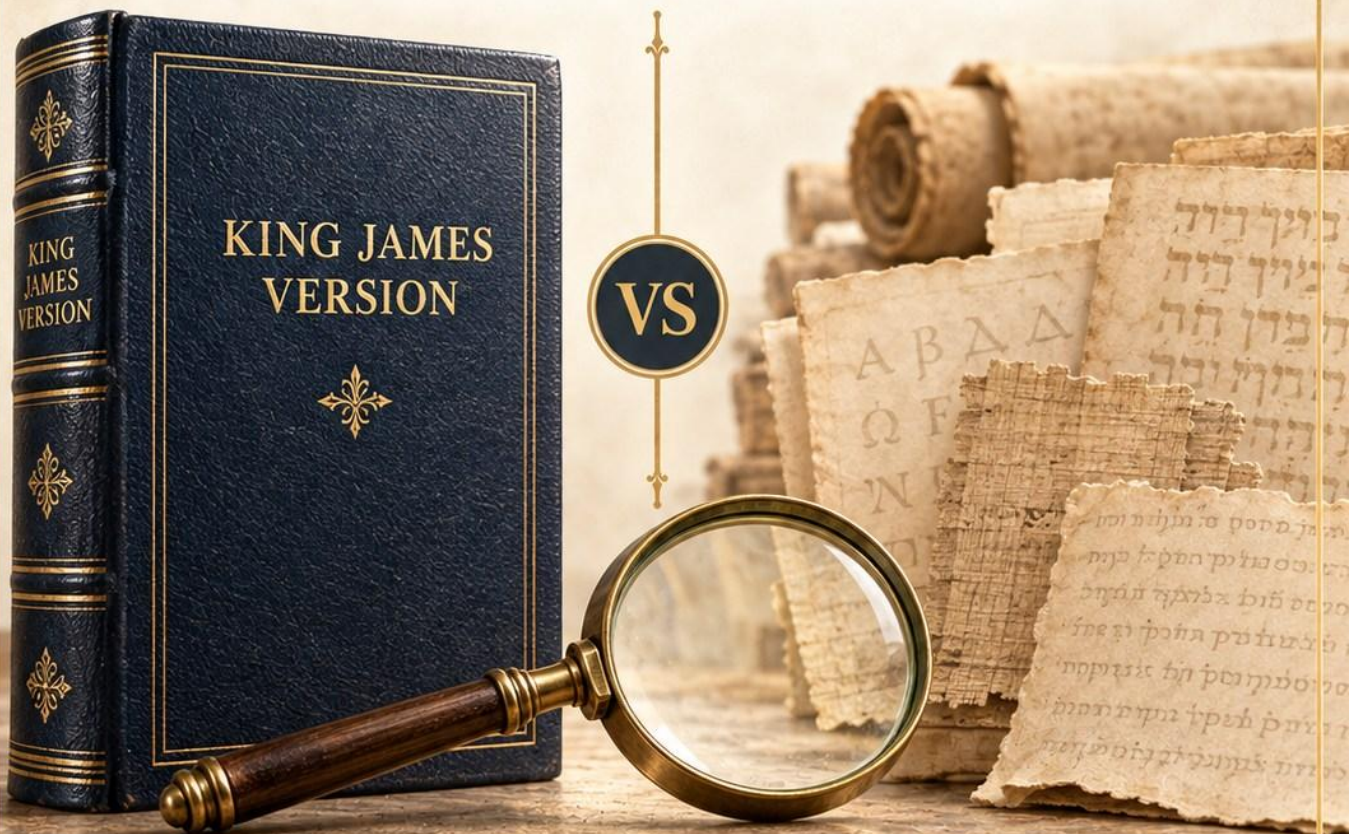


REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

THE BIBLE TRANSLATION QUESTION

A TEN-PART SERIES | PART ONE OF TEN

CAN THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE BE FULLY TRUSTED?



DR. THOMAS W. HAWKSLEY

TRUSTING GOD'S WORD THROUGH CAREFUL EXAMINATION

THE BIBLE TRANSLATION QUESTION | PART ONE OF TEN

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SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

Reason Together Church

Aloha, church family.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether you are here in the room, joining us online or listening later, I am grateful that we can open the Scriptures together.

This is a church where honest questions are welcome because truth does not fear careful examination.

Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let us Reason Together the Word of God.

If you are our honored guest today, thank you for trusting us with part of your weekend.

There is a guest card available for you. We ask only for your first name and email address. We do not need your home address, telephone number or family history. We simply want to thank you for coming and let you know how we can serve you.

