

THE ARCHAIC WORDS OF GOD

A CONSIDERATION OF OLD-FASHIONED BIBLE WORDS

"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers."

~ 2 Timothy 2:14

1. "The King James Bible has Archaic Words"

- a. The most popular protest (but they doth protest too much, methinks)
- b. Archaic ~*def.* Antiquated, ancient; not in common use; old-fashioned.
- c. The Bible itself is archaic! (2000 yr inspired, 413 yr KJ) Every Bible has archaisms.
- d. It is effective to deter those in fashion and the unlearned (children)
- e. *"How many are there?"* Far fewer than you might think (~200 out of 6000)
- f. Archaic words are not useless, unused, inferior, unheard of, too hard
- g. The bigger problem is not archaic words, but the cultural response to them.
 - i. Archaic words are treated like prayer in schools or the word 'sin' in media.
 - ii. We should not immediately think to remove archaic words, but respect them.

2. Words of Unfamiliar Grammar

- a. The majority are words used to give number, case, perspective, tense, mood, metre
- b. Ye, thou, thee, thy/thine indicate number, subject/object, possession – Luke 5:24
- c. Same with "thou art" / "ye be" and "thou dost" / "he doth", -est (2nd person) -eth (3rd)
- d. These can still be recognized: "Where are you, Romeo", "My Country Tis of thee"

3. Words that are old (old-fashioned words)

- a. Archaic words also in Dickens, Darwin, Jane Austen, Constitution, Kierkegaard, Menken
- b. These words are not changed out of respect for the 'dead' authors (so, why the Bible?)
- c. Old words can be better than modern words, sometimes no modern equivalent.
- d. Sometimes old words can be popular: fair, howbeit, nonplussed, pulchritudinous.
- e. Tolkien, CS Lewis, Harry Potter all create fans of old words, why not the Bible?
- f. Every Bible has archaisms: cubit, breastplate, scroll, manger, holy, Lord
- g. 20th c. Bibles replace coat with tunic, espoused with pledged, adamant with emery.

4. Words that are obsolete

- a. An insult to the 2nd most popular Bible sold, most popularly studied, oldest available.
- b. If the words are not in use, it is because people are not using the Bible (then what?)
- c. How do keep a word from being obsolete? Use it - Acts 15:21, Mark 7:11, 2 Tim 2:2
- d. Job 6:6 "white of an egg" (KJ) "slime of the purslane" (RSV) "juice of the mallow" (ESV)
- e. Dictionaries have archaic and obsolete words. Why? For people's use, reference, help.

5. Words hard to be understood

- a. Join the club with the apostle Peter - 2 Peter 3:16
- b. Shouldn't we use easy words? 1 Cor 14:9 We should use God's words in their language
- c. There are not only hard words, there are hard doctrines, ideas.
- d. What if words are misused? Don't blame the victims (words) for their abuse.
- e. The response to ignorance is education, not removal of words (medicine, Latin, Greek)

6. How to Respond to Archaism

- a. Learn! We make reference books this purpose: Websters, OED, study helps – Prov 1:2
- b. Anyone protesting archaism is calling you simpleton, numskull, dolt, dimwit, cretin
- c. When did learning more vocabulary become something to condemn?
- d. Defining words should be normal practice in teaching; Greeking/retranslating should not
- e. "Archaic!" is striving about words to no profit, but to subvert the hearer – 2 Tim 2:14
- f. Archaic words are only a problem for the unlearned and dull of hearing – Heb 5:11-12
- g. Archaic sound of the KJ gives it a sound unlike any other, the Bible is not a blog.
- h. Archaic words can be understood by adults in the room, don't put the kids in charge.
- i. You won't enjoy out of fashion KJ words, until you are comfortable being out of fashion.
 - i. Farmers, bankers, chefs, and judges are always out of fashion, why can't we?
- j. We need the Bible in every language, not watered down for every illiterate. (KJ literacy)
- k. More important than 'archaic' words in Bible translations are changed/missing words.