

# Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

## The King James Only Controversy

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James R. White, in his book, *The King James Only Controversy*, has produced a thorough, fair, clear, and concise argument on a debate that has been wrought by confusion and emotion for decades. White discusses deep issues on a level that someone with very little to no theological training would be able to follow, but serious enough that a scholar could benefit from reading the book as well.

In the first chapter, White is fair enough to caution the reader that not everyone in the King James Only camp are there for the same exact reasons. He divides these people into five categories: 1) those who simply prefer the KJV because they believe it to be the best English translation available today, 2) those who believe that the Greek and Hebrew texts used by the KJV translators were the most accurate texts available, 3) those who insist that the *Textus Receptus* has been either supernaturally inspired, or at least supernaturally preserved, 4) those who believe that the KJV translation itself is inspired, and thus, inerrant, 5) and finally, those who believe that the KJV is new revelation. White emphasizes that it is important to note that not everyone is in the same category, and to know in which category someone belongs, before one goes further with the argument.

In the second chapter, White summarizes the history of the transmission of the Bible, and shows that some of the same arguments used by “KJV Onlyists” to attack modern translations were actually used to attack Jerome and Erasmus in their day. I could not help but think of the “worship wars,” specifically in churches I have been a part of, where the same arguments used to attack contemporary Christian music today were used against the songs of the Reformers by that generation. White shows that the real source of the problem is our unwillingness to change or grow in our traditions, rather than theological purity, as many people say it is.

White then answers vital questions in chapter three with an understandable discussion of questions such as “What are the disputed textual issues?,” “What are the differences in the translations?,” “What is textual criticism?,” and “Why do some manuscripts differ from others?” Again, White does this in a way that makes the subject matter approachable and less intimidating to the common layperson.

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Chapter four takes the reader through a more thorough discussion of Erasmus and other early translators, showing the process the translators used, specifically how Erasmus used the same critical methods that the KJV Only crowd attacks modern translators for using today. White leads the reader through this discussion in a scholarly and disarming way that almost leaves the reader with no choice but to see the irony of the KJV Only arguments, and to agree with White's conclusion.

In the next few chapters, White does a widely comprehensive survey comparing passages in the King James Version against other translations and against the best Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. White shows that the KJV does not often have the better translation, and in fact modern translations contain more accurate translations of key passages, based on far more reliable manuscripts. White then comprehensively refutes the accusation that modern translations seek to strip Christ of His deity, showing that modern translation in fact translate key passages in a way that points *more* to Christ's deity than does the KJV! White then goes through a thorough discussion of the errors present in the KJV, showing conclusively that the KJV is in fact an inferior translation of the Word of God. In "Part 2," White concludes the book by digging deeper into some key textual issues on a more scholarly level for the benefit of people with some knowledge of *koine* Greek or textual criticism. However, I believe this section would be beneficial for anyone looking for a deeper discussion concerning the best rendering of specific texts.

Overall, the book is most certainly to be commended. However, two criticisms may be given concerning this book. First, White does at times come across as rather polemic against the KJV Only position – however, this may be expected since he thinks it to be an ignorant and dangerous position to hold. Secondly, White makes a few comments without backing them up at all. Now, given the evidence he provides for his other claims, and his obvious credentials qualifying him to write such a book in the first place, one can accept most of his claims easily. However, it would have carried much more weight, had he either given evidence for certain claims, or at least referenced sources showing evidence for such claims. However, these issues were rare and minor, and in no way truly detracted from the weight of White's arguments.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone interested in knowing more about Bible translations. It is an essential resource for anyone familiar with, or embroiled in, the debate surrounding the King James Version or Bible translations at large. White has produced an invaluable resource dealing thoroughly and clearly with a subject that has been wrought with emotion and ignorance for decades, and brings

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authenticity, stability, and scholarship to the discussion surrounding the King James Only controversy.

[https://www.academia.edu/7596957/The King James Only Controversy by James White](https://www.academia.edu/7596957/The_King_James_Only_Controversy_by_James_White)

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