

Problem Criticism

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 11 June 2019 18:51

There are many bad and good criticisms of the King James Authorized Version of the Bible, too many to mention here. Below is criticism by a Christian who is 100% a KJ supporter. For me this is a problem criticism, and I explain why. The points raised are answered by myself in sufficient depth to be readable to most believers. My own responses are preceded by 'KBN'. The original criticism is indented and shown in parts. The critic is referred to only as 'R'. My concern is to show an alternative view to his, because I recognize some flaws. In no way, then, is my criticism any kind of denigration, but more of a reminder to think of all aspects of an argument.

“What worries me is that people continue to say that the King James translators wrote this or did this or thought this. If the King James translators are responsible for choosing the words in the Bible, it is not Scripture. It is only Scripture if God chose the words in the Bible.”

KBN: Understand that the criticism is written by a Christian whose allegiance is total towards the KJAV (or, as he prefers, the KJB). Perhaps – and this is only a guess – the critic does not fully realize what happens during the translation process. The process in the case of the KJAV was this – the king wished to have a Bible translation that referred back to the 'original' manuscripts, so as to correct previous errors and to eliminate Romanist deceptions. The moral or spiritual status of the king was irrelevant. I see the king being led by God to bring about a version that was the closest we can get to what the Bible-writers said. The originals were not available, so the translators checked the time-line of manuscripts based on the originals.

There were 47 scholars involved in the translation work and, as far as I can tell, each was a believer. They were all commanded to translate as scripture demands, and not by virtue of denominational preferences. The final version was to be readable in that day's English. It is my view that no other version has surpassed the KJAV. Thus, the aim was to translate as accurately as possible, with many checks and sub-checks. The version is only named after the king because it was he who required the work to be done. And the translators worked according to conscience, knowledge, and a desire to be true to God. Therefore, neither the king nor the translators rewrote the Bible. They simply translated from the Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, according to the original manuscripts made available by faithful copyists.

This means R's worry has no foundation. They did indeed choose the words to use in any text, just as I choose my interpretation for Sunday study use. It works this way:

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1.

The original words in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, mostly have a number of possible meanings.

2.

Thus, each Bible verse can list sometimes many possible meanings for each single word.

3.

The translator looks at each word and chooses the most accurate meaning. In some texts the word in question can have multiple meanings, and they may not all be the same. This can be called the 'interpretation'. It is my view that the KJAV translators were guided by the Holy Spirit in their choice of meanings for individual words.

4.

To enable a proper translation, the translator must also check out the context, because this often regulates what meanings a text can have.

5.

The believing translator will also rely on discernment, a gift given by God, so that the Holy Spirit guides his mind to apply the best possible meaning.

The above is what the KJAV translators were commanded to do by the king, but they did it anyway because they were believers. And, whilst there were several committees to spread the work equally, each member was expert in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic, or all three, and everything they translated was checked by other experts as the work continued. There were many meetings to discuss their choices.

Yes, God chose the words to be used by the writers – Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic (especially in the translation of Daniel, which was all Aramaic). These words were taken by the translators and given the most suitable meaning as prescribed by the original words themselves. The translators, then, did not use words *they* chose, but worked with the words provided by God,

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giving the closest meaning possible. When I teach others or write articles/books, I base what I say on the KJAV, but need to interpret what is said, according to the original wording and meanings. This is what preaching and teaching is all about.

I can assure R that the KJAV work was necessary because the original wording may not make much sense to modern readers. This is why an up-to-date version was needed that was true to the original. For example, of Exodus 1:1 the translators said

“Now these [are] the names of the children of Israel, which came into Egypt; every man and his household came with Jacob.”

The original Hebrew says:

“and these names of sons-of Israel the ones coming Egypt-ward with Jacob man and household of him they came.”

I chose this text randomly because it gives the idea but is also easy to understand. Note it is not written in the same way as English is written. Many other texts can be VERY complex! If we look, for example, at a famous text, John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The Greek reads:

“thus for loves the God the system/world as-besides/so-that the Son of Him the only-generated/only-begotten He gives that every the one-believing into Him no should be being destroyed/should be perishing but may-be-having life eonian.”

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If the translators used these exact words and spaces etc., how many would understand the Greek? And, if only the original words are used, they must be in Greek! It is therefore my view that God DID choose the meanings given by the translators, so they could be read by people who use the English language. It must be remembered that the translators were obliged to use the same words as found in the original manuscripts (and dutifully copied precisely by copyists); these same words had certain meanings, and the correct meaning depended partly on the context. The translators did not, then, simply invent their own words or meanings, but were true to the original words given by God to the Bible writers.

R might argue this is not good enough, but I would then refer him to the very first Bible text that led me to study Greek and Hebrew, nearly 50 years ago. I invite R to read it. 1 Samuel 24:3.

“And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave.”

