we now call the Byzantine texts, the source of the KJV, for three reasons: 1) no pre-4<sup>th</sup> century evidence; 2) Patristic silence; and 3) readings conflated or influenced by older text types.<sup>20</sup> These ideas were soundly dismissed more than 30 years ago by Harry Sturz, who showed that many distinctive Byzantine readings are ancient, Patristic silence is untrue and irrelevant, and supposedly conflated readings are exaggerated.<sup>20</sup> Petzer and Aland reply that the mere existence of ancient readings unique to the Byzantine text type does not demonstrate the Byzantine type

The widely referenced responses to the KJV defence lump Hills in with everyone else. White offers a mere three pages in response to Hills' book. He claims that Hills begins with the assumption that the Textus Receptus (TR), the Greek NT produced by Erasmus and others in the Reform era and the basis for much of the KJV, is the God-preserved text. According to this strawman, Hills is engaging in circular logic. While the superiority of the TR is a major premise in Hills' argument, White is ignoring his detailed exposition. Hills begins with the assertion that the *divine inspiration* of the scriptures necessarily implies the *providential preservation* of the scriptures. God "has exercised a providential control over the copying of the Scriptures and the preservation and use of the copies."<sup>21</sup> As Hills argues, orthodox Evangelicals must regard the NT text as a special case in text criticism, over against secular manuscripts which can be dealt with using normal naturalistic methods. In order to be consistent with the doctrine of inspiration, which entails the doctrine of providential preservation, a Christian must employ a method of text criticism that assumes this divine action.<sup>22</sup> Price argues that Hills holds to the KJV as the final authority on text-critical matters.<sup>23</sup> But Hills is arguing for the KJV as a new, eclectic TR based on providential preservation. This is how he argues for the inclusion of textual variants that were not present in the Byzantine tradition, but were instead added in from other witnesses such as the Vulgate (e.g. 1 John 5:7).<sup>24</sup>

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itself is ancient; we need to see groups of such readings.<sup>20</sup> For the most part support for the Alexandrian texts is based on this kind of fallacious argument from silence. The logic is also circular: only when they see groups of readings from the "Byzantine" type will they acknowledge its independence, but the Byzantine type is just a term they made up for similar texts. Sturz meant to show that the Byzantine readings are independent and he did so.; Wegner, *A Student's Guide*, 214-5; Sturz, Harry A. *The Byzantine Text-Type & New Testament Textual Criticism*. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 53-95; Jacobus H. Petzer, The History of the NT Text- Its Reconstruction, In *New Testament Textual Criticism, Exegesis, and Early Church History: A Discussion of Methods*, (Peeters Publishers, 1994), 16-7; from here we are directed to Kurt Aland's detailed treatment in *Text of the Church*.

<sup>21</sup> Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 2, 86ff..

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<sup>23</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950."

<sup>24</sup> Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 220, 191-212.



Price attempts a more substantive attack on Hills' writings but fails to overturn any of his key concepts. For the most part, his discussion consists of quote-mining Hills, usually from another publication of his called "Believing Bible Study," but he ignores Hills' argument in the KJV Defended book. For example, he accuses Hills of a hasty generalization for the assertion that embracing the critical Greek New Testament "leads inevitably to the denial of the infallible inspiration of the original New Testament Scriptures."<sup>25</sup> According to Price, because Hill has made this statement, he is fallaciously assuming that anyone who embraces the Critical Text will, therefore, deny the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture.<sup>26</sup> But in Hills' other book, he devotes a 24-page chapter to defending this idea and he is not talking about that, he is saying that philosophical naturalism leads inevitably to skepticism. He argues there are two ways of approaching text criticism of the NT, naturalistically or what he calls a "believing point of view."<sup>27</sup> For Hills, his view is the only consistently Christian one and he makes his case. We can disagree, but it is not circular logic.

Price's most sustained attack on Hills position is on one of his key concepts, "The Logic of Faith."<sup>28</sup> His criticisms are quite shallow and do not engage Hills main points. For example, he criticizes Hills for using presuppositions to his text-critical method. But any text-critical method must have presuppositions. The presupposition of the text critics is that they are in possession of "facts" about text criticism which they then "explain" with their theories. Hills

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<sup>25</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950," 51; He cites Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950," 51-2.

