



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XII
Issue 279

The KJV: 400 Years of Bondage

1611-2011

ECCLESIASTICAL BONDAGE – ARCHAIC BONDAGE – TRANSLATIONAL BONDAGE – TEXTUAL BONDAGE

(Part 2)

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

ARCHAIC BONDAGE

The *King James Version* has contributed to keeping people in bondage to an archaic language. It is responsible for locking up the Word of God in an old, stale language, made steadily worse with each passing generation, keeping truth farther and farther away from English speaking people.

God is forced to be a distant Deity of “Thou” instead of the close “Father” as revealed to us by His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Archaic Right Out of the Gate

The *King James Version* was actually archaic and outdated from the very start. Strangely, it used already-then century-old vocabulary, making its 1611 language not just four hundred, but five hundred years old for us today.

A *King James Version* historian writes:

One of the most interesting aspects of the *King James Bible* is its use of ways of speaking that were already becoming archaic in the standard English of the first decade of the seventeenth century ...

[For example] a careful study of the court records of the northern English city of Durham suggests that “you” had replaced “thou” as the normal form of address in spoken English by 1575.¹

1. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, p. 265.

Why did the *King James Version* retain this mode of speaking, when it was already falling out of use? The answer is not difficult to discern, and lies in the first of the very specific directions given to the translators:

The ordinary Bible read in the [Anglican] Church, commonly called the *Bishop's Bible*, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will admit.²

Thus, by the Monarch's decree, the *King James Version* is but a revision of the Anglican *Bishop's Bible*.

God Speaks in the Language of Today

One of God's names in the Bible is the great “*I AM*.” He is not the “*I WAS*,” nor is He the “*I WILL BE*.” He is the God of the ever present – He is the “*I AM*.” Being so, He speaks to men as they are, and where they are. He is the *contemporary* God.

Jesus, the Word of God, sat at the well with the woman and spoke to her in her language in a way that she could hear and identify with what He was saying. He sought to identify with her. He spoke to fishermen. He spoke with the soldier. He spoke with the tax collector. He spoke with the harlot. He spoke to children. He spoke to the common man.

(see **400 YEARS**, page 2575)

2. “Bancroft's Rules to Be Observed in the Translation of the Bible,” cited in its entirety in the author's work *The Plowboy's Bible*, 2010, Appendix B.

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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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 law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (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).

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400 YEARS (continued from front page)

... That Word must come to people in a language they can understand – and not only *can* understand, but will not *misunderstand*.³

It is amazing how many unnatural and artificial expressions Bible readers are willing to put up with. Perhaps it is because ... we have read them so often in the Bible that we are not even aware of how strange and foreign they sound to a person listening to the message for the first time ... I refer to simple matters of everyday mundane grammar and usage.⁴

People read each other's letters, their daily newspaper or the latest paperback in the language of daily life. Why should they not have God's Word available to them in a language they can understand and respond to?⁵

When people can't understand the *words* of God, then they are highly vulnerable to the abuses of the clergy.

In his superb historical work, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, Ross Purdy addresses the lingering effects of this serious danger as it relates to religious authoritarianism,

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 effected considerable damage in the most subtle of ways and it has been by God's grace that it is not more serious.⁶

We would not think of using strange outdated language when trying to communicate the truth of God with our friends and loved ones. Why do we settle for such archaic words when it comes to the *words* of God themselves?

Even Noah Webster, of the *1828 American Dictionary of the English Language* fame, over 16 decades ago wrote of the problem of the outdated *King James Version*:

In the lapse of two or three centuries, changes have taken place which, in particular passages, impair the

beauty; in others, obscure the sense of the original languages. Some words have fallen into disuse; and the signification of others, in current popular use, is not the same now as it was when they were introduced into the version. The effect of these changes is that some words are not understood by common readers who have no access to commentaries, and who will always compose a great proportion of readers; while other words, being now used in a sense different from that which they had when the translation was made, present a wrong signification or false ideas. Whenever words are understood in a sense different from that which they had when introduced, and different from that of the original languages, they do not present to the reader the *Word of God*.⁷

Speaking into the Air

So likewise, unless you speak words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For you shall speak into the air (I Corinthians 14:9).

