

CHAPTER 5

The “King James Only” Controversy

A very real but sad truism regarding the church of today is that we may be knowledgeable about the Bible but we are mainly ignorant about the text of the Bible. Why are there different translations? Why are there controversies over specific words (or the lack thereof)? Why are there controversies over entire passages, such as the ending of Mark? Why does my pastor’s Bible read differently or “omit” a verse? Ignorance in areas such as this are the perfect breeding ground for controversy and emotional damage.

The “King James Only” movement, by its very nature, brings disruption and contention right into the pews. People, including pastors, are often drawn unnecessarily into heated and passionate arguments over “God’s one true Bible.” Grand conspiracy theories are tossed about as factual historical statements. Time that should be spent in ministry are wasted on this intramural debate over an issue whose foundation is built on ignorance of history and Bible transmission, sensationalism, emotionalism, tradition and preference for a seventeenth-century Anglican translation of the Bible.

Responsibility for the destruction of many churches lay directly at the feet of the KJV Only camp. Churches have split as the proponents of this falsehood have brought fear and defensiveness into the body of Christ.

The KJV Only controversy feeds on ignorance. Therefore, the solution to the turmoil is education. We discuss this knowing controversy can ensue. But discuss it we must in order that peace and unity may abound. This peace is not to be found at the cost of compromise but from a single-minded devotion to the things of God. Our relationship with Christ is not based on a particular Bible translation. It must be believed that men and women had true and faithful and meaningful relationships with God through Christ for fifteen hundred years before Robert Barker printed that first page in 1611. You can live a fruitful and joyfully blessed life without ever opening a King James Bible.¹

Of course, some feel it always helps to have a little levity to lighten such an emotion-laden controversy. Some “equal opportunity offender” came up with this list of explanations for the various Bible translation acronyms:

- NIV – Non-Inspired Version
- TNIV – Totally Non-Inspired Version
- NASB – Not Always the Same as Before (ie. Copyright 1960, 1971, 1977, 1995)
- ESV – Extremely Similar Version
- NLT – Non Literal Translation
- NWT – Not Witnessing to the Truth (Jehovah’s Witness’ Bible)
- CEV – Common Elementary Version (4th grade reading level)
- TEV – Totally Elementary Version (3rd grade reading level)
- NRSV – ‘Nother Ridiculously Similar Version
- RSV– Retro Sounding Version (thee & thou) or Removed Sacred Virgin (see IS. 7:14)
- NAB – Not All is Biblical (Roman Catholic Bible containing the Apocrypha)
- HCSB – Heavily Controlled by Southern Baptists
- NKJV – Nearly the King James Version or Not the King James
- KJB – Kingly Jargon Bible
- AV – Antiquated Version or Anglican Version

¹ Please understand that this author does not desire to “bash” the KJV or to get everyone to read his favorite version. I do not want you to throw away your KJV but encourage you to keep reading and studying it. It is a good translation (although I do not believe it is the BEST translation). This chapter is not against the KJV but against **KJV ONLYISM!**

The King James Only Movement

Movements defy exact definition. Just as you can't really get a handle on the "New Age Movement," you also will have a hard time defining a group involved in this controversy. James White defines the various positions found within this movement:²

1. **Group 1: "I Like the KJV Best"** – Those in this group believe the KJV is the best English translation available today. This belief might be based on the rhythmic beauty of the text or its historical importance or any number of factors. This group, however, would not deny the possibility of a better translation being made.
2. **Group 2: "The Textual Argument"** – This large group is made of people from several camps, joined by their common belief that the underlying Greek and Hebrew texts used by the King James translators are superior to all other original language manuscripts. This group would not go as far as to say the manuscripts used are *inspired* but are the most accurate. One subgroup in this group, who feel the Greek texts used by the KJV translators is superior, is the "Majority Text" advocate. This viewpoint asserts that the best reading should be that which is supported by the majority of all Greek manuscripts. However, it is understood that the Majority Text differs in several places from the actual Greek text used in the assembling of the King James Bible. That text is discussed next.
3. **Group 3: "The Received Text (Textus Receptus) Only"** – This group would argue that the "TR" has either been supernaturally preserved over time or even inspired and inerrant. They would argue the same for the Hebrew text used to translate the Old Testament. This group would not *necessarily* argue that the KJV is also inerrant and would leave open the possibility that a better translation could come as long as the translators used the same Greek text as the KJV translators.
4. **Group #4: The Inspired KJV ONLY** – Most KJVO advocates would fall into this group. They believe that the KJV itself, as an English translation, is inspired and therefore inerrant. The affirmation you hear from this group is found in the following equation:

The King James Version ALONE = The Word of God ALONE

It is extremely important to realize that this is the *starting point* in the thinking of most KJV Only believers. It is this belief that gives so much "heat" instead of "light" in this controversy. In the minds of the people of this group, an "attack" on the KJV is an attack on the very Word of God. To use another version is to "deny" and "reject" the "real" Bible.

Furthermore, it must be recognized that once the above equation is firmly entrenched in one's mind, then all the remaining arguments fall into place. The most popular argument is to list verse after verse after verse from the KJV and then "reveal" how the modern versions have been corrupted because they change or omit words or entire verses. It seemingly never crosses the mind of the person making these charges that he or she should be concerned about making the KJV as the starting point and standard by which all other translations are measured. It is perfectly logical and reasonable to ask "Why should the KJV be the standard?" The only answer is found in the above equation. This is circular logic at its best (or worst).

5. **Group #5: "The KJV as New Revelation"** – This is the most radical of the five positions. They make mention of the original texts and the translation process but do not rely on such things. This group believes that God supernaturally inspired the KJV in such a way that the English text itself is inerrant revelation from God. Basically, God "re-inspired" the Bible between 1604 and 1611. This group would go so far as to say that when the KJV differs from the original Greek and Hebrew, then the original languages are in error and must submit to the English. Anyone who opposes the thoughts of this group is quickly labeled as "liberal" or a "Bible hater" or "heretic." It is next to impossible to reason with such a person because their arguments are not based on reason or fact or even logic but on emotion-driven ignorance!

² James White, *The King James Controversy*, 1.

Prominent KJV Only Authors

The proponents of this view are voluminous in their writing and almost omnipresent in their reach. Newsletters and websites and books abound. Sadly, the works are characterized by misquotations and character slander and outright ridiculous assertions, especially in the disturbing rants of Peter Ruckman and Texe Marrs.

Perhaps the most extreme is Gail Riplinger, home economist, interior decorator and author of *New Age Bible Versions*. The book lists the author as “G.A. Riplinger” and the author says that the initials stand for “God And Riplinger” because God “gave” the material in the book to her.

On page 232 of her book, we are warned against the letter “s.” Riplinger writes, “Watch out for the letter ‘s’ - sin, Satan, Sodom, Saul (had to be changed to Paul). The added ‘s’ here is the hiss of the serpent.” Sadly, she doesn’t see that such inane argumentation would lead us to abandon such terms as salvation, Savior, sanctification and especially *SCRIPTURE!*

Her “wackiest” work, however, is found in her “acrostic algebra,” also give “by God.” On page 149, Mrs. Riplinger demonstrates how the abbreviations for the New American Standard Version and the New International Version add up to the word "sin" when the Authorized Version is taken away. This can be illustrated below (again, remember that she claims that God told her how to work this system, which is also her explanation for using AV instead of KJV and NASV instead of NASB! After all, she proclaims, “How could something so “profound” be a coincidence?!”):

Step 1 :	(NASV - NIV) - AV = X
Step 2:	(NASV - NIV) - AV = X
Step 3:	(ASI + NV) - AV = X
Step 4:	ASI + NV - AV = X
Step 5:	SIN = X

Riplinger writes that “Acrostic algebra reveals the ashy residue on which the NIV and NASV rest. When you shake down the ‘Lite’ (NASV) and the ... (NIV), you find some heresies which are common to both (like their common letters ‘N’ and ‘V’, as shown in Step 2).”

Not only is such argumentation utterly without merit, but it is interesting to note that throughout the rest of the book Mrs. Riplinger abbreviates the New American Standard Bible as NASB, but solely for the purpose of this trip into "acrostic algebra," she changes to the NASV, an abbreviation used nowhere else in the book. Indeed, over and over and over again the arguments that are put forward could easily be turned around and used against the KJV and Mrs. Riplinger's position. The use of such argumentation should warn the reader that all is not well in *New Age Bible Versions!* What is mind-boggling to me is that there are some people who accept this as scholarship and “irrefutable evidence.”

To reveal just how silly and juvenile this reasoning is, someone used seven (God’s perfect number) versions to develop a pseudo-argument that the KJV is not “God’s tool.” All you need are Cunard’s Authorized (CA), King James II (KJ2), Heyman’s Epistles (HE), Revised English Bible (REB), New International Version (NIV), New American Standard Bible (NASB) and Barclay’s New Testament (BNT). When you run this list through the algebraic sifter, you get the following:

$$(CA - KJ2 - HE - REB - NIV - NASB - BNT) - (KJV)$$

If you omit all the letters they have in common, you’re left with this:

$$(C K J H R I V S T) - (KJV)$$

When you omit all they have in common (which are only K, J, and V, thereby removing the KJV from the equation), you are left with:

C H R I S T!

Using Riplinger's logic, these seven versions must be from God and the KJV is not! This illustrates the total lunacy of Riplinger's argument.

It is my belief that the use of a particular English translation is a matter of Christian freedom and personal choice. Many factors should go into your decisions, such as using a more formal, literal translation or a more dynamic, free-flowing translation. But one factor that should never influence your choice is intimidation and fear. Fellowship and acceptance should never be determined by the Bible you hold in your hand.