<sup>27</sup> Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 62ff.; These are approaches based on what I identified using Geisler's model of "metaphysical worldviews" on page 4, with the naturalistic view being basically deistic and the believing view being classical theism.

<sup>28</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950," 56.

claims that believers must start from faith in God and then use reason to establish a thought system in relation to the manuscript evidence which is consistent and comprehensive.<sup>29</sup>

Price replies that Hills' system must "explain the realities of text criticism," but that his "system simply did not explain the facts as they existed in manuscripts."<sup>30</sup> He states further, "Unless the facts drawn from the manuscripts, which are the history of God's preservation of the Scriptures, are self-interpreting without the presuppositions of Hills being imposed upon them, all attempts to know the original text must retreat."<sup>31</sup> This is a classic case of the pot calling the kettle black, as the philosophical naturalism of the text critics is also a presupposition. There are no "self-interpreting facts."

Attacking the presuppositions of Hills' text criticism in turn, Price first claims he has simply postulated these principles, but Hills establishes a logical argument for his view in his book which Price ignores.<sup>32</sup> Price also claims that Hills cannot explain the text-critical data, that "consistency may not be a sure sign of truth but contradiction is a sure sign of error."<sup>33</sup> This is a common tactic of the New Versionists, who claim that any failure to explain all the available manuscript evidence defeats the KJVO argument. They cannot explain all of the data either, but this is not a problem because they do not claim there is a correct Bible. Their arguments are reduced to finding specific passages that are difficult to explain and then claiming victory. Price brings up Acts 8:37, when Philip tells the Ethiopian he must believe with all his heart to be baptized and the eunuch replies "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The verse is left

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<sup>29</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950," 61; Cites Hills, "Believing Bible Study, 217.

<sup>30</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950," 61.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>32</sup> Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 86ff..

<sup>33</sup> Price, "The King James Only Controversy in American Fundamentalism Since 1950," 65.

out of many modern translations because the oldest manuscripts do not contain it. The reading comes from the Western text and not the Greek, so given Hills' reliance on the Byzantine text-type and the TR, this is seen as a contradiction. Hills points out that Irenaeus and Cyprian quote the text, proving it predates the Latin, but Price replies that a few quotes do not give us a text type. Other similar texts include 1 John 5:7, the "Johannine Comma," which White discusses at length. Both of these verses have fairly plausible theories attached to them in terms of defending the KJV,<sup>34</sup> but this misses the point. The mere fact that the KJV proponent cannot explain every extraneous data does not disprove their case. The real reason to believe the KJV is not text criticism, but logic.

KJV proponents are often accused of circular logic, but late-modern textual criticism has set the standard.<sup>35</sup> W&H group texts based on mutual attestation of readings, while simultaneously classifying readings based on these groups.<sup>36</sup> The Aland husband and wife team of Kurt and Barbara took it further, classifying texts based on similarity to their own model of the autographs, the very definition of self-referential.<sup>37</sup> Text criticism is not testable. There are no hard rules in text criticism, because it is not an objective science. It ultimately turns on probability and is as much an art as a science.<sup>38</sup> They use abductive logic: looking at data and proposing models which attempt to *explain* it. To assume their model is true because it explains the data is a logical fallacy known as affirming the consequent. The KJV proponent can use

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<sup>34</sup> "Should the Bible Include Acts 8:37: 'And Philip Said, If Thou Believest with All Thine Heart, Thou Mayest. And He Answered and Said, I Believe That Jesus Christ Is the Son of God.'? - King James Version Today."; "Johannine Comma (1 John 5:7) - King James Version Today."

<sup>35</sup> White, *The King James Only Controversy*, 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> Ehrman, *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Wegner, *A Student's Guide*, 219-21; Ehrman, *Studies in the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, 57-70.

<sup>38</sup> Wegner, *A Student's Guide*, 248; Peter R. Rodgers, "Textual Criticism," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*, ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer, Credo Reference, 2005, [http://ezproxy.mytyndale.ca:2048/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/bpgtib/textual\\_criticism/0?institutionId=6949](http://ezproxy.mytyndale.ca:2048/login?url=https://search.credoreference.com/content/entry/bpgtib/textual_criticism/0?institutionId=6949).

biblical consistency as corroborating evidence, but the naturalist cannot because they do not assume the Bible has consistency across testaments, books, or even within books.

