

Is the 1611 King James Version the Only Correct Translation?

The Bible is [God's inerrant Word](#). "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). The Holy Spirit supernaturally inspired the prophets to record God's words in the original manuscripts. These [manuscripts were copied](#) over the centuries and we no longer have the original documents. The KJV is not the original Word of God but is a translation of the copies they had available in 1611.

Some people believe the 1611 King James Version (KJV) is the only true Bible because they believe it is an inspired *translation*, although there's no proof for this. This theory is called King James Only (KJO) and teaches that all other Bible versions are corrupt. (Was there a Bible before 1611?)

I don't have a problem if a brother or sister in Christ prefers to read the KJV—if they can understand it. I do have a problem if someone tells me that I'm a heretic if I read other Bible versions.

I have a very difficult time reading and understanding the outdated language of the KJV. Today, we don't use the words "thee" "thou" "ye" "goest" "whiter" "wilt" "verily" "hath" "cometh" "saith" "howbeit" and many other words. If it's hard for the average person who knows nothing about the Bible to understand the KJV. It's for this reason that Bible scholars have [translated newer versions of the Bible](#) using words people can understand.

In 1982, Bible scholars took the KJV and updated the outdated words ("you" instead of "ye," "has" instead of "hath," etc.) and named it the New King James Version (NKJV). This was a brilliant idea and you'd think that it would solve the KJV controversy. I like reading the NKJV because I can understand it. However, many KJO people call the NKJV a corrupt translation because they changed the outdated words! Here are some problems with the idea that the 1611 KJV is the only correct translation.

Problem #1. The King James Version Bible today isn't the same as the 1611 Version.

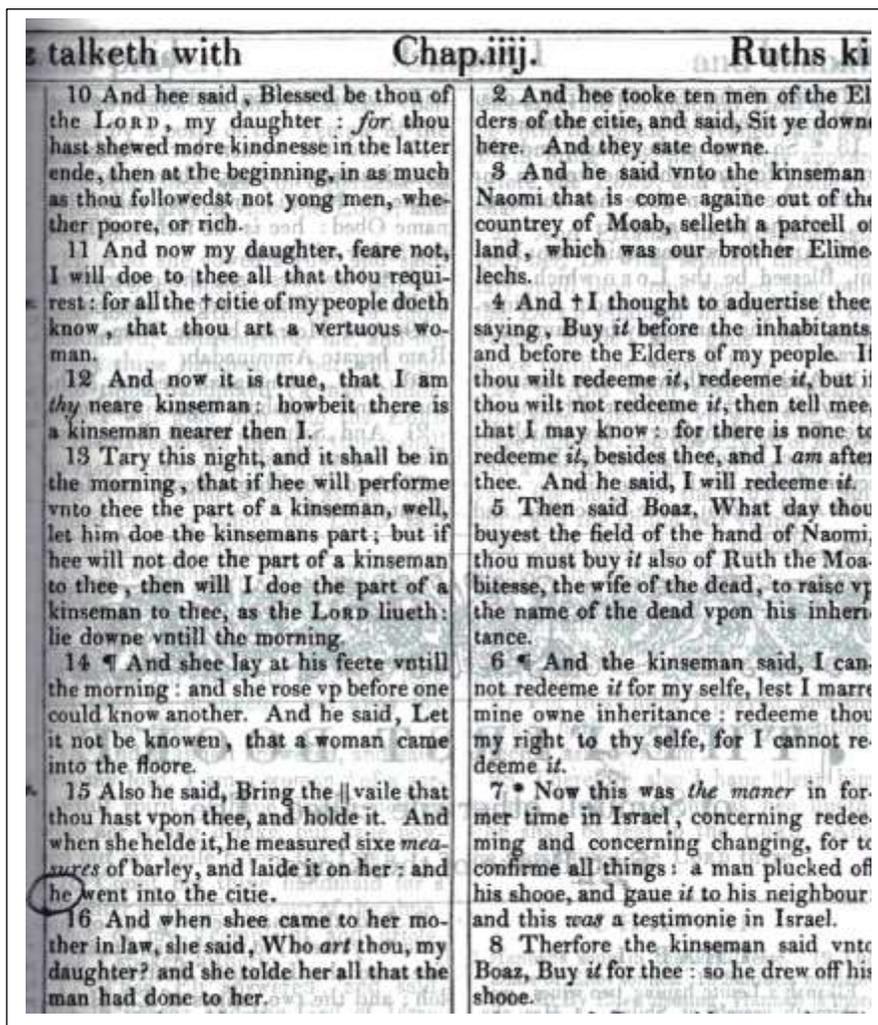
People who claim the 1611 King James is the only true Bible fail to realize that the KJV they use today isn't the 1611 Version. It's the 1769 edition.

The 1611 King James Version

This is a copy of the 1611 KJV from the book of Ruth. Notice that it isn't like the KJV we have today.

In Ruth 3:10, the words "hee" "kindnesse" "ende" "yong" and "poore" are different from today's KJV. That's 5 words in just one verse.

In Ruth 3:15 at the end of the verse it says "he went into the citie." This was a mistake in translation and was later changed to "she" in other editions of the KJV.



Problem #2. If the 1611 version was perfect, then why did future editions make changes?

- The 2nd edition in 1613 made over 400 changes from the original printing.
- Revisions to the text were made in 1613, 1616, 1629, 1638, 1644, 1664, 1701, 1744, 1762, and 1769. Modern KJVs come from the 1769 revision and not the original 1611 edition.
- The 1611 version made mistakes. Ruth 3:15 in the 1st edition read: “*he* went into the city.” It was later changed to “*she*.”
- “Jesus” and “Joshua” are the same in Greek, Ἰησοῦς and the context determines the correct name. In Hebrews 4 and Acts 7, the KJV wrongly translated it “Jesus” when the context shows it should have been translated “Joshua.”

Hebrews 4:8 (NASB) says, “For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.” The KJV wrongly translates this “Jesus.” The same mistake is found in Acts 7:45, using the name Jesus instead of Joshua.

The newer translations such as the New American Standard Bible (NASB) have corrected this translation error by using “Joshua.”

Problem #3. The King James Version cannot be translated into other languages.

There is no “KJV” for any other language. If the KJV is the only perfect translation, it cannot be translated into other languages because then it wouldn’t be perfect. People in foreign countries would have to learn King James English in order to read the Bible.

It’s wise to remember that God inspired the original manuscripts in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament), and not in English. This is why we can go back to Greek and Hebrew to translate the Bible into other languages. The King James Version is itself a translation and not the original manuscript.

Problem #4. The King James translators added italicized words that aren’t in the Greek and Hebrew.

The italicized words were added by the translators to give clarity of thought and weren’t in the manuscripts themselves.

Which translation do I recommend? I prefer the New American Standard Bible because it accurately translates the Greek and Hebrew words into English and it’s easy to understand. I also read the New King James Version, Holman Christian Standard Bible, and the New International Version.

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