Our Keiki Kids Center is ready to serve your family with a safe, thoughtful and age-appropriate setting while we study.

After the service, please stay for a cup of coffee in the cafe.

Around here, COFFEE means Christ Offers Forgiveness For Everyone Everywhere.

The coffee is real, the welcome is sincere and the refills on conversations are always free.

We do not pass an offering plate at Reason Together Church.

Our guests are never expected to give. If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to support your home church faithfully. For those who call this church home, there is a giving box in the back for whatever God leads you to give cheerfully.

We want the attention today to remain where it belongs, on the Word of God and the God of the Word.

Let us pray.

Our Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the holy Scriptures. Thank You for preserving Your truth and for allowing us to hold it in a language we understand. Give us humility where we have spoken too strongly, courage where we have been afraid to ask questions and wisdom to distinguish Your perfect Word from our imperfect understanding. Help us listen carefully and treat one another graciously. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Today we begin a ten-part series called The Bible Translation Question.

The approved question for our first study is direct.

Can the King James Version of the Bible be fully trusted?

For many Christians, that is not merely an academic question.

The King James Bible may be the Bible their parents carried.

It may be the Bible from which they first heard John 3:16.

It may be the Bible in which they memorized the Twenty-third Psalm, the Lord's Prayer and the account of the resurrection.

When someone questions a KJV word, it can sound as though that person is questioning every sermon, every memory and every promise connected with that Bible.

Other Christians have been told that educated people have moved beyond the KJV.

They may have heard its old English mocked or its translators described as careless.

Neither approach helps us reason together.

We do not need to ridicule the Christian who loves the KJV.

We also do not need to accuse a Christian of unbelief for asking what a Hebrew or Greek word means.

There appears to be a choice between two positions.

One position says that every English word chosen by the KJV translators was placed there infallibly and can never be questioned.

The other says that if any rendering can be corrected, the entire translation becomes unreliable.

Those are not our only choices.

Our question is what the words fully trusted should mean.

Please listen to 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

What does Scripture do?

It makes us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

It teaches doctrine.

It reproves us when we are wrong.

It corrects us.

It instructs us in righteousness.

It equips the person of God for every good work.

The KJV does every one of those things.

It tells us who God is.

It tells us what sin is.

It tells us that Jesus Christ is God the Son who became flesh, died for our sins and rose from the grave.

It tells us that salvation is by grace through faith.

It tells believers how to live.

That is our first and most important answer.

Yes, the King James Version can be trusted to accomplish the purpose for which Scripture was given.

But that statement raises another question.

What did God inspire?

Second Peter 1:21 says:

"For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

God moved the prophets and apostles to give His revelation.

That unique act is inspiration.

We need to distinguish five related things.

First is inspiration.

God gave His Word through the Biblical writers.

Second is preservation.

God did not allow His Word to vanish from the earth. Through His providence, the Scriptures survived and spread.

Third is textual transmission.

Before printing presses, manuscripts were copied by hand. When surviving copies differ, those differences must be examined.

Fourth is translation.

Translators communicate Hebrew and Greek meaning in another language.

That requires judgment because languages do not match one another word for word in every sentence.

Fifth is printing.

Printers reproduce a translation. A printer can introduce a misplaced letter or omitted line without changing what God inspired.

Inspiration, preservation, transmission, translation and printing are related, but they are not identical.

If a printer makes an error, God did not make an error.

If a translator chooses an imperfect English word, the Hebrew or Greek text has not suddenly become imperfect.

The authority belongs ultimately to the God who spoke.

Copyists, translators, teachers and printers serve that Word. They do not become its author.

What did the KJV translators believe they were doing?

Fortunately, we do not have to guess.

They wrote a substantial preface called The Translators to the Reader.

That preface is not Scripture, but it is primary historical evidence.

They said their purpose was "to make a good one better."

That is important.

They believed English Christians already possessed good translations of Scripture.

They wanted to improve them.

They described the Hebrew and Greek texts as the sources or fountains from which translation must come.

They consulted earlier English Bibles.

They consulted translations in other languages.

They reconsidered wording and placed alternative renderings in the margins.

They admitted that some words were uncertain.

They wrote, "Variety of translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures."

They did not insist that one Hebrew or Greek word must always receive the same English word.

Most importantly, they did not claim the extraordinary protection from error that belonged to apostles and apostolic men.

They acknowledged that translations may contain imperfections while still properly being called the Word of God.

We should not put a claim into their mouths that they did not make.