It was not until I looked at the meanings of each word that I realized there was more than one option! I had to look at the possible meanings and apply them to the text, The text itself was from the KJAV... but, I was curious about what was meant by the words “*cover his feet*”. Yes, I could continue to simply quote the words... but this would not convey the actual meanings of the text. So, I had to interpret what the text said. I found that ‘cover his feet’ had two possible meanings, and it this simple fact that showed me the Bible was dynamic and immensely exciting.

The phrase *either* meant he went to sleep, *or* he went into the cave because he needed a toilet. This is where discernment came into it... if he went in to urinate/defecate, he would easily hear the breathing of the 400 men hidden in the back. He would also have heard David approach him and would certainly have felt him cutting the bottom off his garment! Therefore, the meaning HAD to be, that Saul went into the cave for a brief respite, perhaps out of the sun, to sleep. This revelation showed me that when reading even the KJAV it does not always say what we think it says! We must use our minds and hearts!

“The King James translators wrote the margin notes in the 1611 edition and they are often used to justify heretical changes in the new versions.”

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KBN: Personally, I do not take much notice of margin notes, though they can be useful at times. The fact that they are used by heretics to justify (or, rather, rationalize) their heretical changes to scripture is an entirely separate issue. Their heretical use does not thereby mean the KJAV notes are invalid.

“The words in italics cannot be words added by the King James translators, because adding to Scripture is forbidden. The words in italics are a part of the perfect translation from one language to another.”

KBN: There is a misconception here. The words were put in italics to show they were NOT in the original language. Thus, they did not add to scripture. They were used as mechanisms to aid readers to better understand God’s words by allowing them to ‘flow’ and this is no different from the way preachers and teachers work. If they were inserted without this knowledge, then they WOULD indeed have added to scripture. Even in preaching or teaching, if we use the same approach advocated by R, then any words used by the preacher/teacher would have to be simply a repetition of what Bible texts say. In my own work I say what the KJAV says, and then I interpret those words so they mean exactly the same, but in language my hearers or readers will be able to readily understand, applied to their own lives. I also advise them to look at the Hebrew/Greek themselves and not to just accept what I say without checking.

Also, sometimes the word ‘The’ is often not found in the Greek. This is because it is usually assumed or implied, which was how koine Greek appeared in those days. To place this word in italics allows the modern mind to ‘see’ it in English. Many other words have thus been given as useful links, though they are not found in the original languages. To say they ought not be there is to misunderstand why they are there! They are not added from nowhere – they are left unsaid in the original, but given in the KJAV to help show the meaning.

“So many bible college lies are told about translation in general and translation of the Bible in particular. “Some words don’t translate into another language.” Hogwash! Every word from any language will translate into another language. It may take two paragraphs to do so, but it is still a perfect translation if done correctly.”

KBN: Yes, many Bible colleges tell lies about God’s word, and lies about the KJAV. But, it is *true* that some words in one language may not be translated easily into another language. I have read of their difficulties in some languages, especially if they are in remote, isolated areas

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previously unknown to westerners. Words cannot be translated properly, so the translators must find alternatives which are NOT exact but are the nearest words in another language. Otherwise, the new readers would not comprehend what was written. Yes, if a person is to be saved by reading these obscure language Bibles, the Holy Spirit will overcome any problems of understanding – but, mankind is given gifts by God to help others in the matter of reading scripture. I have come across many errors made by people who say we must only speak scripture – because they do not understand, say, the culture of the Jews, use of Hebraisms, and so on. The same scripture must be faithfully written in modern language – and the KJAV does this superbly, better than any later version.

Now look at what you said – that it might take a few paragraphs to effect a translation. Is this, then, a ‘perfect translation’? No, it is the nearest. If it takes several paragraphs to describe a meaning for a word, then it is not the original. And it cannot be translated into the KJAV. What you are talking about is not, then, about the KJAV, but about translation from a foreign, often unknown language, into a bible that follows the KJAV in thought. You say that proper translation “*if done properly*” will translate a word in one language into a word in the other language. But, if it takes “*two paragraphs*” then the translation is NOT the same as the original word! Can you see my point?

“What bible colleges have in common is that they teach that the King James translators are responsible for choosing the words in the King James Bible. Some teach that it is the best translation. Some teach that it is the worst translation. What few people realize is that both beliefs are the same. Both beliefs teach that the Bible is the word of men, just like atheists believe. If the KJB is God’s words, then everything Scripture says about itself applies—it is perfect, it is pure, etc. But if the KJB is merely the product of the KJ translators, then teachers have the authority to change whatever they will.”

KBN: With respect, R, you are again mixing two separate issues – the language of the KJAV and heresies conducted by others. I have already covered the facts about translation (above). The KJAV translators believed the scriptures are of God and they translated words according to this belief, from Hebrew/Greek/Aramaic. The KJAV is not the product of translators, because they translated from the original languages into English of the day (a version that remains the best, even now). In other words, they did not have authority to translate as they wished – this was done by later modern versions and is a separate issue.

