

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE VARIOUS SETTINGS OF THE KING JAMES VERSION

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In respect to our honored King James Version (KJV), we know it has served as the standard translation for over four centuries. Appreciated most by fundamental Baptists and Bible-believers, the *Old Black-backed 66* has proved itself to be the perfect, inspired word of God for the English speaking people.

By this *Blessed Book* we live. We read it and know it is the inspired word of God. It not only *contains* the word of God – it *is* the word of God. We preach it. We study it. We teach it. We raise our families by it. We shall never give it up.

We know this Bible has its scars. It has been attacked, persecuted, mocked, banned, and disregarded – even from its first printing in 1611. Although it has been carefully handled for four centuries by men who love it, these men have their faults. Any preacher who is honest will admit he has erred in his quoting or reading of a verse. We tend to paraphrase the word of God when we can't rightly remember the exact wording of a verse.

This is not allowable in scripture translation or editing, but it shows we are fallible, even when handling the infallible word of God. And from the first printing – made on antiquated equipment compared to what we have today, F. H. A. Scrivener identified a number of necessary corrections made to the 1611 edition, and the year the changes were made:

- this thing--this thing also (1638)
- shalt have remained--ye shall have remained (1762)
- Achzib, nor Helbath, nor Aphik--of Achzib, nor of Helbath, nor of Aphik (1762)
- requite good--requite me good (1629)
- this book of the Covenant--the book of this covenant (1629)
- chief rulers--chief ruler (1629)
- And Parbar--At Parbar (1638)
- For this cause--And for this cause (1638)
- For the king had appointed--for so the king had appointed (1629)
- Seek good--seek God (1617)
- The cormorant--But the cormorant (1629)
- returned--turned (1769)
- a fiery furnace--a burning fiery furnace (1638)
- The crowned--Thy crowned (1629)
- thy right doeth--thy right hand doeth (1613)
- the wayes side--the way side (1743)
- which was a Jew--which was a Jewess (1629)
- the city--the city of the Damascenes (1629)
- now and ever--both now and ever (1638)
- which was of our father's--which was our fathers (1616)

Any printing of the word of God, if it found to have an error; that error should be immediately corrected, and all unnecessary copies destroyed.

Subsequent printings of the King James Version, although correcting previous errors, sometimes introduced new errors, that had to be corrected.

And with many publishers over four centuries printing the *Blessed Old Book*, one can only imagine what miracle of God it is that we hold in our hands today. The fact is – except for those obviously poor editions that change words – we have that King James Version God intends for us to have.

Furthermore, we know there has never been a standard edition to which all printings conform (quoting John R. Kohlenberger III):

No two early printings of the KJV were identical—not even the two printings of 1611—and no two modern settings are identical, either. These differences are due to accidental human error as well as to intentional changes by printers and editors, who sought to eliminate what they judged to be the errors of others and to conform the text to their standards of English usage. This said, most differences involve only spelling, punctuation, and italics, and few variations materially affect the meaning of the text.

As early as 1616 there were systematic attempts to revise and standardize the KJV. Other important early editions were issued by Cambridge in 1629 and 1638. In the eighteenth century, the two great English universities (who were also officially chartered printers) commissioned thorough and systematic revisions. The edition of Dr. F. S. Paris was published by Cambridge in 1762 and that of Dr. Benjamin Blayney by Oxford in 1769. Though far from perfect, these remained the standard editions until *The Cambridge Paragraph Bible* of 1873 <sup>1</sup>.

*The Cambridge Paragraph Bible of the Authorized Version*, edited by Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener, LL.D. (1813 – 1891) and published in 1873 is considered by far the most substantial work on the King James text after 1611, when the version was first published.

F. H. A. Scrivener was exceptionally tedious in his analysis of the various King James settings and devoted himself to producing what he considered how the original texts *should* have been translated, not *would* have been translated. And, although he restored about a third of the original readings, the Scrivener text should not be considered the certain text of the translators <sup>2</sup>. He should be considered a reviser to the text, making small changes he thought should have been in the original translation.