What a clear principle Paul teaches us here. Unless we speak words that are *easy* to understand, then how can anyone *possibly* know what we are saying? If we do not speak words that are *clear* and *easy* to grasp, then we are just *speaking into the air*. Our words are without profit because they can find no understanding ear to receive them. This is the whole purpose of translation!

As Paul says that this is true of our own words, how much more this is true of God's words. Many words from five centuries ago are little more than "*unknown tongues*" to the contemporary common man.

TRANSLATIONAL BONDAGE

The *King James Version* has contributed to keeping people in bondage to translation from the past. For some, it has managed to put an end to the aggressive mission of getting the Word of God into the hands of contemporary English speaking people. It has locked the Scriptures in the language of the past.

Our Ever-Changing Language

Even if it was *possible* to produce a "perfect" translation, time's relentless changing of our language would eventually cause the words of God to be made obscure. The passage of time would make God's Word much more difficult for contemporary man to compre- ►

7. *Noah Webster Bible*, 1833.

3. Eugene H. Glassman, *The Translation Debate*, 1981, p. 20.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

6. Ross Purdy, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, Bible Student's Press, 2007.

hend. So translations have a two-fold problem: not only accuracy, but clarity as well.

Words are not static things that always keep the same meaning. The continual changing of language causes many words to drift away from the meanings they once had and some words to be no longer used.⁸

No Scripture is regarded as fully effective for more than fifty years, so rapid is the change which takes place in languages.⁹

The Language of the Common Man

The New Testament originally was written in *Koiné* Greek – the every-day language of the common man. It was the will of God that the common man who had a heart for truth would be able to read and understand His words. He did not want language to be a barrier.

The Ongoing Plowboy's Bible

Likewise, William Tyndale's passion was that the most common of his fellow countrymen – in particular, the plowboy – could have a translation of God's Word in their own familiar tongue. Even though there were earlier English translations, he wanted them to have a translation with which they could easily grasp the truth of God for themselves without the assistance of any professional clergymen. Thus the meaning of his famous words,

I defy the Pope and all his laws; and, if God spares me, I will one day make the boy that drives the plow in England to know more of the Scriptures than the Pope does!

Tyndale's heart-felt passion was a contemporary, common language Bible – a "Plowboy's Bible."

Translating the Word of God accurately into the contemporary vernacular of the common man, as Tyndale did, is indeed a most noble cause. Without a doubt it should be the opportunity of every man in every age to have access to God's Word in a form that can be easily grasped and understood in his *own* dialect.

This is an honorable, ongoing process to which believers have been given charge. The Word of God does not belong exclusively to a generation of four or five cen-

turies ago. It does not belong to corporations, institutions, organization, colleges or universities, nor does it belong to committees of professional clergymen. God's Word belongs to His sons – it belongs to us – it belongs to me, it belongs to you. The transmission of His Word to the common man is the honorable, ongoing process – generation-to-generation – to which we have been divinely entrusted.

Let's realize and embrace our responsibility and privilege to arise and fill the ranks of those men before us who sought to bring God's Word to the people of their day. Let's fully embrace the ongoing process – generation to generation – of truly freeing others from the senseless bondage of *unknown tongues*. We must allow our Father's words to be "*easy to be understood*" (I Corinthians 14:9).

Translating in Ordinary Surroundings

Something struck me as I was recently reading J.B. Phillips's book, *Ring of Truth: A Translator's Testimony*. Here is what I read:

I was, and indeed am, impressed by the fact that the New Testament letters were written not in some holy retreat but sometimes from prison, sometimes from ordinary, probably Christian homes. Moreover, they were written to people who were called to live Christian lives in a thoroughly pagan world.¹⁰

After reading that I got to thinking: Why would it be any different when it comes to translating? Doesn't all of God's life and work take place in the middle of ordinary surroundings, in commonplace circumstances? If the Bible was not written in "holy retreats," why should it be preserved or translated there? Why not in ordinary Christian homes? Like ours?