Translations Controversies in History

It is fair to say that KJVO individuals are not interested in church history. There are exceptions, of course. If everyone took the time to look at the history of the Bible, they would be amazed to see that the same arguments used today against modern versions have been used before.

- 1) **Jerome and Augustine** – By the fourth century, the Septuagint had ascended to the place of “Scripture.” The Septuagint (or LXX) is a Greek translation of the Old Testament. Many Christians believe the LXX to be an inspired translation. It was the only Bible many ever knew. However, in the late 300s and early 400s, Jerome provided a fresh translation that we call the Latin Vulgate. He did not translate the Greek LXX but went back to the original Hebrew language. His new work differed in many places, which caused quite a stir. One such place was in Jonah, where the LXX used “gourd” to speak of the plant Jonah used for shade, while Jerome used “castor-oil plant.” When this passage was read in Carthage, a riot nearly occurred. Augustine was bishop and he wrote Jerome in AD 405 saying,

My only reason for objecting to the public reading of your translation from the Hebrew in our churches was, lest, bringing forward anything which was, as it were, new and opposed to the authority of the Septuagint version, we should trouble by serious cause of offense the flocks of Christ, whose ears and hearts have become accustomed to listen to that version to which the seal of approbation was given by the apostles themselves.³

It is important to note here that Augustine did not object to the *inaccuracy* of Jerome's translation but to the *unfamiliarity* of it. He based his objection purely on tradition. The Septuagint was “the standard” and the Vulgate dared to be different from this appointed standard. Sound familiar??? The crowds in Carthage should have asked “Is this different translation by Jerome more faithful to what is found in the book of Jonah?” before they decided to riot. The same should be said against the KJV Only group before they cast serious aspersions against all who use modern versions!

- 2) **Erasmus and the Vulgate** – Ironically, over the next 1100 years, Jerome's Vulgate slowly but surely became the “standard” by which all other Bibles would be gauged. By the early 1500s, the Vulgate was “the Bible.” It held the exact same position in the minds of Christians as the Septuagint had held a millennium before. Just as Jerome himself ruffled feathers with his new translation, an even newer translation would do the same. Desiderius Erasmus lived by the motto of *ad fontes*, which is Latin for “to the sources.” He wanted to go directly to the source of Scripture. He was influenced in this endeavor by Lorenzo Valla. Valla discovered discrepancies between Jerome's Vulgate and quotes from the Vulgate in Jerome's commentaries. He reasoned that the commentaries were seldom read and therefore seldom copied. This led him to think that the commentaries would be less likely to suffer changes due to constant human copying. Valla produced a “corrected” version on the Vulgate which turned out to be much closer to Jerome's original work. This was dangerous work since he was tampering with “God's Word.” *Again, sound familiar?*

Years after Valla's death, Erasmus found his notes and was so impressed he had them published. Soon, Erasmus set out to discover the original sources and produce a Greek New Testament. He

³ Letter LXXXII in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Series I (Eerdmans: 1983), I:361.

eventually produced this work, which was a bi-lingual book. Each page had two columns: one was a new Latin translation of his own doing and the other one was Greek. He “dared” to change the Latin text!

It is hard to escape the irony. Jerome was castigated for changing the Word of God as found in the Septuagint. One thousand years later, Erasmus was castigated for changing the Word of God as found in Jerome’s Vulgate. Today, modern translators are castigated for changing the Word of God as found in the King James Version, which used a later edition of Erasmus’ text to translate the King James. This only makes me think that it won’t be long before some are castigated for daring to change the Word of God as it is found in the New International Version. *Indeed, it probably won’t be long before a book must be written to answer the charges of the “NIV Only” groups!*

The Controversy over Modern Bible Versions

The controversy we find ourselves in stems almost completely from just two areas of study. Unfortunately, most today confuse these two issues so it is important to define them. These two issues are TRANSLATIONAL DISPUTES and TEXTUAL DISPUTES.

Translational Disputes

Translational disputes are disagreements over how to properly translate what was written by the original authors in another language. The VAST MAJORITY of the biblical text is without question when it comes to textual accuracy. That is to say that we KNOW beyond a shadow of a doubt what was originally written by the biblical authors in about 99% of the Bible. There is some question in the remaining 1% but that 1% does not occur with any major point of doctrine and usually has to do with articles (such as “a” or “the”).

Translating from one language to another is not a simple task. You can’t simply look at a Greek or Hebrew word and “assign” an English (or any other language’s) word to it. In translating, you have to consider vocabulary, grammar and syntax of both the original language and the language into which you are translating. The major difference is in how literal a translation is and it must be noted that sometimes, a literal word-for-word translation is not the best way to go.

Let’s look at modern examples. The French have a saying that goes “*j’ai le cafard.*” The most literal translation is “I have the cockroach.” This makes NO sense to us until you discover the true meaning of this phrase, which is “I am depressed.” It is the equivalent to the American “I am blue.”

The French also have a saying that is literally translated as “to have mustard up the nose.” This makes no sense until you compare our equally confusing expression, “to be hot under the collar.”

Also, how do you think foreign languages translate our phrase, “I have a frog in my throat.”

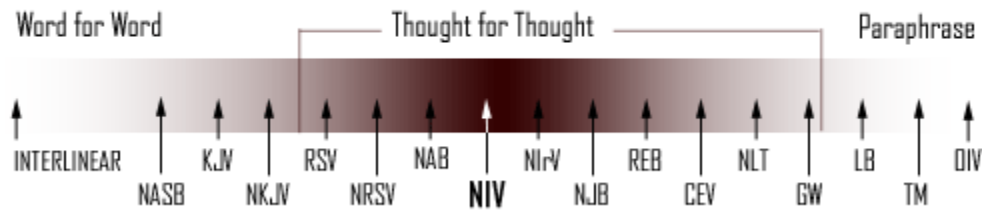
Formal or Dynamic Equivalency

This introduces us to the concepts of formal equivalency and dynamic equivalency. Formal equivalency is the method of translating that gives as *literal* a translation as possible. The KJV and today’s New American Standard Bible try to utilize this method as much as possible. This perspective seeks a *word-for-word* translation.

Dynamic equivalency seeks to translate the *meaning* from one language to another, even if that means sacrificing a word-for-word translation. In our example above, “I have the cockroach” is the formal equivalent and “I am depressed” is the dynamic equivalent. You, as a translator, must decide which route you wish to take.

The following chart will be helpful:

English Bible Translation Comparison



Some examples are helpful. In the Old Testament, we read in the Hebrew that “God’s nostrils became enlarged.” What in the world does that mean? It is a Hebrew idiom that means that God became angry! Aren’t you glad our Bibles aren’t strictly literal?

In Matthew 1:18, the Greek reads that “Mary was having it in the belly.” This coarse language is better translated “Mary was pregnant” or “Mary was with child.”

Another passage that plainly illustrates the difference (and benefits) of translating dynamically at the proper times can be found in Luke 9:44. In the KJV and NASB, Jesus says “Let these sayings (words) sink down into your ears.” The NIV translate that phrase as “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you.” Which is accurate? Both are – one is accurate literally and the other is accurate in meaning.

The KJV also contains passages that are translated loosely. A classic example is in the many places where we read “God forbid” in passages such as Romans 6:2 and 7:7 and many more. But the original has neither “God” nor “forbid.” Literally, it says, “May it never be!” (as most modern translations render it!)

It also must be understood that NO translation is purely formal. All contain dynamic translations in places. A completely literal translation would make no sense at all. We also note that dynamic translations also use formal equivalency in places. It would seem that a proper balance between the two would lead to the best translation. There seems to be no good reason to insist upon having words “sink into ears” when “listen carefully” does a much better job at conveying the intention of Jesus’ words to His disciples.

However, it must also be noted that an attempt to make the Bible “easier to read” can sometimes lead to confusion. An example of this is the NIV’s constant translation of the term “flesh” in Paul’s epistles as “sinful nature.” Even though the NIV discusses this and puts “flesh” in the footnotes, this translation is more of an interpretation and one that does not carry the full weight of Paul’s arguments.

There are some translational differences that must be discussed in more detail.

Rise Early or Do Continually?

Eleven times in Jeremiah, he uses the term “to rise up early” and do “something.” The KJV translators chose to translate this literally, giving us passages such as Jeremiah 7:13 “And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not.” What does this mean? Did Israel not hear because it was sleeping in?

The same meaning is derived in Jeremiah 29:19, which says, “Because they have not hearkened to my words, saith the LORD, which I sent unto them by my servants the prophets, rising up early and sending them; but ye would not hear, saith the LORD.”

This is a Hebrew idiom that means “to do something *continually*.” Now, we can understand these passages. God judged them because they did not listen to His continual speaking. The prophets were sent continually and Israel still would not listen.

Only Begotten Son or Unique Son?

Modern versions are roundly criticized for daring to change “only begotten” into “unique” in passages such as John 3:16. In this most familiar of all verses, we all grew up quoting “His only begotten Son.” Modern versions will say “Only” or “unique” or “one and only.” In doing so, KJV Onlyists will claim that the

modern versions are denying the virgin birth of Christ. Besides the point that the doctrine of the virgin birth does not hinge on only this singular verse, evidence points that the modern translations are more accurate.

Older translations have traditionally understood the Greek word underlying the phrase (*monogenes*) to be a compound word formed from *monos* (only) and *gennao* (beget). This led Jerome to use the Latin phrase *unigenitus* in his Latin translation, which was picked up centuries later. This has caused great misunderstanding through the centuries since the Son did not have an origin and was not created (begotten) by the Father. Jesus Himself is an eternal being.