We do not honor the translators by turning them into inspired apostles.

We honor them by recognizing the care, learning and humility with which they worked.

Now let us consider a common source of confusion.

Sometimes the KJV has not changed at all, but the English language has changed around it.

We saw the word perfect in 2 Timothy 3:17.

"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Perfect there carries the idea of completeness or fitness for the purpose.

It does not mean that a person who studies the Bible becomes incapable of sin or error.

Philippians 1:27 says:

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ."

Conversation there is not limited to talking.

It means conduct or manner of life.

Paul is not merely telling Christians to speak well. He is telling us to live in a way that suits the gospel.

Philippians 4:6 says:

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

Paul is not telling us to drive carelessly, ignore responsibilities or stop planning.

Careful means anxious or full of care.

Second Thessalonians 2:7 says:

"For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way."

Today, to let usually means to allow.

In that verse, letteth means to hinder or restrain.

If we give the old word its modern meaning, we can reverse the verse.

First Thessalonians 5:22 says:

"Abstain from all appearance of evil."

That verse is often used to say that Christians must avoid anything another person might think looks questionable.

Protecting our testimony is wise, but let us read the context.

"Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."

The passage concerns testing what is presented, holding the good and rejecting every form or kind of evil.

Appearance can refer to a form or manifestation, not merely to what a suspicious observer may imagine.

These examples usually are not translation errors.

They are changed-English problems.

The words stayed on the page while the definitions people carried in their minds changed.

The same caution applies to masculine wording.

Sometimes the KJV says man when the meaning is any person.

Sometimes brethren addresses an entire congregation that included women.

Sometimes man refers to humanity.

Sometimes sons describes the inheritance status shared by every believer in Christ.

That does not mean every masculine word should be changed.

Some passages specifically concern males.

The original expression and the context must decide.

A woman reading "brethren" should not automatically think that every promise or command in that paragraph excludes her.

Now we come to four verses frequently questioned.

Hebrews 10:23 says:

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"

The Greek expression says the confession or profession of our hope.

The Greek noun is elpis, hope.

The manuscripts involved read hope. This is not primarily a textual dispute.

Faith and hope are close companions, but they are not the same word.

In this verse, faith is a legitimate minor translation error.

Some listeners may feel nervous when they hear those words.

But ask what has happened.

Have we lost the doctrine of faith?

No.

Have we lost the doctrine of hope?

No.

Has God's promise become uncertain?

No. The verse still says, "for he is faithful that promised."

Correcting faith to hope makes the exhortation more precise. It does not remove an essential doctrine.

Acts 19:37 contains another example.

The town clerk is trying to quiet a crowd devoted to the goddess Diana.

He says of Paul's companions:

"For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess."

The Greek word means temple robbers or persons guilty of sacrilege.

The speaker is not referring to Christian churches.

He is speaking in a city famous for a pagan temple.

Robbers of temples is clearer and more precise.

That is a real translation problem for a modern reader.

What doctrine has been destroyed?

None.

The wording occurs in a civil official's description of two men during a riot.

It does not define the church or alter the gospel.

James 5:16 says:

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."

Modern readers may hear faults and think of being impatient, disorganized or forgetful.

The Greek word behind the KJV can mean trespasses, offenses or transgressions.

Some Greek witnesses have the ordinary word for sins.

The KJV's faults was capable of carrying a stronger moral sense than many people hear today.

The verse concerns real wrongdoing.

It does not require us to announce every private sin to an entire congregation.

It also does not teach that forgiveness can be received only by confessing to a priest.

It teaches honest confession, mutual prayer and spiritual care.

Isaiah 45:7 may be the most troubling example when it is read with a narrow modern definition.

God says:

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."

Does God create moral wickedness in people?

The Hebrew word *ra* can refer to wickedness, but it can also refer to calamity, adversity, harm or disaster.

Look at the contrast.

God forms light and creates darkness.

He makes peace or well-being and creates the corresponding calamity.

The chapter declares God's sovereignty over rulers, nations, prosperity and judgment.

James 1:13 says:

"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

God rules over calamity and judgment.

God is not the author of sin and does not entice people to wickedness.

The KJV uses evil in a historically broader English sense.

If we force only the modern moral definition into Isaiah 45:7, we make Isaiah contradict James unnecessarily.

Let us summarize those four passages.

Hebrews 10:23 contains a minor translation error.

Acts 19:37 contains wording that is misleading today.

James 5:16 is defensible but can sound too weak.

Isaiah 45:7 uses an older, broader meaning of evil.

Not one destroys a Biblical doctrine.