The Word of God does not belong to a King of England, nor does it belong to Thomas Nelson, Oxford University, Cambridge University, or any other Society or publishing house. The Word of God belongs to the sons of God. His Word belongs to us!

TEXTUAL BONDAGE

The *King James Version* has contributed to keeping people in bondage to a Greek text that the translators themselves developed. English readers were locked into

⁸ Rick Norris, *The Unbounded Scriptures*, p. 32.

⁹ Eugene A. Nida, *The Bible Translator: Bible Translation in Today's World*, 1966, p. 60.

¹⁰ J.B. Phillips's book, *Ring of Truth: A Translator's Testimony*, 1967, p. 37.

the eclectic-ecclesiastical text that was actually created in 1611.

Many assume that the *King James Version* is somehow based on “a” single Greek text called the *Textus Receptus*. They do not understand that the *King James Version* translators actually *created* their own new text. The *exact* Greek text behind the *King James Version* was not in printed form until nearly *three hundred years* after its English translation. The so-called *Textus Receptus* of the *King James Version* never appeared as a printed text under one cover until 1881. The *Majority Text* never appeared as a printed text under one cover until 2007.

The *King James Version* is a *revision* from an eclectically-ecclesiastically created text. The *King James Version* revisionists drew words and phrases from several sources. They used foreign language translations (*Sep-tuagint, Coptic, Vulgate*, etc.), various original language printed texts, quotations from the “Early Church Fathers” (Chrysostom, Augustine, etc.), and previous English translations (*Tyndale, Bishop’s, Matthew’s, Great, Wycliffe*, etc.).

In fact, the Preface of the *King James Version* says,

Neither did we think much [lightly] to consult the translators or commentators, Chaldee, Hebrew, Syrian, Greek, or Latin, no nor the Spanish, French, Italian, or Dutch; neither did we disdain to revise that which we had done, and to bring back to the anvil that which we had hammered ...

The translators created a Greek text and an English translation that had never before existed. In fact, words appear in the 1611 *King James Version* that Christians use today that do not appear in any Greek manuscript and only appear in Roman Latin texts. The evidence that the revisionist created a new Greek Text is witnessed by the fact that their English word choices in 1611 never appeared in Greek form until 1881, when Scrivener converted the *King James Version’s* choices into Greek. It was their English choices that Scrivener used nearly three hundred years later to place in printed form the *Textus Receptus* text that underlies the *King James Version*.

The underlying “Greek text” of the *King James Version* was actually created after-the-fact by Scrivener in 1881. It was a Greek text that was retrofitted, since there was no Greek text in print that was the foundation for the *King James Version*. The term *Textus Receptus* was coined in a preface to a Greek edition printed after the

King James Version in 1633. There are scores of “Textus Receptus” texts in existence, none of which are identical. The 1611 revisionists even included a few words in their text that have never appeared in *any* Greek manuscript. The *King James Version* revisionists even left the *Beza* text and the *Stephanus* text for other readings in about 25 places, showing that they did not consider *Erasmus, Beza, Stephanus*, or any other printed text the final authority.

According to *King James Version* proponent Edward Hills,

Sometimes the King James translators forsook the printed Greek text and united with the earlier English versions in following the *Latin Vulgate*.¹¹

Even the *Majority Text* and the *Textus Receptus* are *not* identical – Dan Wallace has counted 1,838 differences.¹² Even *King James Version* proponent Dean Burgon made this clear:

Once for all, we request it may be clearly understood that we do not, by any means, claim perfection for the *Received Text*. We entertain no extravagant notions on this subject. Again and again we shall have occasion to point out that the *Textus Receptus* needs correction.¹³

He further stated:

I am not defending the *Textus Receptus*: I am simply stating the fact of its existence. That it is without authority to bind, nay, that it calls for skillful revision in every part, is freely admitted ... I do not believe it to be absolutely identical with the true *Traditional Text*.¹⁴

POSTSCRIPT QUOTATIONS

King James – The Man

As “Defender of the Faith” of the state church, [a title given to King Henry VIII by the pope in 1521 and used by James], King James became the enemy of all believers who would not follow the official doctrines and practices of the state church. In 1614, Leonard Busher claimed that “his Majesty’s bishops and ministers ►

11. Edward Hills, *Believing Bible Study*, page 207.

12. Dan Wallace, *Some Second Thoughts on the Majority Text*, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 146; July-September 1989: 276.

13. John W. Burgon, *The Revision Revised*, page 21, footnote 2.

14. John W. Burgon, *The Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, pages 13, 15.

had been armed and weaponed with fire and sword and not with Scripture.”

Rick Norris
The Unbound Scripture,
2003, pages 58, 59



Whom should modern Christians believe concerning the character of King James? The two choices are: the Separatists, who lost all their earthly possessions and many of them their lives in opposing James; or modern “KJV-only” authors, who have a theological bias to prove.

Dr. Michael D. Sproul
God’s Word Preserved: A Defense of Historic Separatists Definitions and Beliefs,
2005, page 44



No prince was ever so much flattered who so little deserved it.

Daniel Neal
The History of the Puritans
1837, page 277



[King James was] undoubtedly one of the worst sort of monarchs.

Alexander McClure
Translators Revived
1855, page 196



[King James was] the rejected and most despicable sovereign that ever held an English scepter.

J.J. Goadby
Bye-Paths in Baptist History
1871, page 80

Admissions of King James Advocates

(What some authors defending the King James Version have actually written.)

The A.V. could be corrected in a number of passages

where the meaning is now obscured because of changes which three centuries have brought about in the meaning of English words, or where diligent study or recent discoveries have brought to light better readings.

David Otis Fuller
quoting Philip Mauro
True? or False?
1973, pages 101, 102



As the marginal notes indicate, the *King James* translators did not regard their work as perfect or inspired.

Admittedly the KJV is not ideally perfect. No translation can be.

Edward Hills
The KJV Defended, 1973, page 216.
Believing Bible Study, 1967, page 83



A version is that which is translated, or rendered from one language to another ... In the case of the Bible, it is the translation only that is subject to revision.

Everyone should know that the *King James Version* of the Bible is a translation, and not the original words given by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. ... There are a few mis-translations in the *King James English*.

J.J. Ray
God Wrote Only One Bible
1955, pages 30, 101, 102



Some of its words have, in the lapse of time, gone out of common use; some have suffered a gradual change of meaning.

Alexander McClure
Translator’s Revived
1855, page 235



Recommendations of Bible Versions and Scripture Study Helps

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

I am often asked to recommend a Bible version. Knowing that translations are just that – translations – and are the fallible works of men, there is no one single translation that I am able to suggest that is the “be-all and end-all” of English translations. Each believer must study the Scriptures for themselves to know what Father has said. We can't just trust what others have prepared for us. This goes for Bible translations as well.

God gave us the *Scriptures* in Hebrew and Greek. I personally try to avail myself of as *many* different English translations as I can, seeking the benefit of as much variety as possible from the study and research of others.

In consulting multiple translations I am looking mainly for two things: harmony, and that lone translation or two that offers something of a different testimony to the meaning of a particular Hebrew or Greek word.

This is where the spirit of the Bereans applies – searching these translations to see if they are true. With the many Hebrew and Greek tools (such as lexicons, dictionaries and other sources) that are available in our day, one doesn't need to have a particularly vast knowledge of these original languages to be able to verify a testimony to the harmony of translations, or to that lone translation.

Finally, my purpose is to examine these variations in word translations in their scriptural context; both the immediate one, as well as any possible remote ones (where the same Hebrew or Greek word is used, or where the same subject is handled). After all, it is the use of words in their scriptural context that ultimately determines their divine definition.