It is best to understand the term to instead be a compound from *monos* (only) and *genos* (kind).⁴ This word means “the only one of its kind.” This translation is more consistent with John’s use of the word in other locations.

Furthermore, support for this word can be found in Hebrews 11:17, where Isaac is called Abraham’s *monogenes* in the KJV. The KJV says Isaac is Abraham’s “only begotten son” and the NIV says Isaac is Abraham’s “one and only son.” Of course, both of these translations are lacking because we know that Isaac is not Abraham’s only begotten son, as he fathered Ishmael and other sons through Keturah. However, Isaac was the only one of his kind – the child of promise. The same is said with believers and Jesus: there are many children of God (John 1:12-13) but only one unique Son of God.

Hell or Hades?

The word “hell” appears 54 times in the KJV (31 times in the Old Testament and 23 times in the New Testament). In each of the OT passages, the translated word is *sheol*. In the NT, two words are translated as “hell”: *hades* and *gehenna*. *Hades* is translated as “hell” ten times and *gehenna* is translated as “hell” twelve times.⁵

In the OT, the word *sheol* is best translated by the Greek term *hades*, both of which mean “realm of the dead.” This can refer to the grave or the place of departed spirits (such as in Luke 14:9-15). KJV Onlyists will often rail against modern translations for using the term “grave” but even the KJV does at times (Genesis 37:35).

The problem comes from the fact that neither *sheol* nor *hades* are the equivalent of *gehenna* (hell). This is seen quite plainly in Revelation 20:13-14 where death and *hades* are thrown into the lake of fire. What is the lake of fire if it is not hell? And furthermore, if *hades* equals hell, how can you throw hell into hell? In this passage, we see the realm of the dead being differentiated from the lake of fire itself.

Strain At or Strain Out?

In Matthew 23:24, the KJV has “strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.” All modern versions have “strain out a gnat and swallow a camel.” The actual Greek is “strain out.” In the least, this illustrates that no version is infallible.

Lucifer or Morning Star?

The influence of our traditions is most ably illustrated in Isaiah 14:12. In this passage, the KJV speaks of a being that has fallen from heaven and calls him by the name “Lucifer.” The NIV and NASB refer to the being as “star of the morning” or “morning star.” Of course, KJV Onlyists immediately go to Revelation 22:16 where Jesus is referred to as the Morning Star and the claim is made the modern versions equate Jesus with Satan. Is this accurate?

The term “Lucifer” came into existence in the pages of Jerome’s Latin Vulgate. The fact that the Vulgate reigned unchallenged for 1100 years reveals the staying power of this word. Yet the question remains, “Why should I believe that Jerome was verbally inspired to insert this term at this point?”

⁴ Like the Latin phrase *genus*, with which we are all familiar through our high school biology classes.

⁵ The other remaining translated word is *tartarus* in 2 Peter 2:4.

KJV Onlyists like to “preach” that modern versions have “removed the devil from the Bible” since they are in league with Satan himself. Yet, how do you answer all the other instances in Scripture where words such as Satan, the devil, the old serpent, the accuser and others appear again and again.

The standard lexicon (Brown, Driver and Briggs) states that this proper translation is “shining one” or “star of the morning.”

As for the title “Morning Star” being “shared” by Satan and Christ, it takes someone who cares nothing or knows nothing about context to make that illogical leap. The person in Isaiah 14 is under judgment and the wrath of God. Further, aren’t the terms in Isaiah 14 sarcastic in nature? Didn’t this person who is tossed from heaven claim lofty titles that were inappropriate for him? Elsewhere the Scriptures speak of his “pomp” and inward boasting in verses 11 and 13. This term is more of a taunt than a descriptive title.

A Root or The Root?

A familiar passage in I Timothy 6:10 tells us that the love of money is either “the root of all evil” or “a root of all kinds of evil.” Which is it? The word for “root” does not have an article before it in the original Greek. Therefore, the more literal rendering would be “a root.” Paul is definitely not trying to teach Timothy that the love of money is the ONLY origin or source of evil in this world. Literally, the Greek reads “of all the evils” and is plural. Obviously, the love of money does not explain every evil act in this world, such as rape or dishonoring your parents or using blasphemous language.

The Deity of Christ

Often in examining the KJVO issue, you will see tables like the following that attempt to show that the modern versions “remove” the name Jesus and replacing it with a pronoun like “he” or “him.” These versions are then considered “perversions.” Some KJV Onlyists go as far as saying that Satan is responsible for these removals of the name of Jesus because Satan hates that name. Is this thinking correct and is it consistent with itself?

The following table is complete, comparing all verses in the KJV that have "Jesus" where the corresponding verse in the NIV does not have "Jesus" in the verse:

<i>Scripture Reference</i>	<i>KJV</i>	<i>NIV</i>
Matt 9:28, Matt 13:36, Matt 17:20, Matt 17:22, Matt 18:2, Matt 24:2, Mark 5:13, Mark 7:27, Mark 11:14, Mark 14:18, Luke 7:22, John 4:16, John 4:46, John 8:20, John 9:1, John 11:14, John 11:39, John 20:15, John 21:5	Jesus	he
2 Cor 4:11	Jesus	his
Matt 8:29	Jesus , thou Son of God	Son of God
Matt 16:20	Jesus the Christ	the Christ
Romans 15:8, 2 Cor 4:6, 2 Cor 5:18	Jesus Christ	Christ
Col 1:28, Philemon 1:6, 1 Pet 5:10, 1 Pet 5:14	Christ Jesus	Christ
Luke 7:19, Luke 10:39, Luke 10:41	Jesus	the Lord
Acts 19:10, 1 Cor 5:5	Lord Jesus	Lord
Rom 16:18	Lord Jesus Christ	Lord Christ
1 Cor 16:22, 2 Tim 4:22	Lord Jesus Christ	Lord
John 19:38	the body of Jesus	the body
Acts 3:26	Son Jesus	servant
Rom 1:3	Son Jesus Christ our Lord	Son

Acts 7:45, Heb 4:8	Jesus	Joshua
Acts 8:37, Romans 16:24, Col 1:2	Jesus	[not present, but it is in the footnote]
John 21:21, Acts 9:29, Gal 6:15, Eph 3:9, Eph 3:14	Jesus	[not present]

Such a table is used to “shock” and “alarm” the ignorant reader or listener. It is very effective but also extremely misleading. This is often a TEXTUAL ISSUE (which we will discuss later) but sometimes it is merely a matter of translation.

The question at hand, however, is this: Does this table of verses “prove” that the modern NIV denies the deity of Christ and made a conscious effort to “remove Christ” from the Bible?

If you turn the tables, you will discover the answer is a definite “No!” Consider the following chart where the name “Jesus” appears in the NIV and yet does NOT appear in the KJV:

<i>Scripture Reference(s)</i>	<i>KJV</i>	<i>NIV</i>
Matt 4:4, Matt 4:19, Matt 4:21, Matt 8:24, Matt 9:1, Matt 11:20, Matt 12:22, Matt 12:46, Matt 13:24, Matt 15:3, Matt 15:10, Matt 15:23, 39, Matt 16:4, 23, Matt 19:8, Matt 19:11, Matt 19:17, Matt 20:23, Matt 21:10, Matt 21:23, Matt 22:34, Matt 24:3, Matt 26:20, Matt 26:23, Matt 26:25, Matt 27:3, Matt 27:14, Mark 1:10, Mark 1:16, Mark 1:21, Mark 1:35, Mark 1:38, Mark 1:43, Mark 2:4, Mark 2:13, Mark 2:14, Mark 2:23, Mark 3:3, Mark 3:4, Mark 3:13, Mark 3:23, Mark 4:1, Mark 4:9, Mark 4:13, Mark 4:33, Mark 4:28, Mark 5:2, Mark 5:8, Mark 5:9, Mark 5:18, Mark 5:32, Mark 5:35, Mark 5:38, Mark 6:1, Mark 6:6, Mark 6:39, Mark 6:45, Mark 7:14, Mark 7:24, Mark 7:31, Mark 7:33, Mark 7:36, Mark 8:5, Mark 8:15, Mark 8:23, Mark 8:25, Mark 8:26, Mark 8:30, Mark 8:33, Mark 9:9, Mark 9:12, Mark 9:19, Mark 9:21, Mark 9:28, Mark 9:30, Mark 9:35, Mark 10:1, Mark 10:17, Mark 10:46, Mark 11:1, Mark 11:12, Mark 11:27, Mark 12:15, Mark 12:28, Mark 12:38, Mark 12:43, Mark 13:3, Mark 14:16, Mark 14:17, Mark 14:32, Mark 14:61, Mark 15:2, Mark 15:44, Mark 16:11, Mark 16:12, Mark 16:14, Luke 4:23, Luke 4:38, Luke 4:42, Luke 5:12, Luke 5:13, Luke 5:14, Luke 5:16, Luke 5:20, Luke 5:27 (twice), Luke 5:34, Luke 6:1, Luke 6:5, Luke 6:8, Luke 6:12, Luke 7:1, Luke 7:11, Luke 7:15, Luke 7:21, Luke 7:24, Luke 7:43, Luke 7:48, Luke 7:50, Luke 8:1, Luke 8:22, Luke 8:27, Luke 8:29, Luke 8:42, Luke 8:49, Luke 8:52, Luke 8:55, Luke 9:1, Luke 9:18, Luke 9:21, Luke 9:28, Luke 9:51, Luke 9:55, Luke 10:28, Luke 11:1, Luke 11:14, Luke 11:17, Luke 11:27, Luke 11:29, Luke 11:37, Luke 11:38, Luke 11:46, Luke 11:53, Luke 12:1, Luke 12:14, Luke 12:22, Luke 13:10, Luke 13:18, Luke 13:22, Luke 14:1, Luke 14:12, Luke 14:16, Luke 15:3, Luke 15:11, Luke 16:1, Luke 17:1, Luke 17:11, Luke 17:20, Luke 18:1, Luke 18:9, Luke 18:27, Luke 18:29, Luke 18:31, Luke 18:35, Luke 19:4, Luke 19:28, Luke 20:17, Luke 20:41, Luke 20:45, Luke 21:1, Luke 21:5, Luke 21:37, Luke 22:8, Luke 22:13, Luke 22:14, Luke 22:25, Luke 22:34, Luke 22:35, Luke 22:39, Luke 22:67, Luke 23:3, Luke 23:7, Luke 23:9, Luke 24:28, Luke 24:35, John 9:22, John 11:43, John 11:57, John 12:9, John 12:37, John 13:28, John 18:6, John 19:41, John 20:9, John 21:15, John	he	Jesus