Now we come to Easter in Acts 12:4.

The KJV says that Herod imprisoned Peter, "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people."

The Greek word is pascha.

It is the regular New Testament word for Passover.

Older English sometimes used Easter in connection with the Jewish Passover season.

That makes the KJV wording historically explainable.

But some defenses go much farther.

They argue that the Jewish Passover was already over and that Herod was waiting for a separate pagan Easter celebration.

The text does not establish that theory.

Acts 12:3 says Peter was arrested "during the days of unleavened bread."

Luke 22:1 says:

"Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover."

Luke can use Passover language for the connected festival period.

We do not need to invent a pagan holiday in Herod's calendar to protect the KJV.

Easter in Acts 12:4 is a historically understandable English choice whose meaning is no longer clear.

Passover is the clearest meaning for a reader today.

Then there is the unicorn.

Job 39:9-10 says:

"Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee?"

The Hebrew word is re'em.

The animal is real, wild, powerful and resistant to domestication.

Lexical evidence most strongly points toward a wild ox or another powerful wild bovine.

The extinct aurochs is often proposed.

The KJV inherited unicorn through a long Greek and Latin translation tradition.

Older readers did not necessarily picture the gentle white horse with one spiral horn found in modern fantasy stories.

Deuteronomy 33:17 also speaks of the animal's horns in the plural.

Can we identify its exact species with absolute certainty?

No.

Evidence points strongly toward a wild ox. The precise zoological identification retains some uncertainty.

What we can reject is the accusation that the Bible is teaching children to believe in a magical horse.

Now consider three familiar claims involving Holy Ghost, Jesus and Lucifer.

First, Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit refer to the same divine Person.

Ghost was once ordinary English for spirit.

The KJV itself uses both Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit.

The underlying Greek word is pneuma.

When another translation says Holy Spirit, it has not removed the third Person of the Trinity.

It has represented the same Greek expression in present English.

Second, the Greek name Iesous can represent Jesus or Joshua.

Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 use Jesus in the KJV where the historical person is Joshua son of Nun.

Hebrews 4:8 says:

"For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day."

The verse does not say Jesus Christ failed to give spiritual rest.

It says Joshua did not give Israel God's final rest when he led them into Canaan.

The KJV follows the Greek form of the name, but Joshua would prevent confusion for modern English readers.

Third, Isaiah 14:12 says:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

Lucifer came into English through Latin. It means a light-bearer or morning star.

The Hebrew describes a shining one, son of the dawn.

Isaiah 14:4 introduces the passage as a proverb against the king of Babylon.

Verse 16 asks, "Is this the man that made the earth to tremble?"

Many Christians see the pride and fall of Satan reflected behind the earthly king.

That is a possible theological interpretation.

It does not prove that Lucifer was an inspired personal name that God assigned to Satan.

If a translation uses shining one or morning star, it has not called Satan Jesus.

The Bible uses the same kind of image for different subjects according to context.

Jesus is a lion, but Satan is also compared to a roaring lion.

Jesus is the true light, yet believers are told to let their light shine.

Shared imagery does not create shared identity.

We have now examined changed English, inclusive masculine language, disputed renderings and genuine translation problems.

Let us put every example through an essential-doctrine test.

Does hope disappear because Hebrews 10:23 says faith?

No.

Does the church disappear because Acts 19:37 should say temples?

No.

Does confession disappear because James says faults?

No.

Does God become morally wicked because an old use of evil included calamity?

No.

Does the death and resurrection of Christ depend on Easter in Acts 12:4?

No.

Does any saving truth depend on the exact species of the re'em?

No.

Does the Trinity depend on whether English says Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit?

No.

Does the deity of Christ depend on using Jesus rather than Joshua for the son of Nun?

No.

Does the reality of Satan depend on treating Lucifer as a personal name?

No.

A correctable word is not a corrupted gospel.

A difficult verse is not a destroyed Bible.

A translator's limitation is not a limitation in God.

The KJV clearly teaches that there is one God in three Persons.

It clearly teaches the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ.

It clearly teaches His virgin birth, sinless life, substitutionary death and bodily resurrection.

It clearly teaches salvation by grace through faith.

It clearly teaches repentance, forgiveness, resurrection and final judgment.

No essential Biblical doctrine is destroyed by any of the translation questions examined today.

So can the King James Version be fully trusted?

Yes.

It can be trusted as a faithful, authoritative and spiritually sufficient English translation of God's inspired Word.

It can be trusted to reveal God, identify sin, proclaim Christ and communicate the gospel.