We do have the original manuscripts of the King James translators. These were either lost or destroyed. And we know the first printing in 1611 had some printing errors. To what extent the printer may have interjected his own textual “errors” (i.e., not following the translator’s manuscripts) is unknown, or at least debatable. So, what learned men have done since 1611 is to make editions that purpose to produce that perfect edition. As with all human endeavors, their work is not always infallible. But we know the word of God is, for God has promised to preserve his inspired word forever. And so, through the centuries of the English Bible, God has cared for and preserved his word.

Whether it be Scrivener or Blayney, or Parris or Tyndale; men’s work has to be checked and proofread, and rechecked – I say seven times – to make sure all errors are found and corrected. Any writer knows this.

Some revisions had to correct even words. As already mentioned, whether these words were incorrect because the printer mistyped them, or whether it was a handwritten translation that was wrong, men involved have found and corrected the text. Any person who honors the word of God realizes these changes are indeed corrections, and not an attempt by a scorners to corrupt the word of God. If that was the case, the changes would have likely attacked the deity of our Saviour, the precious blood, the holiness of God, or some such thing.

Rick Beckman (quoting Gary F. Zoella’s *Differences Between Bible Versions Updated and Expanded Edition*) provided a list of what he considered significant changes made to the KJV, comparing the 1611 to the 1769 <sup>3</sup>:

- 1 Corinthians 12:28 – “helpes in gouernmets” vs. “helps, governments”
- Joshua 3:11 – “Arke of the Couenant, euen the Lord” vs. “ark of the covenant of the Lord”
- 2 Kings 11:10 – “in the Temple” vs. “in the temple of the LORD”
- Isaiah 49:13 – “for God” vs. “for the LORD”
- Jeremiah 31:14 – “with goodnesse” vs. “with my goodness”
- Jeremiah 51:30 – “burnt their dwelling places” vs. “burned her dwellingplaces”

- Ezekiel 6:8 – “that he may” vs. “that ye may”
- Ezekiel 24:5 – “let him see the” vs. “let them see the”
- Ezekiel 24:7 – “powred it vpon the ground” vs. “poured it not upon the ground”
- Ezekiel 48:8 – “which they shall” vs. “which ye shall”
- Daniel 3:15 – “a fierie furnace” vs. “a burning fiery furnace”
- Matthew 14:9 – “the othes sake” vs. “the oath’s sake”
- 1 Corinthians 15:6 – “And that” vs. “After that”
- 1 John 5:12 – “the Sonne, hath” vs. “the Son of God hath”

This writer is a Bible-believer, and as such these changes do not cause me concern. I do not lose sleep over these nor do I propose to defend one side or the other. I can accept them and continue to read, believe and preach the infallible word of God out of my Oxford Bible (and even some of my Oxford bibles have unintended printing errors) with a fully persuaded heart and mind. I trust God to protect and preserve his word for me.

The Universities of Oxford and Cambridge produced updated texts in the 18<sup>th</sup> century seeking to standardize the texts. For from the first printing a wide variety of texts – most duplicating misprints – were in circulation. It is similar today; with so many KJV publishers you will find some very poor settings, some even with substantial word changes. Every Bible-believer needs to take care in selecting a good setting of the text, from a proven publisher – one that has done due diligence to select the right text of the King James Version. I added my own quick check at the end of this paper.

Two noteworthy editions of the *Authorized Version* were Cambridge’s edition of 1760 by Francis Sawyer Parris and Oxford’s edition of 1769 edited by Benjamin Blayney. The Oxford edition has few differences from the Cambridge edition. The 1769 edition is Oxford’s standard text.

Here is an example of one difference, found in Matthew 5:13:

Parris (1760): Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be troden under foot of men.

Blayney (1769) Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Since 1769, the Blayney edition has remained the standard, and has become the basis for many printings.

But let’s look further into the 1873 edition edited by F. H. A. Scrivener.

For seven years (1866 – 1873) Dr. F. H. A. Scrivener was devoted to his task of standardizing the King James text. J. R. K. III goes on to write: “Dr. Scrivener compared at least 15 early settings and important revisions, including both settings of 1611; Bibles of 1612, 1613, 1616, 1617, 1629, 1630, 1634, 1638, 1640; and the significant editions of Drs. Paris (1762) and Blayney (1769).”<sup>4</sup>

I know there are writers who either denounce or promote the work of Scrivener. I thank God for some of his work, for he was a prolific writer and very diligent in his involvement with the *Revisers* to record the differences between the *Authorized Version* and the *Revised Version*. If it were not for that, many would falsely believe the *Revised Version* has the same base texts as the *Authorized Version*. He also for the first time identified the Greek texts underlying KJV – after the fact – which causes concern, as he is thought to have omitted some. As to his heart’s motives, I shall leave that to our Savior to judge.