### **Authorized Providence**

Some describe the move from the KJV to the modern translations as democratization of the word, from the monarchic “King James” to the free market of American style democracy.<sup>39</sup> The opposite is true. The English Bible was created to democratize the word of God, which had been the province of (some might say “captured by”) elites who could read Latin. The new versions are devaluing the English Bible such that only elite intellectuals, those that speak the ancient, dead languages of Hebrew and Greek, and who can decipher the arcane sigils of text criticism, can read the Bible “as it was meant to be read.” All other Christians are second-class with inferior Bibles. The people are left dependent on hierophants for theology. This priest-class is itself dependent on state-largesse, whether it is modern churches that do not pay taxes, academia which is largely state-funded and regulated, Medieval to Reform era churches that were political institutions, or ancient Roman cults of the public religion. But He is not the God of the dead, of dead languages and nonexistent autographs, therefore we do greatly err in tying His legacy to them (Mark 12:27).

“Despite the proliferation of Bible translations, the King James Version is the top choice – and by a wide margin – of Bible readers” says Philip Goff, lead author of “The Bible in American Life,” a report for the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture.<sup>40</sup> While

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<sup>39</sup> Paul C. Gutjahr, “From Monarchy to Democracy: The Dethroning of the King James Bible in the United States,” in *The King James Bible after 400 Years: Literary, Linguistic, and Cultural Influences*, ed. Hannibal Hamlin and Norman W. Jones (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> Philip Goff, Arthur E. Farnsley II, and Peter J. Thuesen, “The Bible in American Life” (Indianapolis: The Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture; Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, March 6, 2014), 7.

the NIV quickly became popular among Evangelicals and overtook the KJV as the best-selling translation in 1986, this is driven by a massive marketing and publishing industry. The NIV aggressively markets smaller devotional Bibles which also adds to its sales. 55% of respondents still used the KJV, with only 19% reporting NIV use (NRSV 7%; LB 5%; NAB 6%, “Other Translations” 8%). Interestingly, 21% of respondents also reported being in congregations that either use or encourage the use of the NIV. That’s more than the number of people who claim to actually read the NIV. How much of the popularity of the “best-selling” NIV is top-down rather than bottom-up? And why does the KJV remain so popular, when the vast majority of academics and large denominations do not use it? Maybe because it resonates with the low rather than the high, the weak rather than the mighty, the foolish rather than the wise (1 Cor 1:19ff.). 69% of respondents who make less than \$25K read the KJV compared to 44% of those making \$75K or more. 72% of respondents with less than a high school education read the KJV, compared to 33% of those with a graduate degree. 79% of blacks compared to 51% of whites.<sup>41</sup> Another interesting finding was that 53% of KJV readers said the Bible is the literal word of God, compared to 39% of NIV readers.<sup>42</sup> Populism has gotten a bad reputation in the Trump era, especially in academia, but many blame the superior attitude of academics for the rise of populism. Political elites on the right are capitalizing on this sentiment, from Trump, to Ford in Ontario, to Bosanaro in Brazil, to the rise of nationalism in Europe. When will the church smarten up and give the people the Bible they want? If mainline denominations are wondering why their congregations are disappearing, using new Bibles that more than half the people reject is probably a big part of it, along with their other departures from orthodoxy.<sup>43</sup> The educated and

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<sup>41</sup> Goff, Farnsley II, and Thuesen, “The Bible in American Life,” 12-16.

<sup>42</sup> Goff, Farnsley II, and Thuesen, “The Bible in American Life,” 13.

<sup>43</sup> “Nine Interesting Data Points on the State of Today’s Protestant Churches - Macleans.Ca,” accessed December 9, 2018, <https://www.macleans.ca/society/nine-interesting-data-points-on-the-state-of-todays-protestant->

moneyed prefer the new versions, while the poor, the downtrodden, the undereducated, and the marginalized prefer the KJV. What would Jesus do?