21:16 (twice), John 21:17, John 21:19, Acts 1:22, Acts 9:20, Hebrews 2:11, Hebrews 7:24, Hebrews 8:6, 1 Jn 2:6, 1 Jn 3:16		
Matt 8:31, Matt 9:32, Matt 12:10, Matt 12:14, Matt 14:35, Matt 16:1, Matt 17:3, Matt 17:14, Matt 18:21, Matt 19:13, Matt 19:16, Matt 20:20, Matt 21:7, Matt 26:62, Matt 27:18, Matt 27:34, Matt 27:48, Mark 1:30, Mark 1:32, Mark 1:34, Mark 2:4, Mark 2:18, Mark 3:2, Mark 3:6, Mark 5:10, Mark 5:12, Mark 5:17, Mark 5:22, Mark 6:54, Mark 7:1, Mark 7:5, Mark 7:26, Mark 8:11, Mark 8:22, Mark 9:15, Mark 9:20, Mark 10:10, Mark 10:13, Mark 11:21, Mark 12:13, Mark 14:1, Mark 14:10, Mark 14:45, Mark 14:46, Mark 14:51, Mark 15:10, Mark 15:16, Mark 15:22, Mark 15:36, Mark 15:39, Luke 4:38, Luke 4:40, Luke 5:1, Luke 5:18, Luke 5:29, Luke 6:7, Luke 7:17, Luke 7:20, Luke 7:36, Luke 8:4, Luke 8:32, Luke 8:37, Luke 9:10, Luke 10:25, Luke 13:1, Luke 13:31, Luke 14:15, Luke 14:25, Luke 16:14, Luke 18:15, Luke 18:43, Luke 19:39, Luke 20:27, Luke 22:2, Luke 22:4, Luke 22:6, Luke 22:66, Luke 23:3, Luke 23:55, John 1:40, John 7:43, John 8:4, John 10:42, John 11:3, John 13:2, John 19:12, John 19:32, Acts 3:16, Acts 13:27, Hebrews 13:15	him	Jesus
Luke 20:20, Acts 3:16, Acts 13:24	his	Jesus
Matt 17:24, Matt 20:29, Luke 10:38	they	Jesus and his disciples
2 Cor 11:4	whom	Jesus
Acts 10:48	the Lord	Jesus Christ
Acts 18:25	the Lord	Jesus
Mark 16:19, 2 Thess 2:8	Lord	Lord Jesus
Acts 16:7	Spirit	Spirit of Jesus
Acts 24:24, Romans 8:34, 1 Cor 4:17, Gal 5:24, Eph 3:6, Col 4:12	Christ	Christ Jesus
Acts 9:22	this	Jesus
Acts 13:38, Heb 3:3	this man	Jesus
Mark 3:20, Mark 7:19, Luke 9:31, John 10:40	[not present]	Jesus
Romans 1:4	[not present]	Jesus Christ our Lord
Jude 1:25	[not present]	through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages

A simple look at an electronic Bible reveals the following:

Phrase	KJV	NIV	NASB
<i>Jesus</i>	983 times in 942 verses	1,275 times in 1,226 verses	987 times in 948 verses
<i>Christ</i>	516 times in 488 verses	530 times in 499 verses	516 times in 488 verses
<i>Lord Jesus</i>	118 times in 115 verses	103 times in 101 verses	103 times in 101 verses
<i>Lord Jesus Christ</i>	84 times in 81 verses	60 times in 60 verses	63 times in 63 verses

What does all these charts mean? **NOTHING!** They do not prove the NIV is satanically inspired to deny Christ anymore than they prove the KJV does the same thing. Instead, the repeated use of such materials shows the KJVO individual is in desperate standing and needful of “shock value” to influence his hearers. It is the dying grasp for acceptance from a man using a pointless argument!

Changes in Language

As anyone who has ever read Chaucer or Shakespeare or the King James Bible knows, language has changed over the centuries. Just as surely, we know that language will continue to change. These changes often bring confusion in reading the KJV. A few verses will illustrate this fact.

Prevent or Go Before?

In Psalm 59:10, we read in the KJV that “The God of my mercy *shall prevent me*. God shall let me see my desire upon mine enemies.” Does not these two sentences contradict each other. In one, God is preventing and in the other, God is letting. In 1611, the word “prevent” meant “go before.”

Another example of this type of confusion is found in I Thessalonians 4:15, which reads, “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord *shall not prevent them* which are asleep.” The readers in 1611 had no problem with this passage but modern readers do. With the understand of “prevent” meaning “go before,” we easily understand this passage.

Look at Matthew 17:25. The KJV has “when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, . . .” Did Jesus stop someone from doing something? No! The modern versions have it correctly when they say, “When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. . . .”

Ironically, in 1611 the word “let” meant “hinder” or “prevent.”

Suffer the Children?

The same is illustrated in the familiar story of Jesus in Mark 10:14 where He says “Suffer the little children to come unto me.” Does this mean we are to “beat” our children so that they’ll come to Jesus or His Church? Obviously not. In 1611, “suffer” meant “permit”. Of course, most of us know this because of the familiarity of this passage, usually with a nice poster of children climbing up into a smiling Jesus’ lap.

Peculiar or Special?

Peter’s words in I Peter 2:9 are confusing to some, especially children. In that passage, he writes that believers are a “peculiar” people. Obviously, many Christians are quite strange but this is not what Peter meant. Language has changed and now, “peculiar” means “a possession.” We are God’s chosen people whom He possesses.

Interestingly and ironically, the KJV translates this very same Greek word as “possession” in Ephesians 1:14.

Cussing in the KJV?

Many are shocked to find within the pages of the King James Versions words that would warrant a soapy mouth-washing for most of us. There is a phrase that is used six times in Samuel and Kings⁶ that sounds rather coarse. In each of the passages, a comment is made about a certain group of people who are distinguished by the fact that they all “pisseth against the wall.” This phrase is dumbfounding to most and probably blows the mind of a legalistic KJV Onlyist.

When you compare the six verses with in the modern day versions, the meaning is discovered quite easily and the “shock value” is removed completely. Compare the following:

- I Samuel 25:22 (and the other five verses)
 - KJV - So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that pertain to him by the morning light any that **pisseth against the wall**.
 - NIV - May God deal with David, be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave alive one male of **all who belong to him!**

⁶ I Samuel 25:22 and 25:34; I Kings 14:10 and 16:11 and 21:21; 2 Kings 9:8

The same “vulgar” word is used twice as a noun. Consider these two verses:

- 2 Kings 18:27 (Isaiah 36:12 repeats)
 - KJV - But Rabshakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men which sit on the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and **drink their own piss** with you?
 - NIV - But the commander replied, "Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the men sitting on the wall--who, like you, will have to eat their own filth and **drink their own urine**?"

This merely shows how much the English language has changed over the years. What is now an offensive word was once used in Scripture!

What are we to do with these passages? What can the KJV Onlyist conclude? If he is consistent, he will utilize this word in his everyday vocabulary and allow his children to use it as well. After all, God “inspired” the KJV translators to use it therefore it must be a word acceptable in His sight.

Other Archaic Words

The following passages from the KJV illustrate just how much language has changed in the last four hundred years.

- Psalm 5:6 - Thou shalt destroy them that speak **leasing**. (Much to the relief of bankers everywhere, this word means *speaking lies*.)
- I Corinthians 10:25 - Whatsoever is sold in the **shambles**, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake. (*meat market*)
- Numbers 34:5 - And the border shall **fetch a compass** from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea. (*mark the borders*)
- Romans 13:13 - Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in **chambering and wantonness**, not in strife and envying. (*sexual immorality and lust*)
- Isaiah 32:7 - The instruments also of the **churl** are evil: he deviseth wicked devices to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right. (*the schemer*)
- Daniel 3:5 - That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, **sackbut**, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: (*the lyre*)
- Leviticus 21:18-20 - For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, Or **crookbacked**, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or **hath his stones broken**; (*hunchback; a castrated eunuch*)
- Job 41:26 - The sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold: the spear, the dart, nor the **habergeon**. (*javelin*)

All of the above is written not to mock or disparage the King James Version. It was written to suggest that the KJV is not the “best” of all translations and surely is not the ONLY translation we should use today.

In the words of Edwin Palmer, “Do not give them a loaf of bread, covered with an inedible, impenetrable crust, fossilized by three and half centuries. Give them the Word of God as fresh and warm and clear as the Holy Spirit gave it to the authors of the Bible. . . . For any preacher or theologian who loves God’s Word to allow that Word to go on being misunderstood because of the veneration of an archaic, not-understood version of four centuries ago is inexcusable, and almost unconscionable.”