It can be trusted for doctrine, correction, instruction and Christian living.

But fully trusted should not mean that its translators were inspired apostles.

It should not mean that every English word remains equally clear after more than four centuries of language change.

It should not mean that every translation choice is the only possible choice.

It should not mean that asking about Greek or Hebrew is an attack on God.

Our final authority is the inspired Scripture that the KJV translators sought faithfully to represent.

The translators themselves directed readers back to those Hebrew and Greek fountains.

Mature confidence does not fear an honest question.

Mature confidence can say that Hebrews 10:23 should say hope and still preach confidently from the KJV.

Mature confidence can explain that conversation means conduct without pretending everyone already knows it.

Mature confidence can love the familiar sound of Holy Ghost while recognizing that Holy Spirit refers to the same divine Person.

Mature confidence does not need a pagan-Easter theory or a fantasy-animal theory to defend the Bible.

Mature confidence follows Acts 17:11 and searches the Scriptures to see whether these things are so.

If you love the King James Bible, you do not need to be embarrassed by that love.

Generations have heard Christ proclaimed through its words.

Believers have carried it into pulpits, prisons, hospitals, battlefields and quiet rooms where grief made every other book seem small.

Continue reading it.

Continue memorizing it.

Continue teaching it.

When an old word is unclear, learn what it meant.

When a rendering is disputed, examine the evidence.

When a translation choice is genuinely imperfect, acknowledge it without panic.

And please do not become so occupied with defending the Bible that you fail to obey the Bible already in your hands.

We can win an argument about the word conversation while our conversation does not become the gospel of Christ.

We can defend "Be careful for nothing" while anxiety controls every decision.

We can argue about confessing faults while refusing to admit that we have wronged someone.

We can insist that Scripture is perfect while resisting its reproof and correction.

The purpose of this study is not to make us better at winning translation arguments.

It is to help us hear and obey the Word of God.

Second Timothy 3:15 says that the holy Scriptures "are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The most important question is not only which Bible you trust.

The most important question is whether you have trusted the Savior revealed in that Bible.

The KJV tells us plainly that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

It tells us that the wages of sin is death.

It tells us that God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

It tells us that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

It tells us, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

If you have never trusted Jesus Christ, you may come to Him today.

You are not saved by winning a Bible translation argument.

You are not saved by owning a particular edition.

You are saved by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

If you are ready to trust Him, you may pray with me.

The words do not save you. Jesus saves the person who genuinely turns to Him in faith.

Our Heavenly Father, I know that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, was buried and rose again. I turn from trusting myself and place my faith in Jesus Christ. Please forgive me, save me and begin changing my life according to Your Word. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

If you trusted Christ today, please speak with me after the service or let one of our church family know.

We want to pray with you and help you begin reading the Bible for yourself.

Perhaps you already know Christ but have been afraid that one difficult translation question could cause your entire faith to collapse.

Your faith does not rest on an old English definition.

It rests upon the living God and the Lord Jesus Christ whom Scripture reveals.

Perhaps someone has made you feel uneducated because you love the KJV.

You should not be ashamed of reading a translation that has faithfully proclaimed Christ for generations.

Perhaps you have questioned another Christian's salvation because that person uses a different translation.

The gospel tells us who saves. Jesus saves.

Our task is to examine words carefully, speak truthfully and treat Christ's people graciously.

Take your King James Bible home.

Read it.

Believe what it teaches.

Obey what you understand.

Ask when you do not understand.

The truth has nothing to fear from honest examination.

Let us pray.

Father, thank You for the Scriptures that make us wise unto salvation. Thank You for the scholars and translators whose labor placed Your Word into our language. Guard us from pride, fear and careless accusation. Give us confidence without pretending, honesty without contempt and love without compromise. Help us become people who do more than defend the Bible. Help us hear it, believe it and obey it. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Aloha Nui Loa.

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

THE BIBLE TRANSLATION QUESTION

A TEN-PART SERIES | PART ONE OF TEN

**CAN THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE
BE FULLY TRUSTED?**

PASTOR'S COMMENTARY

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Pastor & Teacher

Reason Together Church

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Bring your questions. Open your Bible.
Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Introduction

RTS-100 asks whether Christians can fully trust the King James Version while acknowledging changed English, inclusive masculine language, disputed translation choices and a limited number of genuine translation errors. The sermon answers yes. The KJV faithfully communicates the message and doctrines of the inspired Scriptures. That conclusion does not require treating its translators as inspired apostles.