“This is playing right into the hands of Rome. Rome mocks the idea of Sola Scriptura. Too many people have believed the Bible college lie that “studying the Bible” means to use text books to find the mistakes or alternate meanings for each word.”

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KBN: Yes, *heretics* play into the hands of Rome. Anyone who reads scripture just to find fault or alternatives is blatantly wrong, and probably not a believer. In my own Bible studies I give the KJAV text. I hand out printed copies of the whole study, which can be taken home. In the notes I give relevant original language words with their meanings, meanings already contained in or inferred by the text. For us there are no errors in the KJAV. We take it as truth. So, your fear here is not with ourselves but with heretics.

“I am Norwegian. If I send a card that says “Happy Birthday”, I don’t expect someone to get a Norwegian/English dictionary to figure out what I REALLY meant. But this is what teachers do every day. Shame.”

KBN: I sometimes receive or look at articles written in a language I do not understand. So, I use a translation tool. This is not a shame, but is necessary for proper understanding of the text. So, if you sent me a card saying ‘Happy Birthday’, but in Norwegian, I would have to look it up in a Norwegian dictionary and would assume that the meaning given is the correct one. But, if you sent a card in English, I would not need to translate it. Teachers might misuse scripture every day if they are heretical, but genuine believers use scripture properly.

“The Bible says what it means and means what it says. I personally believe that “Holy Ghost” was changed to “Holy Spirit” because the Bible mentions different kinds of spirits and it helps the Charismatic cause to claim that these spirits mentioned are the “Holy Spirit”. But, that is just my opinion.”

KBN: I agree. The Bible is exact and cannot be faulted nor changed. That heretics DO change things is a different issue. Let me be blunt – I could personally believe whatever I like, but that does not make me correct! We know that one committee translated *hagion pneuma* as ‘Holy Ghost’ and another translated the same text ‘Holy Spirit’. There is no difference between the two renditions, for both mean the same things. Your criticism is only valid in this instance if you are talking about modern versions, which deliberately misuse scripture in favour of a sectarian religious opinion, where personal opinions are given instead of actual translations. (Note: 99% of modern versions are erroneous because of this, and they are mainly not translations anyway, but paraphrases).

Allusions by heretics to different ‘spirits’ are invalid because they take no notice of the actual

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languages used in Hebrew/Greek/Aramaic. Again, this refers to heresy and not to genuine translation.

“It took thirty years for me to learn that the KJB is the Bible. That is because preachers and radio preachers mostly teach it is the worst version, while they are selling ecumenical multiversionism. Even the preachers and radio preachers that use the KJB will “correct” it with words from the NIV, NAS, etc., also to promote ecumenical multiversionism as they are taught in college. 2 Timothy 3 says that all Scripture is inspired. The text makes it very clear that Scripture does not consist of the “original languages” or the “original autographs”. Scripture is something that Timothy could hold in his hand, read, believe and practice. Not tear apart with text books.”

I am really glad you finally realized the KJAV is the best version of the Bible, but your fear of the heretical fake ‘bibles’ is making you say things that cannot be verified. Yes, many today abuse and misuse scripture... but, as I have said, these are separate issues and must be condemned. They are separate from genuine translation by saved men.

Your statement concerning 2 Timothy 3:16 is the basis on which I teach (see my book on doctrine). Yes, ALL scripture is inspired, or, as per Greek, divinely breathed (translated as ‘inspired’). It is indeed the sole source of doctrine and everything we say and do. What Timothy held in his hand was the Torah or Old Testament. The New had yet to be compiled and published. Timothy’s own book is in Greek. Because it was written in Greek, this was the original language. What else can we call it? It was God breathing His own divine words into the disciple, who then passed it on verbally and in writing.

And because what he and the others wrote were from God and put into writing, they were, logically, the ‘original autographs’. What else could they be? God gave His word to the writers of the New Testament (and Old) in the language they spoke. These were passed on to us by translators. I certainly do not “tear (it) apart with text books”, nor do those who are like-minded. When I started to preach and teach I used to read many text books to confirm what I read. But, after the Holy Spirit showed me my error, I stopped relying on the words of others and solely used scripture.

I urge R not to be afraid of heretics, nor think the worst of those of us who speak of the KJAV. It is only called a ‘version’ because that is what it is – there were several before it existed, and, sadly, many more in modern times. For me the KJAV IS ‘the Bible’, as it is for many others I

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know and respect. Yet, as teachers we must look at the languages the Bible was written in, so we may interpret properly... interpretation being a legitimate activity valued in scripture. Did not Joseph receive dreams from God and yet had to provide Pharaoh with interpretation? Did not Daniel have to do the exact same thing? And does not scripture warn that no man may utter his own interpretation? This means that there can be false interpretation as well as genuine. The genuine interpretation is given by God to a believer in order to properly speak God's words.

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