Textual Disputes

Textual disputes are disagreements over what the authors of Scripture originally wrote. In other words, when Paul sat down to write his letter to the Romans, how certain are we regarding what he actually put to paper (or papyrus)? Is there an accurate way of determining what he truly wrote? After all, we don't have anything in Paul's handwriting. The only thing we have remaining today (for the most part) are copies of copies of copies of copies.

It is important to realize that the majority of Christians who have ever lived have never seen a completed Bible. Paul never saw a complete Bible as parts of it were written after he died.

In the centuries to follow, most people lived in conditions we would deem unbearable. Their main goal in life was simply to survive the most recent drought or plague or attack from a warring country. They were glad to have small sections of Scripture. Often, they had no Scripture because the government would not allow possession of the Bible. However, the most common reason for having no Bible was the simple scarcity of texts. The copies of the Bible, even well into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were handwritten copies. If you wanted one, you either had to copy it yourself or pay a huge price to have it copied professionally. If you attempted to do it yourself, you had to convince someone to give you their copy long enough to copy it in poorly-lit conditions at night, while during the daytime tending your fields and animals and defending your property.

As a result, many of the Greek manuscripts we have were copied by untrained people who simply wanted a copy of their own. These copyists were businessmen, soldiers, and even literate slaves. Keep in mind that these are the copies that we use today to translate our Bibles.

Textual Differences: Writing Materials

The Jews were fanatic about copying and preserving their Scriptures, which gave birth to entire classes of workers whose main job was the production of the Old Testament. The Jewish Scriptures were written in the form of a scroll, usually made by binding leaves of papyri together side by side and rolling into a scroll.

Christians changed things almost immediately, using a new method. Christians utilized the "book" or "codex" style of manuscript, where they would write on both sides of the leaf and then bind in a book form (which we still use today).

By the fourth century, vellum became the medium of choice of copying Scripture. Vellum is the skin of a baby cow or baby goat. As expected, this leather writing surface was much more durable than pulverized blades of grass. Therefore, we have found many more examples of this kind of Scripture than the papyri, which dissolved over time if the conditions weren't perfect.

Textual Differences: Writing Form

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, which has changed slightly over the centuries. The most important change was the addition of dots (or "vowel pointing") over certain letters.

The New Testament was written almost entirely in Greek. At first, the New Testament Scriptures were written entirely in capital letters without punctuation or spaces between any of the words, including the ending and beginning of sentences. The capital letter copies of Scripture are called **UNCIALS**, which prevailed until about the 9th century. This type of manuscript is very hard to read and interpret.

In the 9th century, a new way of writing Greek took over: the **MINISCULE** form. This form uses lower case letters and allows for spaces and punctuation. We have thousands of these manuscripts.

We have discovered numerous examples for both kinds of writing forms. The single greatest uncial codex (which would be earlier than miniscule) was written on vellum and is called *Codex Sinaiticus*. When it came time to name this book, the letters "A" and "B" were already taken and its importance would not allow scholars to name it any less. Therefore, this codex is usually abbreviated with the Hebrew letter for "A", which is pronounced "aleph" and looks like this: א. This huge book contains the vast majority of the Bible, both Old and New Testament in Greek. This codex is often vilified by KJV Onlyists. It is not

infallible but it is also not a “tool of the devil” as some have written and preached. It is a great treasure and a tremendously valuable asset.

One of the earliest of Paul’s writings is known as Papyrus 46, which is believed to have been handwritten by a copyist around the year AD 200. This papyrus contains Romans, Hebrews, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Galatians, Philippians, Colossians and 1 and 2 Thessalonians. All these books were collected on 104 leaves and we still have 86 of them.

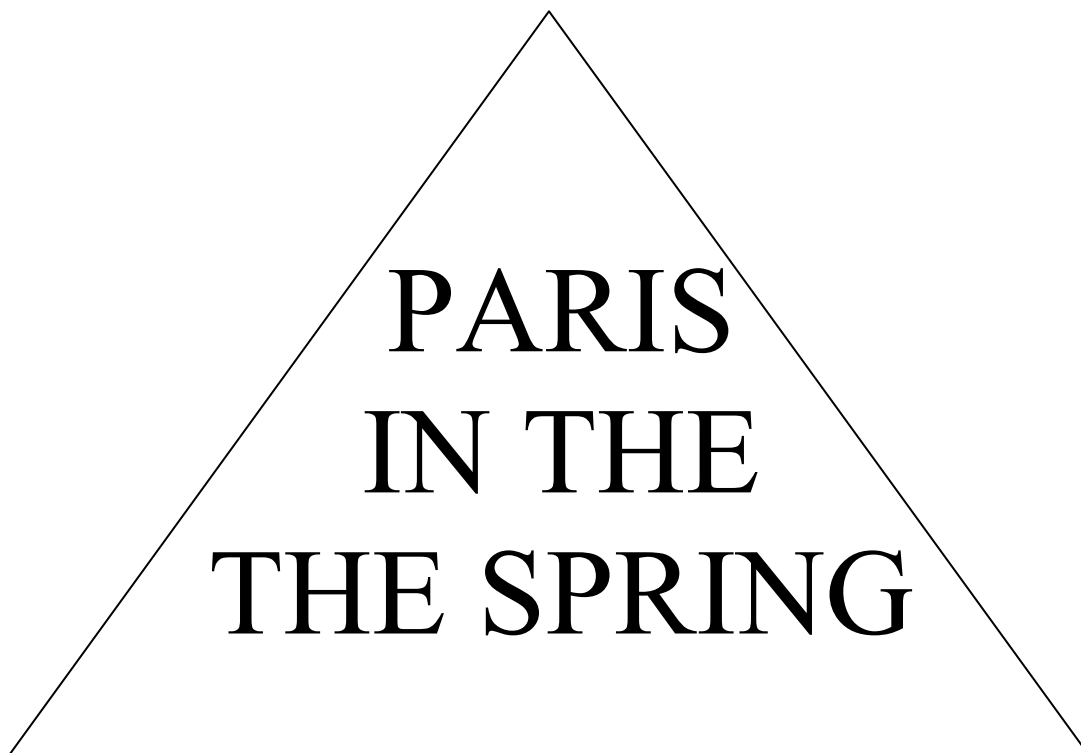
Another important find was Papyrus 72, which is the earliest manuscript we have of an epistle from Peter. The importance of this document is in the understanding it gives us of the scarcity and preciousness of writing materials. We know this because this manuscript also contains other works that are not part of our Bible, such as the apocryphal correspondence of Paul to the Corinthians, the eleventh ode of Solomon, Melito's *Homily on the Passover*, a fragment of a hymn, the Apology of Phileas and Psalms 33 and 34. It seems the owner wanted to carry as much reading material as possible in as small a space as possible.

Textual Differences: Textual Variances

It is of the utmost importance to remember that we are dealing with copies of copies of copies of copies. These copies were made by men just like you and me. As we all must admit, men make mistakes because “to err is human.” As I sit here typing these notes, I have to “back up” and correct mistakes. My computer tells me when a word is misspelled. As I copy a quote from a book, I make mistakes of skipping words or entire lines of text. Even in my air-conditioned office, sitting in my comfortable chair using a Pentium 4 computer under many bright lights, I still make mistakes in my writing.

Now, consider the difficulty of writing by hand, working for hours upon hours with fingers cramping around a feather quill or some other antiquated writing instrument in a hot/cold dimly-lit room on a rough stone or wood table. It is easy to understand how errors began to appear in these copies.

This should not shock you or surprise you. If I asked all in the classroom to spend a week copying the Gospel of John, what are the odds that 40+ people would return with exact matches throughout the handwritten (or typed) documents? Not very high, I would assume. We would still make the same types of errors those ancient scribes did. Consider this familiar “brain teaser”:



Did you read “Paris In The Spring” or “Paris in THE THE Spring”? See how easy it is to make a mistake. And you were not sitting in a cold stone “scriptorium” with little to no light and horrible writing/reading conditions.

As we readily know, it is easy to make mistakes while handwriting or copying text. There are many different kinds of errors we make (and ancient scribes made). Consider the following:

- **Misspelling** – we all have words that we just can’t seem to ever get right or remember. This simple error accounts for a vast majority of “textual variances.”
- **Skip a word of phrase** – This might occur as a scribe returns to the “exemplar” and his eye catches a similar word or the same word at a different point in the text. We do this all the time when we are reading.
- **Fusion or Fission** – this is the incorrect joining or parting of words. For example, in Mark 10:40, different manuscripts have “all ois” which means “but for whom” and others have “al lois” which means “for others.” Also, Romans 7:14 has both “oidamen” which is “we know” and “oida men” which means “on the one hand I know.”
- **Errors in hearing** – In some instances, scribes worked in a “scriptorium,” a dictation center of sorts. One individual would read from the master text and others would write down what he read aloud. It is easy to see how errors occurred in this situation. We all know how a mind can wander after several hours of monotonous labor. The copyists also had to deal with homonyms, words that sound alike but have different spellings and meanings (such as “their” and “there”). In Greek you have “exomen” (ecomen, “we have”) and “exomen” (exwmen, let us have”).
- **Harmonization** – This scribal error occurs when you are used to hearing a certain phrase hear a certain way and then you hear a similar phrase. It would be very easy to inadvertently and innocently change the phrase to fit your familiar understanding. This kind of textual variant is found all over the place. One example will be helpful in understanding:
 - Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:2 “Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This phrase became a “blessing” or “greeting” in the early Christian church. Later, when writing to the Colossians, Paul was not as “complete” in his wording. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:2 “Grace to you and peace from God our father.”