Many highly regard Scrivener’s Cambridge Paragraph Bible of 1873, and for good reasons. Allow me to quote at length John R. Kohlenberger III, as he speaks to the work done by Scrivener to standardize the KJV text:

In his 120-page introduction, Dr. Scrivener addressed the various features of the KJV he worked to standardize:

*Italic type.* Italic type was used in the KJV, as in the Geneva Bible, to indicate words in the English translation that have no exact representative in the original language. Dr. Scrivener, following many earlier scholars, noted that the KJV translators were noticeably inconsistent in their use of italics, sometimes even in the same paragraph and verse. To cite one small pattern from the 1611 edition, Leviticus 11:20 has “upon all foure,” while for the same Hebrew 11:21 and 42 have “upon *all* foure,” and 11:27 has “on *all* foure.”

Dr. Scrivener carefully analyzed why italic type was used throughout the KJV, reduced this analysis to 14 major principles, and then applied these principles with meticulous consistency throughout the entire Bible. A substantial portion of the editor’s “seven laborious years” was devoted to this significant improvement.

*Punctuation.* Later printings of the KJV added a great deal of punctuation to the editions of 1611. Dr. Scrivener restored the major punctuation (periods, colons, parentheses, question marks) of 1611, and used commas and semicolons to help divide longer sentences into more manageable units for reading.

*Spelling and capital letters.* Spelling of proper names and common words was very fluid in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: “Inquire” and “enquire” were interchangeable, as were “ceiling,” “cieling,” and “sieling.” Most differences between modern settings of the KJV and early settings involve standardization of spelling.

Dr. Scrivener’s general rule was that whenever a word was spelled more than one way, he conformed all occurrences to the standard spelling of the late nineteenth century. Proper names, on the other hand, vary according to their spelling in the original languages, so “Elijah” throughout 1 and 2 Kings and in Malachi 4:5 becomes “Elias” throughout the New Testament, as in Matthew 11:14 and 17:3. For the benefit of modern readers, three spelling patterns are changed in this edition that are not changed in Scrivener’s edition: twenty-nine occurrences of “mo” and “moe” are conformed to “more”; four occurrences of “unpossible” are conformed to “impossible”; and “neesed” in 2 Kings 4:35 is spelled “sneezed.”

*Paragraphs.* According to Dr. Scrivener and other scholars, the paragraph marks (¶) were unequally and inconsistently distributed, and they disappear altogether after Acts 20:26. So, while consulted, the original marks were not always followed in *The Cambridge Paragraph Bible*.<sup>5</sup>

Just about any person who desires to seriously study the difference of the settings of the KJV can do so, either by finding the research of others, or by doing the comparison for himself. Bound photocopies of the original 1611 edition are widely available at a very low cost, and these copies can be read with a little effort to figure out the use of letters and the odd (to us) spelling. Most would agree updating the obsolete spellings and letters of that first edition to today’s usage is a welcome improvement.

We know our beloved *Authorized Version* was translated by learned men with powerful testimonies, anti-catholic, and following strict rules for translating. These men honored God and the king, and put forth their best efforts. Even so, we know as men, there must be certain small differences based on their peculiar personalities. Some spelled one way, others spelled another way. The KJV translation committees consisted of the following men:

First Westminster Company, translating from Genesis to 2 Kings:

Lancelot Andrewes, John Overall, Hadrian à Saravia, Richard Clarke, John Layfield, Robert Tighe, Francis Burleigh, Geoffrey King, Richard Thomson, William Bedwell;

First Cambridge Company, translated from 1 Chronicles to the Song of Solomon:

Edward Lively, John Richardson, Lawrence Chaderton, Francis Dillingham, Roger Andrewes, Thomas Harrison, Robert Spaulding, Andrew Bing;