### Conclusion

God speaks to the people in their language, so while the OT was in Hebrew for the chosen people, the Septuagint took it to Greek as the world changed. The NT was in Koine Greek for the common people of the Hellenized world, just as English was the common tongue in James' England where the rich spoke French.<sup>44</sup> Now English is the worldwide *lingua franca*, and the KJV is the Bible for the world. The God of the Bible is the God of history. When He acts, all the world remembers forever. The OT became the most enduring cultural legacy of the fertile crescent, long after the mighty empires had disappeared into the sand.<sup>45</sup> A penniless preacher from a backwater of the Roman Empire, who died young by the shameful death of crucifixion, became the most famous person in world history (John 12:32). The Bible became the best-selling book in world history, in numbers beyond counting, a foundational document of Western civilization.<sup>46</sup> The KJV became the most influential book in the English language's history,<sup>47</sup> then English went on to become the international language of commerce and science,

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[churches/](https://factsandtrends.net/2017/01/27/study-conservative-churches-most-likely-to-grow/); "Study: Conservative Churches Most Likely to Grow," Facts & Trends, January 27, 2017, <https://factsandtrends.net/2017/01/27/study-conservative-churches-most-likely-to-grow/>.

<sup>44</sup> Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible*, 24-36

<sup>45</sup> Christine Hayes, *Introduction to the Bible*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), Ch. 1

<sup>46</sup> "The Master Works of Western Civilization", Drs. Adler and Eliot et al., Louisiana Tech University, Apr. 11, 2005, [http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/201/great\\_books\\_etexts.html](http://www2.latech.edu/~bmagee/201/great_books_etexts.html); "Best Selling Book of Non-Fiction | Guinness Book of World Records", Dec 6, 2015, <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/best-selling-book-of-non-fiction>.

<sup>47</sup> Shakespeare was a linguistic innovator, contributing far more new words to the English language than the KJV, but this is partly why Shakespeare is so difficult to read.; David Crystal, *Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 258; Although many claim to find the archaic English of the KJV difficult, it actually gives a fairly low reading level on the Flesch-Kincaid test. However, some have argued that these tests cannot accurately assess the ease or difficulty of the KJV because of weaknesses in methodology. While this may be true, there is no way in which new versions make the Bible easier to read. Maybe on the surface, you can understand what the text literally says more easily, but there are layers of meaning lost and mistakes in translation such as Deut 22:28-29 above. Furthermore, every archaic word in the KJV is available in

spreading the gospel to every corner of the world (Mark 14:9).<sup>48</sup> New versions are late and owe their insignificant impact to advanced capitalism, globalization, and technology. Changes in equipment and distribution channels allowed companies to turn a profit on smaller and smaller printings, allowing more and more niche Bibles to hit the market.<sup>49</sup> The devil now mocks God with the *Queen James Bible*. New Versions and Critical Texts update themselves every ten years, just as we would expect from a for-profit enterprise. The Authorized Version is an unchangeable, international treasure of world literature that will never be extinguished or surpassed.

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a dictionary within a few keystrokes. The archaic meaning for *shambles* (1 Cor 10:25 – “a meat market”) is actually the first semantic field on Merriam-Webster online. The concern for putting the Bible in the vernacular is over in the internet era. Now we should be concerned about the right interpretation of the received text. There is at least one way in which “archaic” language makes the KJV superior to practically any new Bible on the market: the use of different singular and plural 2<sup>nd</sup>-person pronouns. The KJV’s use of “thou,” “thee,” “thine,” and “thyself” for the singular pronoun and “ye,” “you,” “your,” “yours,” and “yourselves” for plural reduces ambiguity in numerous texts. Consider Luke 22:31-32, where the Lord says to Peter: “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have *you*, that he may sift *you* as wheat: But I have prayed for *thee*, that *thy* faith fail not: and when *thou* art converted, strengthen *thy* brethren.” (emphasis mine). Satan desires to sift all Christ’s disciples, including us, but in the story Christ has prayed for Peter personally, so he would strengthen the brethren. In John 4, the Samaritan woman at the well is speaking to Jesus and says: Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Jesus says to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews.” When the woman says “ye” she is talking about the Jews in general. When she says “thou” she is talking to Christ personally. Christ talks to the woman directly about the Samaritans in general, but this bit of information is easy to overlook in new versions.; “Definition of SHAMBLES,” accessed December 9, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/shambles>.

<sup>48</sup> Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2001), 253.

<sup>49</sup> Gutjahr, “From Monarchy to Democracy: The Dethroning of the King James Bible in the United States,” 174.

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