Now, place yourself in the position of the scribe who has memorized Ephesians 1:2 and repeats it every Lord’s Day as he enters or leaves the worship service. You start to copy Paul’s letter to the Colossians and read “Grace to you and peace . . .” and then you think to yourself, “Ahh, I know that one” or “That’s strange, it should say . . .” In thinking this, you might “correct” the manuscript to say what you “know” it should say because the earlier scribe must have missed it.

This is very easy to understand why this is a very most common type of textual variant. The KJV does have “and the Lord Jesus Christ” at Colossians 1:2 and the modern versions do not. Therefore, this verse, and others like it, are some of the most commonly used ammunition of KJV Only authors and preachers who proceed to tell us how the modern versions “remove Jesus” from the Bible. The fact that “the Lord Jesus Christ” appears at Ephesians 1:2 and dozens of other places is seemingly lost on these authors, whose conspiracy theory falls flat.

- **Marginal notes** – We must remember that these texts were all handwritten. Therefore, if you made an error, you couldn’t just backspace or erase or wad up and toss. Instead, the copyists put a note in margin in the place of the error. Later, future copyists would see that note and have to interpret its meaning. Did the first scribe mean for the note to be inserted in the text because he had mistakenly omitted it? Or was it just an explanatory or referential notation? You don’t want something in your copy that isn’t authentic but you also don’t want to leave something out. For the most part, it seems most scribes deemed it safer to add the extra material than leave it out. This has lead to scholars referring to the more recent copies as “fuller.”
- **Natural human error in handwriting** – Even in our day, it is hard to read some people’s writing. It was no different in ancient times. People still had trouble differentiating between

T's and F's, E, O, C. If you can't ask the original scribe, you have to "make an educated guess."

This information is probably SHOCKING to many of you. It need not be. When you hear that the Bible contains thousands of variants, it is wise to listen closely to what is really being said. If you put ten people in a room and asked them to copy the first five chapters of Leviticus, you would soon end up with ten different versions of Leviticus. No two handwritten copies would be identical. Someone would skip a word in 2:8. One person would misspell a word in 4:13. Another might skip a whole line in 3:15.

In other words, you would end up with a lot of VARIANTS. However, would you still be able to reproduce the original and authentic message of Leviticus from these "corrupted" copies? Of course you would. This is possible because although every copy has errors in it, none will have the same error in the same spot in all ten copies.

When you hear a claim that the ancient manuscripts have thousands of variants, they are referring to the fact that when one manuscript has a unique spelling of a word at one point, this creates a variant against ALL OTHER manuscripts. When we speak of 200,000 variants within the 5,300 manuscripts we have, that does not mean that we have 5,300 DIFFERENT New Testament documents. You can still reproduce the original writings.

The great American scholar, Dr. A.T. Robertson, whose familiarity with the most intricate details of the Greek text is abundantly verified in his massive 1,454 page "A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research," indicates that areas of real concern amounts to a "thousandth part of the entire text."

Research has shown that 98.33% of the texts are pure no matter whether one used the *Textus Receptus* or any of the modern Greek texts. The reality is that the amount of variation between the two most extremely different manuscripts would not fundamentally alter the message of the Bible. The simple truth is that no textual variants in either the Old or New Testaments in any way, shape or form materially disrupt or destroy any essential doctrine of the Christian faith. Any impartial review of the situation will reveal this.

Textual Differences: Textual Families

You will not discuss or read about the KJV Only controversy too long before you are faced with arguments concerning the "*Alexandrian* cult" or the "superior *Byzantine* text." What do these terms mean?

The books of the New Testament were written between 50 and 100 years after the birth of Christ. They were almost all written in papyrus. They were kept in scrolls. The elder of a church in Western Asia who arose in his congregation to read Paul's letter to the Ephesians would have held in his hand a roll of whitish-yellow material about four feet in length and about ten inches tall. The Acts of the Apostles or the Gospel of Luke would have formed a roll of over thirty feet. From this knowledge, we can say that even had the idea been entertained of "collecting" these letters and books into a single volume, it would have been quite impossible to have done so as long as the scroll was the medium of choice.

In fact, the formation of a single "New Testament" was impossible because the canon was not recognized at this early point in the church. The four gospels had been separated and distinguished, as had the letters of Paul. But even into the fourth century, some letters were being questioned.⁷ Only gradually did the Church discover which books God had inspired as Scripture.

As a result of this slow pace of collection, numerous copies were made repeatedly through the centuries. These copies were made, sent to the far reaches of the empire and copied some more. These copies were not made in a linear fashion, with one person copying John's original gospel to create Manuscript #1 and then another person copying manuscript #1 to make Manuscript #2 and then another using Manuscript #2 to copy Manuscript #3 and so forth down the line. Instead, several copies were made of John's Gospel to create MSS #1a and MSS #1b and MSS #1c and so on. Then several more copies were made of each of the numerous copies of MSS #1a and #1b and #1c to create MSS #2a and MSS #2b and MSS #2c and so on.

⁷ Such as 2 and 3 John, Peter, Jude, Revelation.

Then, several more copies were made of Mss #2a and even more made of MSS #2b and so one and so on. Copies of the New Testament exploded like branches or roots of a tree, not in a single line.

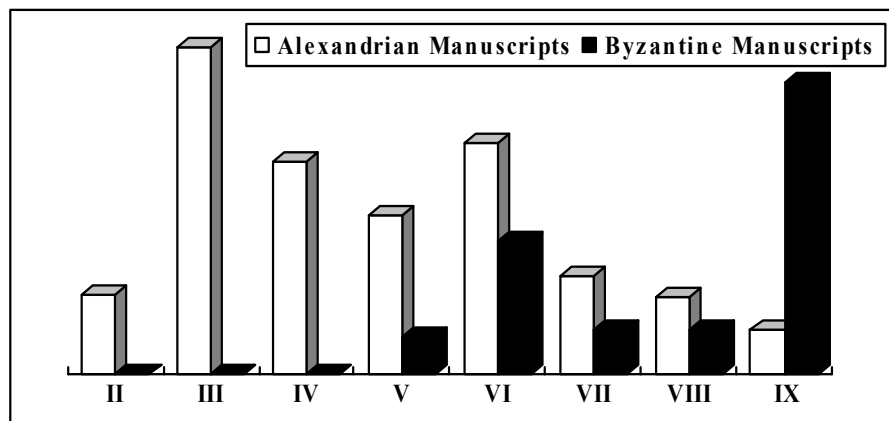
Over the centuries, “text types” or “text families” began to develop. A text-type is a group of manuscripts that share common readings or characteristics that distinguish them from other types or families. These families are often grouped as follows:

- **Byzantine** – found around or near Constantinople. This type comprises about 95% of all manuscripts available to us today. Texts from this family were used to translate the KJV and the NKJV.
- **Alexandrian** – found in Egypt. This type accounts for 2-3% of all the manuscripts we have available to us today. All modern translations use texts from this family.
- **Western** (Roman empire) – 0.001%
- **Caesarean** – (rest of Roman empire) 1-2%

As you can see, text types developed along geographical lines. Of these types, two major families dominate the discussion, accounting for 98% of all texts: Alexandrian (we have fewer of these texts but they are considerably older than the Byzantine) and Byzantine – We have a lot of these texts but they are relatively recent and not as ancient.

A chart might be helpful. Below you will see columns representing the number of manuscripts found as defined by text families. The roman numerals represent centuries. :

You can see the abundance of Alexandrian texts early in the church’s history and the slow



decline in those numbers as a similar increase occurs in Byzantine manuscripts. You will also notice the complete absence of Byzantine manuscripts in the first four centuries of the church. Is there an explanation for this?

A review of history reveals why this happened. Within a few hundred years of the New Testament, Latin became the language of the people. This “Latinization” was especially prominent in the West as Rome continued to expand. When people began to lose the Greek language, the production of manuscripts in that language would diminish as well. Of course, people continued to speak Greek in the eastern portion of the empire, which is still home of the Greek Orthodox Church, which split from Rome in AD 1054.

Another factor to consider is the Muslim invasion of Palestine, North African and eventually Spain and southern France. Production of manuscripts in these areas was drastically reduced by this invasion and occupation. The people of the east resisted the Muslim invasion for centuries before finally succumbing in the 1400s.

KJV Onlyists would disagree with these historical facts. The text used to translate the KJV (the *Textus Receptus*) is Byzantine in nature. Therefore, KJV Onlyists must find a way to defend the Byzantine family as the “best.” They explain the lack of ancient Byzantine manuscripts by saying they haven’t been discovered yet or “wore out” from excessive use while the Alexandrian texts were quickly seen as corrupt and buried in the sand.

It is easily seen this argument is from silence and can be dismissed as hopeful conjecture.

The Textus Receptus

Desiderius Erasmus is known today as the “Prince of Humanists.” Of course, the term “humanist” has changed greatly since his days. A “humanist” in Erasmus’ day was not trying to remove God from every aspect of life. Instead, the humanistic Erasmus felt that God had endowed man with certain abilities of the mind and thought that men should, to God’s glory, cultivate those abilities. The motto of the humanists was *ad fontes*, which means “to the source!” Of course, the “source” for Erasmus was the original Greek manuscripts of the New Testament.