First Oxford Company, translated from Isaiah to Malachi:

John Harding, John Rainolds, Thomas Holland, Richard Kilby, Miles Smith, Richard Brett, Daniel Fairclough, William Thorne;

Second Oxford Company, translated the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation:

Thomas Ravis, George Abbot, Richard Eedes, Giles Tomson, Sir Henry Savile, John Peryn, Ralph Ravens, John Harmar, John Aglionby, Leonard Hutten;

Second Westminster Company, translated the Epistles:

William Barlow, John Spenser, Roger Fenton, Ralph Hutchinson, William Dakins, Michael Rabbet, Thomas Sanderson.

Second Cambridge Company, translated the Apocrypha:

John Duport, William Branthwaite, Jeremiah Radcliffe, Samuel Ward, Andrew Downes, John Bois, Robert Ward, Thomas Bilson, Richard Bancroft.

Accordingly, it is understandable that there would be differences in spelling, punctuation rules, and italicization.

The printer Robert Barker, an expert in his field as the King's Printer, produced this monumental work, working in reverse print. He would have to read the hand written manuscripts of the various translators and commit them to type. And as a printer, I understand a typo in the hand written original has to be fixed every now and then. That, coupled with his own human error, makes that first printed edition – although a miracle of God – likely to have some typographical errors, extending even to omissions, additions, and word changes (Ruth 3:15 – ).

And since we do have those original manuscripts the translators turned over to the printer, we have to trust men close to the work to make the call on how a rendering should read.

In the end, the blessed text of the Authorized Version is preserved for us. The inspired text easily survived human error. Through the centuries God purified that holy text so we have it as it ought to be. We indeed are blessed.

### **Pastor's Quick Check for the Right Setting of the King James Version**

It can be an unsure effort to order Bibles online, or worse, just ask the clerk at a Christian Bookstore for a King James Bible. Over the years I have been able to quickly identify what I expect is a good text, and one which I would not buy or use. Just because the cover says King James does not mean the printer followed a proved text.

So then, here is what I look for when finding the right King James, in lieu of an extensive verse comparison:

- 1 Consider the publisher. Publishers that make all kinds of versions that appeal to all kinds of people will not give diligence in selecting their right King James text. They publish to sell, not for righteousness. Publishers like Nelson, Zondervan, and others are notoriously poor publishers of the King James Bible. On the other hand, publishers like Oxford, Cambridge, Trinitarian, Hendrickson, Church, World, and others have published using the right text. Do not just trust the publisher. This is just a good starting place.
- 2 Look for the "Epistle Dedicatory" in the front of the Bible. Bibles that put forth effort to supply this are following a good pattern.
- 3 Check the titles of the books, especially "The Epistle of Paul of Apostle to the Hebrews" is good. Simply "Hebrews" is an incomplete rendering, not following the original translation. This is likely a poor text. Also, the fifth book of the New Testament should read "The Acts of the Apostles"; not simply "Acts."
- 4 Check for the post scripts at the ends of some of the Epistles. At the end of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews it should read, "Written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy." At the end of First Timothy it should read, "The first to Timothy was written from Laodicea, which is the chiefest city of Phrygia Pacatiana." These are indications the text follows the original version of 1611.

- 5 Read 2 Timothy 3:17: “That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Notice is says “thoroughly,” not “thoroughly.” “Thoroughly” is a bad rendering.
- 6 Center column references are usually a dead give-away that it is a good text. I do have many good texts that do not have the center column references, but all the ones I have with the references is a fine King James Bible.

As a final note, this preacher uses an Oxford 1769 Clarendon Minion edition. It is an expensive Bible, but it is the tool of my trade. I have noticed a few “typos” – a missing period, and incomplete printed letter, or a transposed word. However, it is not uncommon to find printing mistakes in bibles – just make sure there are only a very few.

God bless you.

NSD 02/24/13

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1. John R. Kohlenberger III, Hendrickson Introduction to their King James Version.
  2. A Textual History of the King James Bible, David Norton, page 124.
  3. <http://www.rickbeckman.org/kjv-1611-vs-kjv-1769/>
  4. John R. Kohlenberger III, Hendrickson Introduction to their King James Version.
  5. Ibid.