This Commentary follows the sermon in order. It expands the historical and linguistic material, identifies the degree of certainty behind each conclusion and provides additional help for teaching or discussion. It does not attempt an extended comparison with individual modern translations. Edition history and printing differences belong in RTS-101.

1 The Meaning of Full Trust

Trustworthiness and Independent Inerrancy

The expression fully trusted can carry two different meanings. It may describe a translation that reliably performs the purpose for which Scripture was given. It may also be used to claim that every translation decision is incapable of correction. The sermon affirms the first meaning and rejects the need for the second.

Second Timothy 3:15-17 gives a Biblical test. Scripture makes a person wise unto salvation, teaches doctrine, reproves error, provides correction and instructs believers in righteousness. The KJV plainly performs those functions. A reader can learn the gospel and every essential Christian doctrine from it without consulting another English Bible.

That practical and doctrinal sufficiency does not make the English translation a second set of inspired autographs. Its authority is derived from the inspired text it represents. This is not a reduction of authority. It locates authority where Scripture and the KJV translators located it, in the Word God originally gave.

A Careful Formula

A useful formula for teaching is: the KJV is the Word of God in English insofar as it faithfully communicates the inspired Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. The phrase insofar as does not imply general suspicion. It states the relationship shared by every translation.

2 Inspiration Preservation Transmission Translation and Printing

Inspiration

Second Peter 1:21 describes holy men of God speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Inspiration belongs uniquely to God's act through the Biblical writers. The term should not be expanded to include every later person involved in copying, translating or printing Scripture.

Preservation

Preservation describes God's providential protection of His Word through history. Christians may disagree about the precise mechanism or textual theory while agreeing that God did not allow His revelation to vanish. Preservation does not require claiming that every manuscript or printed copy is identical.

Textual Transmission

Textual transmission concerns handwritten copies and the comparison of surviving manuscripts. A textual question asks which wording belongs in the source text. A translation question asks how that source wording should be expressed in another language. James 5:16 involves both questions because the Greek witnesses contain a variation and the KJV's English word has also changed in perceived force.

Translation and Printing

Translation requires interpretation because vocabulary, grammar and idiom do not line up mechanically across languages. Printing reproduces the translators' work and may introduce a separate class of errors. RTS-100 needs only the distinction. The history of particular KJV printings is reserved for RTS-101.

3 The KJV Translators Position

Their Stated Purpose

The preface titled The Translators to the Reader says the translators sought "to make a good one better." This wording recognizes the value of earlier English Bibles. It does not present 1611 as the first moment English readers possessed God's Word.

The translators described Hebrew and Greek as the sources or fountains. They consulted previous English translations, ancient versions, other European translations and scholarly comments. Their working method included comparison and revision.

Alternative Renderings

The preface defends marginal alternatives because some words and senses were uncertain. It also states, "Variety of translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures." The translators did not impose a rule that every Hebrew or Greek term must always receive one fixed English equivalent.

What They Did Not Claim

The preface distinguishes the translators from apostles and apostolic men who possessed an extraordinary privilege of the Spirit. It also acknowledges imperfections in translations while maintaining that even a less precise translation may properly be called the Word of God.

The historical evidence therefore does not support a claim that the translators regarded every English word they selected as a new act of verbal inspiration.

4 Changed English

Perfect

Perfect may express completeness, maturity or fitness for a purpose. In 2 Timothy 3:17, the parallel expression "thoroughly furnished" supports the sense of being complete or fully equipped. The word should not automatically be read as absolute sinlessness.

Conversation

Conversation commonly described conduct or a manner of life. Philippians 1:27 concerns a life worthy of the gospel. First Peter uses the word repeatedly with this older sense. Modern readers who hear only spoken interaction will narrow the command.

Careful

In Philippians 4:6, careful means anxious or burdened with care. The verse does not oppose prudent attention. The surrounding call to prayer shows that Paul addresses anxiety.

Letteth

In 2 Thessalonians 2:7, letteth means hinders or restrains. This older sense survives in the legal phrase "without let or hindrance." Applying the dominant modern sense allows would reverse the statement.

Appearance

The Greek *eidos* in 1 Thessalonians 5:22 can denote form, outward shape or kind. Verses 19-22 concern testing claims, retaining what is good and rejecting what is evil. The verse provides a stronger command than avoiding suspicious appearances. It directs the believer to reject evil in every manifestation.

These examples should be called semantic changes rather than translation failures. Their practical danger is real because a sincere reader can assign the wrong modern meaning to the right printed word.