After years of Scripture investigation one begins to find that they can *rule out* certain Bible translations and study tools as being unfaithful, and unreliable, and thus unprofitable altogether. The key to an honest study of Scriptures, however, is the realization that *all* translations and language tools are of human origin, and are therefore subject to accompanying weaknesses, inconsistencies and errors. When we see them in their proper place they are greatly valuable. When we don't, they actually become a deterrent to our study and eventual understanding of God and His Word.

Through such a process of study I am able to be persuaded in my own heart and mind as to what the Scriptures are saying in a way that I can understand them in English, and share them with others. I hold these persuasions as truth, at least until such time from further study that may shed even greater light upon the Scriptures.

Along the lines of recommendations for Bible versions, I recently read the words of one who answered the question in a way that rang true with my own study and experience. I share these words with you here.

From time to time we receive letters from readers asking if

we can recommend a Bible which is both accurate and readable. Unfortunately such a request is not easy to meet. To obtain a version of verbal accuracy and also of the highest literary quality so as to make its reading a pleasure is probably more than one can expect from any human source.

We are often prone to forget that it is only God's original Word which is “inspired” or “God-breathed.” Although there are many Bibles in the world, no two of them are identical. When sincere Christians speak of their love for the Bible, they are sometimes unaware that their devotion is only to one or another of many versions of Scripture which we are still very fortunate to have.

To understand and enjoy Scripture, we need all the help we can get; most of all, we need the Spirit to lead us into all truth. Scholarship alone is not sufficient, yet mental indolence is a great hindrance. Nothing good comes easy, nor is it so intended.

It may be helpful to our readers if we mention here those sources from which we compile our own studies.

We greatly appreciate E.W. Bullinger's *Companion Bible* with its excellent notes. Both for readability and accuracy we like Rotherham's Emphasized Version. For concordant use of words and reference to facsimiles of the Greek, we find the *Concordant Version* invaluable, meaning here also its enlightening notes, lexicon and Keyword Concordance. Though we usually avoid the many liberal paraphrases, we may occasionally find that a helpful point in the literal rendering of some word or phrase by an individual scholar is often helpful. Like the Bereans, we need to search the Scriptures daily. Though the Word of God is complete, it is still true that “God hath yet more light and truth to break forth from His Word” as His Spirit continually illuminates places formerly dark. Though we have not yet an infallible version, we do have an infallible God.¹

With these words I concur.

After many years of private study, my personal recommendations as a *baseline* of essential translations and study aids would be:

ESSENTIAL TRANSLATIONS:

Companion Bible
Concordant Literal Translation
Rotherham's Literal Translation
Young's Literal Translation

ESSENTIAL REFERENCE WORKS:

Bullinger's *Critical Greek Lexicon*

1. Cecil J. Blay, *Treasures of Truth*, No. 10, August-September 1973.

Bullinger's *Figures of Speech*
Concordant Commentary on the NT
Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

You may already have some of these works. It may take you some time to acquire all of them; but they will be the investment of a lifetime. Maybe they could be birthday present suggestions for yourself to family members and friends who are inquiring as to what to get for you.

If you are looking for a thorough, detailed presentation on how to go about the study of the Scriptures, I would highly

recommend:

Bullinger's *How To Enjoy the Bible*
Beyond these basic essentials, some of my recommendations, as money allows, would be in obtaining the following:

Bullinger's *Companion Bible Appendixes*
Emphatic Diaglott
Thayer's Greek Lexicon
Vine's Expository Dictionary
Webster's 1828 American Dictionary
Welch's Alphabetical Analysis (10 Volumes)

Bibles



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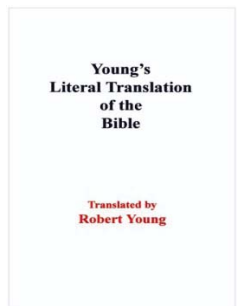
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