Erasmus wanted to compile a Greek New Testament and worked in England for years. Up to 1511, no one had ever printed one and scholars were all using hand-written copies. In 1514, Erasmus went to Basel, Switzerland, hoping to find many excellent Greek manuscripts. He was disappointed to find only five but set to work with these few. Using these few manuscripts, Erasmus did an incredible job of translation and editing.⁸ However, Erasmus also readily admitted that he did not produce a “perfect work,” saying it was “precipitated rather than edited.” Some of these problems that plagued Erasmus in compiling the Greek New Testament have a direct impact on the King James Version and still plague us today. *There are approximately twelve passages found in the Textus Receptus and the King James Version that are not found in any other Greek manuscripts from any age and therefore are not in our modern Bibles.*

So, what should we think about the T.R.? It helps to understand how it came to be. The T.R. has a long history and is not equivalent to Erasmus’ original work.

The New Testament of the King James Version of the Bible is based upon a later printed edition of the Greek New Testament that originated in the work of Erasmus. Erasmus produced several editions in 1516, 1519, 1522, 1527 and 1535 and reprinted it 69 times in that span. Luther used the second edition to translate his German text and Tyndale used the third edition for his English translation.

However, the fourth edition is the definitive work. It contained THREE columns: the Greek text, the standard Latin Vulgate and Erasmus’ own Latin translation, which differed from Jerome’s. Erasmus’ work became the standard Greek text.

Is Erasmus’ work the famed Textus Receptus? Not yet. A famous printer from Paris named Robert Estienne (1503-1559) later produced four more editions (1546, 1549, 1550, 1551). He is also known as Stephanus, his Latinized name. Estienne’s work compiled Erasmus’ text and the text of Ximenes, whom Erasmus was racing to be the first to publish a Greek New Testament. Ximenes’ work is called the *Complutensian Polyglot*, which contained Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin in four columns. Stephanus’ third edition contained the first “critical apparatus,” which is a series of footnotes that the editor used to show the facts for the basis on why he chose a particular Greek word in each verse. Stephanus also invented another item that is of great importance to all of us: verse divisions. It was Stephanus who first divided the Bible up into numbered verses.

Is the work of Erasmus and Stephanus the famed Textus Receptus? Not yet. Theodore Bèza succeeded John Calvin in Geneva as head of Reformed Protestantism. He published NINE editions of this same Greek New Testament. Bèza’s text is quite similar to Stephanus’ fourth edition.

Is the work of Erasmus and Stephanus and Bèza the famed Textus Receptus? Yes and No. There was still one more step. Bonaventure and Abraham Elzevir were two brothers who had a lucrative printing press in the Netherlands. As a commercial venture, they published a small edition of the Greek text and it gained great popularity because of its small size and remarkably clear printing. It was primarily based on Bèza’s 1565 edition. The preface contains an advertising blurb in Latin and claims that this edition was “the text which is now received by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted.”

In Latin, the important words are “textum” which is “text” and “receptum” which is “received.” This edition came to be known as the TEXTUS RECEPTUS or the Received Text. Please note that this does NOT mean the text was “received from God” but rather was “accepted by readers.”

The T.R. (as it is commonly abbreviated) is the accepted text of the Erasmus/Estienne/ Bèza/Elzevir tradition in 1633. Ironically, thousands swear allegiance to this T.R. and yet know nothing about it.

⁸ See pages 11-13 of chapter 1 for more information about Erasmus and his work, some of which is copied here.

This Greek text underlies the King James Version of the Bible, even though it was not called the Textus Receptus until 22 years after the publication of the first King James Version.⁹

We cannot praise enough the T.R. but we should not be blinded to its limitations, either. The question is whether or not we should stop with the Received Text of 1633. To use an illustration, the T.R. is the Model T of the New Testament texts. The Model T automobile was a triumph of early engineering and design, but it was only the first step of many. Wouldn't we all suffer if we were still forced to use that type of car today? Aren't you glad we have faster, safer, more comfortable, more powerful and more efficient cars today?

What is an amazing irony is that Erasmus, if he were alive today, would be on the side of the modern scholars. Many of the exact same arguments that are used today by KJV Only advocates were used *against* Erasmus 500 years ago! The very man to whom KJV defenders must defer for the mast majority of their New Testament text and textual arguments used the very same arguments and methodology to defend his work that modern translators use to defend the NASB or NIV! Amazing!

Textual Differences: Examples of Variants

As we look at specific examples in the next few pages, more history will be revealed regarding the compilation of the Textus Receptus and the differences between the modern versions. You will discover there is always a good reason why the modern versions chose to “omit” certain passages. Some of the stories are truly fascinating.

The Expansion of Piety

A common charge coming for the KJVO camp is that the modern versions delete or omit certain words or phrases or passages. Of course, this can only be true when using their circular reasoning.¹⁰ Noting comments made earlier, the Byzantine texts, which appear later in history, are the “fuller” texts and the Alexandrian, which was copied earlier in history, are the more “concise” texts. Many scholars today would say that the earlier, more concise Alexandrian text is more accurate as the later Byzantine text contains readings that were “added” or “expanded” during the long history of copying,

The most common additions can be grouped under the phrase “expansion of piety,” which refers to additions to the text that originated in a desire to protect and reverence divine truths and names. Consider the following chart:

REFERENCE	ALEXANDRIAN	BYZANTINE
Matthew 4:18, 12:25; Mark 2:15; 10:52; Luke 24:36;	He	Jesus
Acts 19:10	the Lord	the Lord Jesus
I Corinthians 16:22	the Lord	the Lord Jesus Christ
Acts 19:4; Hebrews 3:1	Jesus	Christ Jesus
I Corinthians 9:1, I John 1:7; Revelation 1:9 and 12:17	Jesus	Jesus Christ
2 Corinthians 4:10	Jesus	Lord Jesus
I Thessalonians 3:11	Jesus our Lord	our Lord Jesus Christ
2 Corinthians 5:18	Christ	Jesus Christ

⁹ It should also be noted that the *Textus Receptus* is not the same as the Byzantine text. The TR used only five or six Byzantine texts.

¹⁰ By setting up the KJV as the standard by which every other Bible is to be judged, there will naturally be differences. An “NIV Only” advocate could say the same thing when comparing the NIV to the NASB or ESV or other modern versions. It proves nothing except that the KJV and modern versions differ. Only when the KJV is seen (from the beginning) as the absolute gold standard do problems occur.

Acts 15:11 and 16:31; I Cor 5:4,
2 Cor 11:31; 2 Thess 1:8, 12
2 John 1:3

Lord Jesus
Jesus Christ

Lord Jesus Christ
the Lord Jesus Christ

There are two ways to interpret this chart. KJV Onlyists declare that the modern translators conspire to denigrate the person of Christ by removing or reducing his titles of deity. This cannot be true. Some KJV Onlyists point to Romans 16:20 where the word “Christ” is not in the modern versions. However, this cannot be a conspiracy because the word “Christ” is found nine other times in that very same chapter (vv. 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18, 25 and 27).

A concordance search shows that the full title “Lord Jesus Christ” appears 86 times in the KJV and 64 times in the NASB and 61 times in the NIV. If there is a full-blown conspiracy, the conspirators did a truly horrible job!

There is a better explanation that requires no special theories. The expansions of the titles of divinity flow from a desire to safeguard the sanctity of Jesus. This desire still exists today with individuals who insist we always refer to Jesus with “His last name” – Christ.

The Deity of Christ

As mentioned earlier, the oldest copies of Scripture we have were written in UNCIAL writing. This makes translating a difficult work. If we still wrote that way in English, we could “translate” the following letters two different ways:

GODISNOWHERE = “God is now-here.” or “God is no-where.”

This difficulty is the basis and answer for the charge often made by KJV Onlyists that the modern versions deny the deity of Christ. A favorite verse used to illustrate this is I Timothy 3:16. We can see the differences here:

- KJV - **God was manifest in the flesh**, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.
- NIV - **He appeared in a body**, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.
- NASB - **He who was revealed in the flesh**, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

Much has been made about the “deletion” of Christ’s incarnational deity. Is the furor worth all the attention? Personally, I *prefer* the KJV and believe it can be translated as such. However, there is nothing wrong with the NIV or NASB. Let me explain why there are differences.

As you know, the first written manuscripts were UNCIAL texts, meaning they were written completely in capitalized letters with no spaces or punctuation. Also, the uncial texts used a certain practice when it came to sacred names like “God” and “Jesus”: they were abbreviated. In the case of “God,” the first and last letters were used. To let the reader know the word was abbreviated, a line would be written over the abbreviation. In Greek, the word for “God” is **QEOS**. However, when abbreviated, the word would be **QS** (with a bar over the letters). This is important because the word translated “He who” in Greek looks like this: **OS**. Looks almost identical, doesn’t it.

Now, look at this entire sentence in uncial Greek:

KAIOMOLOGOUMENWSMEGAESTINTOTHSEUSEBEIASMUSTHRIONQSEFANERWOHENSARKIEDIKAIWOHEN

Now, with the same text but with the reading “He who was manifested”:

KAIOMOLOGOUMENWSMEGAESTINTOTHSEUSEBEIA SMUSTHRIONOSEFANERWQHENSARKIEDIKAIWQHEN

Can you spot the difference? Now, pretend you are in your fifth hour of copying in an uncomfortable and unproductive setting. Also, keep in mind that these words were being written on animal hides or dried grass leaves. It takes a HUGE step of faith to believe a grand “conspiracy” led to this difference.

An ironic counter-example is found in **Revelation 1:8**, where the KJV reads “saith the Lord” and the modern versions read “says the Lord God.” Can you imagine the fuss that would be made over this verse if the situations were reversed? Here you have a verse calling Jesus “God” in the modern versions yet the KJV “merely” has “Lord.”

Another example of this inconsistency is found in **John 1:18**. Here is that verse in three versions:

- **KJV** - No man hath seen God at any time; **the only begotten Son**, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.
- **NIV** - No one has ever seen God, but **God the One and Only**, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.
- **NASB** - No one has seen God at any time; **the only begotten God** who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

Here we have the KJV following the TR, which has the Greek word for Son (*uios*) and the modern versions following the more ancient texts, which as the Greek word for God (*theos*). Where are the cries for the denial of the deity of Christ here?