5 Masculine Language That Includes Women

Greek *anthropos* can mean a male person, a human being or humanity. An indefinite expression rendered "any man" may mean anyone. The plural *adelphoi* can address a congregation of fellow believers that includes women.

Historical English also used masculine forms generically more often than present English does. Context remains decisive. Some masculine references are specific to men and must not be broadened. Others plainly include women. Responsible explanation avoids both automatic exclusion and automatic alteration.

The doctrinal importance is pastoral. Women in a congregation should understand when a promise, warning or command addressed to "brethren" belongs to the whole church.

6 Hebrews 10 23

Evidence

The Greek phrase is *ten homologian tes elpidos*, the confession of the hope. *Elpis* means hope. The principal Greek textual traditions agree at this point, so the difference is not caused by the translators following a different manuscript reading.

Evaluation

The KJV's faith is theologically related to hope but does not precisely translate the noun. Calling this a minor translation error is warranted. It should not be exaggerated into a doctrinal corruption.

Doctrinal Effect

The verse still urges steadfast public confession and grounds perseverance in the faithfulness of God. The KJV teaches hope in many other passages. No doctrine depends on this isolated substitution.

7 Acts 19 37

Evidence

The Greek hierosylous refers to temple robbers or sacrilegious persons. The setting is Ephesus and the civic defense of Artemis or Diana. The speaker cannot be describing robbery from Christian congregations.

Evaluation

Churches once could refer to sacred buildings more broadly, but that is not what present readers naturally hear. Temples gives the historical meaning directly. The KJV wording is a legitimate translation problem for current use.

Doctrinal Effect

The verse reports the town clerk's assessment of Paul's companions. It establishes no doctrine about the nature or property of a Christian church.

8 James 5 16

Text and Translation

The Greek text underlying the KJV reads paraptomata. The term can mean trespasses, transgressions or offenses. Some early Greek witnesses read hamartias, sins. The critical-text reading is therefore a textual transmission question. The force of faults is an English translation question.

Evaluation

Faults was capable of a serious moral meaning. Modern usage often reduces it to weaknesses or undesirable habits, so explanation is needed. The KJV rendering is defensible for its source text but can now understate the verse.

Pastoral Boundaries

The verse teaches confession of real wrongdoing and mutual prayer. It does not specify that every private sin must be publicly disclosed. Other passages guide confession according to the person harmed and the scope of the offense.

9 Isaiah 45 7

Lexical Range

Hebrew ra has a broad range. It can describe moral evil, but it can also denote adversity, distress, harm or calamity. Context must determine the intended category.

Context

Isaiah 45 contrasts light with darkness and shalom with ra. Shalom in this setting describes peace or well-being. Its counterpart is calamity. God asserts sovereignty over Cyrus, nations and historical judgment.

Theological Safeguard

James 1:13 denies that God tempts people with evil. Habakkuk 1:13 describes God as of purer eyes than to approve evil. Isaiah 45:7 should therefore be understood as God's sovereignty over judgment and disaster, not as divine authorship of moral sin.

The KJV rendering reflects an older broad use of evil. It becomes misleading only when the modern reader supplies the narrower moral sense without consulting context.

10 Easter in Acts 12 4

Greek and Context

Pascha is the regular New Testament term for Passover. Acts 12:3 places Peter's arrest during the days of unleavened bread. Luke 22:1 says the Feast of Unleavened Bread "is called the Passover." This evidence permits pascha to refer to the connected festival period.

Historical English

Earlier English usage could employ Easter for the Jewish Passover season. Tyndale used forms of Easter widely before introducing or standardizing Passover in his Old Testament work. The KJV's isolated use therefore has a historical explanation.

Claim That Should Be Rejected

The proposal that Herod was waiting for a separate pagan Easter celebration after the Jewish feast is not established by Luke's language or narrative sequence. A defensible historical explanation should not be replaced with unsupported speculation.

Passover is the clearest present-English sense. The KJV wording does not insert a pagan festival into Christian doctrine.

11 Unicorn and Reem

Evidence

The Hebrew re'em occurs nine times. Its contexts describe strength, prominent horns and resistance to domestication. Job 39:9-12 presents an animal that cannot be trusted to perform ordinary farm labor. Deuteronomy 33:17 speaks of its horns in the plural.

Comparative lexical evidence points toward a wild bovine. Wild ox is the standard modern identification and the extinct aurochs is often proposed.

Translation History

The KJV inherited unicorn from older Greek and Latin traditions. Historical uses of unicorn were not limited to the modern fantasy horse. The term could function as a label for an unfamiliar or supposedly one-horned animal.