The Comma Johanneum

The single most famous incident relating to Erasmus' work centers on the words in I John 5:7-8. This passage will be found in EVERY anti-NIV book today and comes up near the beginning of every anti-NASB sermon or speech. Many make this verse THE test of “orthodoxy.”

Here are the differences, with the words in question bolded in the KJV verse:

- KJV - ⁷ For there are three that bear record in heaven, **the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.** ⁸ **And there are three that bear witness in earth,** the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.
- NIV - ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.
- NASB - ⁷ For there are three that testify: ⁸ the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement.

The story of how the KJV came to read as it does is very instructive. When the first edition of Erasmus' Greek text came out in 1516, the phrase in bold print above (dubbed “the Johannine Comma”) was not in the text. Why? For the simple reason that Erasmus did not find it in ANY of the Greek manuscripts he had at his disposal.

This was a problem because the phrase WAS found in the accepted Latin *Vulgate*. Erasmus also did not include the phrase in his second edition. As you can imagine, his reliance on the Greek texts instead of a common foreign language translation created quite a controversy (just as it does today). Erasmus was attacked and charged with fomenting “Arianism,” the same charge levied against modern versions today. Basically, KJV Onlyists insist that the “deletion” of this phrase destroys the basis for the doctrine of the Trinity.

Erasmus, when challenged, refused to give in. He issued a challenge in response, saying “produce a Greek manuscript that has what is missing in my edition.” One particular opponent, Diego Lopez Zuniga, attacked Erasmus. Erasmus noted that Zuniga constantly upbraided Erasmus by constantly referring to a particular Greek manuscript Zuniga had. However, Erasmus noted that Zuniga had not brought that

document into the open, reasoning that Zuniga failed to do so because even Zuniga's manuscript did not have the phrase.

However, Erasmus made a mistake in promising to include the phrase if a single Greek manuscript could be found that included it. Amazingly,¹¹ an Irish manuscript¹² was found that contained the phrase. Erasmus declared that "the ink was still wet" but held true to his word. However, Erasmus wrote a lengthy note saying "I have 'restored' the text . . . so as not to give anyone an occasion for slander. . . . But to return to the business of the reading: from our remarks it is clear that the Greek and Latin manuscripts vary, and in my opinion there is no danger in accepting either reading."

This passage is important because it is a phrase that is patently orthodox. What it says is obviously TRUE. Yet, it must be admitted that the doctrine of the Trinity does not stand or fall on this one passage.

What is truly amazing (and damaging to the KJVO position) is that it must be noted as a fact of recorded history that this very issue was the central argument during the great Arian debates in the early fourth century at the Council of Nicaea. *During the great council debates in the 4th century over Trinitarian doctrine, notes were taken of the minutes of those councils. Words and quotations were recorded and Bible passages written down. In reviewing those minutes of those councils, it is interesting to note that not in a single instance is this passage quoted. That seems odd that scholars trying to prove the Bible teaches the Trinity would not turn FIRST to this passage. The only reason they did not is that the passage simply was not in the copies they were using at the time.*

Since the time of that "presentation" of the text, multiple thousands of manuscripts have been found and only THREE have a similar reading (*see footnote 20 below*).

A scary conclusion must be reached if the KJV Onlyists are correct. If this phrase was part of the apostle's original handwritten letter, then we must conclude that ENTIRE passages, rich in theological meaning, can COMPELTEY DISAPPEAR without leaving a single trace!

The Book or Tree of Life

When Erasmus was compiling his Greek New Testament, he struggled with the text of the Revelation. He could not find ANY manuscript that contained the book. He learned that his friend Reuchlin possessed a text that was "of such great age that it might be thought to have been written in the time of the apostles." However the text was still missing that last page of the Revelation, which contained the last six verses.

Erasmus made the decision to use his Latin *Vulgate* to translate the Latin back into Greek since he had no original Greek to use. This caused Erasmus to create the following textual variant:

- KJV - And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the **book of life**,
- NIV - And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the **tree of life**
- NASB - and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the **tree of life**

Naturally, this verse is important because of its theology and its warning, which is not missed by KJV Onlyists. The screed goes out that modern versions HAVE taken away for the words of "this book." But have they?

Remember, Erasmus translated Latin back into Greek. The Latin word for "book" is *libro*. The Latin word for "tree" is *ligno*. It is easy to see how *ligno* could slowly change over time through copy errors into *libro*

¹¹ Please read that sarcastically.

¹² The MSS produced is the *Codex Montfortianus*, now at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Other MSS that agree with the KJV reading are Minuscule 88, a 12th century manuscript with the relevant words scribbled onto the margin in 17th-century handwriting; a 16th century copy of the *Complutensian Polyglot* (a parallel Bible with many different languages in columns); and one other manuscript that is dated between the 14th and 17th centuries.

in Jerome's Bible. There is no doubt that Erasmus saw *libro* in the Latin text he was using, which read "*Deus partem eius de libro vitae*" in the *Vulgate* and still does today.

However, there is NO other Greek text ANYWHERE that has the Greek word for "book" here. In fact, every Greek text has the Greek word for "tree," which is *xulos*.

This also presents a theological problem. Protestants believe in the "perseverance of the saints." We believe in eternal security. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. However, the KJV tells us that nothing does not mean nothing – the act of translating a modern version can cancel out your salvation! Is this doctrinally correct?

These "embarrassing" items are mentioned NOT to denounce the T.R. Excepting the accounts above and a few more, the T.R. is a fine example of the Byzantine text family. We note these things because of the ABUSE and MISUSE of the T.R. by KJV Only adherents.

More Revelation

The same copy of Reuchlin's text used by Erasmus had another error simple to understand. In Revelation 17:8, we read the following:

- KJV - when they behold the beast that was, and is not, **and yet is**.
- NIV - when they see the beast, because he once was, now is not, **and yet will come**.
- NASB - when they see the beast, that he was and is not **and will come**.

These readings are quite different but the original Greek explains the error. The two phrases are:

KJV text –	<i>ouk esti kaiper esti</i>	or	<i>ouk esti kaiper esti</i>
Modern texts -	<i>ouk estin kai parestai</i>	or	<i>ouk estin kai parestai</i>

The similarity in these phrases is striking and confusion is understandable.

Believe What?

KJV Only advocates often use a double standard in their incrimination of the modern versions. Consider this passage found in John 6:47:

- KJV - Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth **on me** hath everlasting life.
- NIV - I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life.
- NASB - "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.

Because of this verse, serious charges of "tampering with the Gospel have been levied against the modern versions. D.A. Waite, in a somewhat hysterical fashion, declares:

This is, perhaps, one of the **CLEAREST** theological errors in these three versions. To make salvation only a matter of "believing" rather than solely, as Christ said in this verse, "believing on me," is truly **ANOTHER GOSPEL**. If you are trying to lead someone to Christ with the NIV or NASV, using this verse, they could "believe" in anything and still have "everlasting life" – whether in Santa Claus, in the Easter Bunny, in the Tooth Fairy, in Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer or in any of the false world religions. This is **SERIOUS THEOLOGICAL PERVERSION!**

The question is asked, "Does the rendering of John 6:47 allow for belief in Santa Claus for eternal salvation?" This rant is ridiculous when you read just 12 verses earlier, where the modern version records Jesus saying "I am the bread of life; he who **comes to Me** shall not hunger, and he who **believes in Me** shall never thirst." In verse 40, Jesus says, "For this is the will of the Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and **believes in Him**, may have eternal life." This same phraseology is found in John 7:38, 11:25-26, 12:44 and 12:46.

Here, in the exact same immediate context, Jesus is defined as the direct object of the faith about which He is speaking. Again, if this is a conspiracy among modern translators to mislead people away from Christ,

they do a horribly inconsistent job. And seriously, could ANYONE read John 6:35-47 and NOT know what the object of faith in verse 47 is to be?

However, this does open a “can of worms” for the consistent KJVO advocate. What if the KJV fails to always include a direct object with “believe?” Consider the following from the KJV:

- Mark 9:23, where we read “Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” **Believeth what???**
- Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **Believeth what???**
- Romans 10:4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. **Believeth what???**

Can we condemn the KJV as presenting “another gospel” here in these verses? Of course not, yet KJV Onlyists are quick to pin that label on modern versions. I am stunned by the complete lack of ethical scholarship in this argumentation.

Quite simply, it is hard to imagine that someone could see a malevolent force behind the John 6:47 verse and then ignore the same situation in these verses!

Conclusion

All we’ve discussed may sound horrible and it may appear that we cannot trust the Bible. That is far from the case. Let me explain.

If had each of you copy a chapter from an encyclopedia, do we agree that it would be rare if any two copies matched perfectly. But, WHAT ARE ODDS OF THE SAME ERROR OCCURING IN THE SAME PLACE IN EACH AND EVERY COPY?

However, a wonderful thing known as the **TENACITY OF SCRIPTURE** gives proof we can trust the Scriptures. This simply means that once a variant is in place, IT NEVER GOES AWAY. This shows the great respect these copyists had for Scripture.

Finally, we can trust that God knows what’s going on - The GOSPEL IS FOR ALL and it SPREAD FAR AND FAST. That’s to our benefit because Bible was not kept in a central location that would have made it possible for a single person or group to make wholesale changes unknown to the rest of the world. In fact, by the time the great church controversies arose, many important texts were long buried in the sands of Egypt. In short, we do have the Word of God with us today.