Uncertainty

The exact species cannot be demonstrated beyond question. Wild ox is the best-supported sense, while aurochs is a probable identification rather than a certain one.

12 Holy Ghost Jesus Joshua and Lucifer

Holy Ghost

Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit translate the same Greek expression and identify the same divine Person. Pneuma may mean spirit, wind or breath according to context. Ghost reflects older English usage. The KJV itself uses Holy Spirit in places such as Luke 11:13 and Ephesians 1:13.

Jesus and Joshua

Greek Iesous represents the Hebrew name behind both Jesus and Joshua. In Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8, context identifies Joshua son of Nun. The KJV's Jesus is historically explainable as transliteration but creates present-English confusion. The passage contrasts Joshua's limited rest in Canaan with God's final rest. It does not report a failure by Jesus Christ.

Lucifer

Hebrew helem in Isaiah 14:12 is associated with shining and is followed by "son of the morning." Latin lucifer means light-bearer or morning star. Isaiah 14:4 names the king of Babylon as the immediate target and verse 16 calls the figure a man.

A secondary reference to Satan remains a theological interpretation held by many Christians. It should be distinguished from the lexical claim that Lucifer is Satan's revealed personal name. Rendering the image as morning star does not identify Satan with Christ. Shared imagery does not establish shared identity.

13 The Essential Doctrine Test

None of the examined issues removes an essential doctrine. The KJV clearly teaches the Trinity, Christ's deity and humanity, the virgin birth, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, salvation by grace through faith, the authority of Scripture, resurrection and judgment.

The test should be stated with care. It does not claim that wording never matters. Accurate words matter because they affect understanding. It claims that these particular problems are limited and that the KJV's teaching as a whole supplies the correct doctrine abundantly.

14 Pastoral Use

The study should produce confidence without fear and honesty without contempt. A listener who loves the KJV should feel respected. A listener who recognizes translation difficulties should not be forced to conceal evidence. Neither listener should use this subject to question another Christian's salvation.

The pastor may continue preaching ordinarily from the KJV. When a word has changed or a rendering is imperfect, a brief explanation can give the congregation the intended sense. That practice treats the congregation as capable of learning and treats Scripture as worthy of careful attention.

Pastoral Summary

The KJV can be fully trusted as a faithful English witness to the inspired Scriptures. Its few correctable renderings do not invalidate the translation. Changed-English words require teaching. Disputed choices require context. Genuine errors require honest acknowledgment. The KJV translators remain learned servants of Scripture, not inspired apostles.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What is the difference between trusting a translation and declaring every translation decision infallible?
2. Which purpose of Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:15-17 does the KJV fail to perform?
3. Why must inspiration, preservation, transmission, translation and printing be distinguished?
4. What did the KJV translators mean when they sought to make a good translation better?
5. Why did they defend alternative renderings in the margins?
6. How can changed English produce a misunderstanding without proving an original translation error?
7. What does conversation mean in Philippians 1:27?
8. What does letteth mean in 2 Thessalonians 2:7?
9. How does context clarify appearance in 1 Thessalonians 5:22?
10. When may masculine language include both sexes?
11. Why should Hebrews 10:23 read hope?
12. Why does Acts 19:37 refer to temple robbers?
13. What moral force can faults carry in James 5:16?
14. Why does evil in Isaiah 45:7 describe calamity rather than moral wickedness?
15. What does Luke's use of Passover contribute to Acts 12:4?
16. What evidence points toward a wild ox for re'em?
17. Why do Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit name the same Person?
18. Why does Jesus in Hebrews 4:8 refer to Joshua?
19. What is certain and uncertain about Lucifer in Isaiah 14?
20. Why does no examined problem destroy an essential Biblical doctrine?

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, thank You for giving and preserving Your Word. Give us confidence that rests in truth, humility that receives correction and love that refuses careless accusation. Help us read the KJV with understanding, explain it faithfully and obey the Savior it reveals. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Selected Sources and Further Reading

[The Translators to the Reader](#)

[Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter One](#)

[Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy](#)

[Trinitarian Bible Society Doctrine of Holy Scripture](#)

[Webster 1828 Conversation](#)

[Webster 1828 Let](#)

[Greek Elpis](#)

[Greek Hierosylos](#)

[Greek Paraptoma](#)

[Hebrew Ra](#)

[Greek Pascha](#)

[Hebrew Reem](#)

[Greek Pneuma](#)

[Greek Iesous](#)

[Hebrew Helel](#)

[Daniel Wallace on Lucifer and Isaiah 14](#)