

# 119

## MINISTRIES

*“The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below.”*

### Testing KJV-Onlyism

As followers of Yeshua the Messiah—Jesus Christ—we hold to the Bible as the inspired Word of God. But there are many different Bible versions. There’s the KJV, the ESV, the HCSB, the NASB, and so forth. And those are just some of the most popular ones.

All of these versions of the Bible are written in English. But as we all know, the Scriptures weren’t originally written in English but in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. The purpose of these English translations is to convey the meaning of the original words of Scripture to people who read and speak English.

But why are there *so many* different English versions of the Bible? Well, there are a couple of reasons for this. First, the English language has dramatically evolved over time. Thus, translations need to be updated so that modern readers can understand what they’re reading.

For example, when the King James Version was translated, the word “meat” had a broader meaning than it does today. So, when you read about “meat offerings” in the KJV, the text is actually referring to grain offerings (Leviticus 2:1ff). But when people read the word “meat” today, they think of meat from animals. That’s why modern translations use the word grain instead of meat, because “meat” has a narrower meaning today, and it doesn’t quite capture the meaning of the Hebrew term.

Again, the point of an English translation is to convey *the meaning* of the original words so that modern English readers can understand what they’re reading. So it makes perfect sense that modern translations would use more modern verbiage.

The second reason for the various English translations is due to different translation methodologies. For instance, some Bible versions translate as literally as possible, while others are more like paraphrases and geared toward readability. Every English translation is on a spectrum between a literal, word-for-word translation and a thought-for-thought translation. For instance, the ESV and NASB are on the more literal side of the spectrum, while translations like the NIV are on more of the thought-for-thought side. The drawback of the more literal translations is that they don’t read very smoothly at times. But the drawback of translations on the other side of the spectrum is that there are more liberties taken with the

text.

For more on this, see our teaching, [Which Bible?](#)

So, there are many different English translations of the Bible, some better than others for various reasons. But the fact that there are so many translations is actually a good thing. A good Bible study practice is to have multiple English translations and compare them as you examine certain passages.

Generally, people tend to find that they prefer one version of the Bible to others, which is natural. We all have our preferences. Some people prefer the KJV. Perhaps they find beauty in the poetic style of the translation. Maybe they grew up in a church that used the KJV, so it's the version they're used to.

We at 119 Ministries tend to use the ESV. This isn't because the ESV is necessarily better than something like the NASB. Both are modern, literal translations. We just like using the ESV most of the time. The Bible quotations in our teachings come from the ESV unless we've found that a different translation renders a particular verse in a way that fits better with what we're trying to communicate, and then we'll use that one. But if you ask us, "Which Bible version do you prefer?" the short answer would be the ESV.

There's nothing wrong with preferring a particular Bible version to another. You can expect most English translations to give a pretty accurate understanding of what the original words say. However, one group within Christianity holds a peculiar view when it comes to English translations of the Bible. This view has come to be known as KJV-Onlyism.

KJV-Onlyism goes far beyond personal preferences. Advocates of this view think that the KJV—the King James Version of the Bible—is not just the translation they feel is the best. No, it is the *only* translation that a believer should use. Using any other translation is to reject God's inspired words. They think that God has done something special with the KJV that he hasn't done with other English translations.

In other words, the KJV has a sacred status. It's not just a translation of the original inspired words; the *KJV translation itself* is inspired.

Steven Anderson is a fundamentalist Baptist and a well-known KJV-Onlyist. Listen to how he defines his position:

“First of all, I just want to tell you where I stand: I believe that the King James Bible is the Word of God. I believe that it is without error. And I believe that the other versions that are coming out—the NIV, the New American standard—are bad. They are of the devil. That's my position.”

In this same interview, Anderson goes even further. He questions the salvation of anyone who prefers other versions, like the NIV, to the KJV:

WHITE: “You have said you know the Bible is the word of God because you read the NIV and it doesn't do the same thing for you. And yet, I've talked to Christians who have been raised on that—good, godly people—and they can't read this [the KJV] and get anything out of it because it doesn't speak their language.

ANDERSON: “I think it's probably because they're not saved.”

WHITE: “So you would just dismiss their Christianity based on the Bible they use?”

ANDERSON: “If a person is reading the King James Bible, and they’re reading it and just like ‘I can’t understand this thing.’ And then they read the NIV and they love it, you know, why don’t they recognize the voice of the Shepherd? Why do they prefer the lie to the truth?”

So, according to KJV-Onlyists like Steven Anderson, if you prefer to read a different English translation to the KJV, you possibly aren’t even saved. Why? Because the KJV contains God’s words, and other English versions do not. They are a lie, a counterfeit. Therefore, to prefer a different translation is to prefer a lie.

Now, not all KJV-Onlyists are as extreme as Steven Anderson, but they all fundamentally affirm the idea that the KJV is without error and the only English translation believers should use. Let’s examine this doctrine.

## **Is the KJV an inspired translation?**

The fundamental assumption of KJV-Onlyism is that the KJV holds some sort of sacred status. It’s not a translation of the words of God; it *is* the words of God. To prefer a different English translation is to reject the “true” words of God. To criticize the KJV, in any way, is to attack the words of God.

In the minds of KJV-Onlyists, the KJV is without error. That means it cannot be improved upon by definition. There’s no verse in the KJV that can be translated better.

It’s on this assumption that the entire KJV-Only belief system is built. The KJV becomes the standard; all modern Bible versions are judged against it. Thus, if a new translation comes out and differs somehow from the KJV, it’s because men (or Satan) have tampered with it to corrupt the words of God.

Before we address this fundamental assumption that the KJV is the standard and modern versions are distortions, it’s worth pointing out the irony here.

To explain, it’s essential to understand that the KJV was not the first English translation. You had Wycliffe’s translation in 1380, credited with being the first English translation of the entire Bible. Then, in 1526, William Tyndale saw a need to produce a new English translation for various reasons. First, Wycliffe’s translation was based on the Latin Vulgate; Tyndale translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek. Second, Wycliffe’s translation was in Middle English; Tyndale translated into the modern English of his time so that the common person could understand. (Again, that’s the entire point of a translation—to convey the meaning of the original words so that regular people can understand them.)

From there, you had the Coverdale Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Bishop’s Bible, and then eventually the King James Bible. So, the King James translators themselves had to make the case for an updated English translation! They had to defend the idea that you have *to continue* to provide translations of the Bible in a language that people can understand!

In fact, some people opposed the KJV when it first came out, much like KJV-Onlyists today oppose modern translations. The Pilgrims didn’t like the KJV. They preferred the Geneva Bible and considered the KJV to be too liberal! So, you see the irony when KJV-Onlyists hold to their preferred translation as the standard against which modern translations are judged. The KJV itself was once judged as the “new

modern version.”

Another point of irony is that the KJV translators themselves were not KJV-Onlyists. The 1611 KJV Bible had an eleven-page preface titled, “The Translators to the Reader.” In this preface, the translators explain their views regarding Bible translation, why a modern translation must be produced to reflect the common language of the day, and humbly acknowledged their limitations. They even explained that their translations of certain obscure words were best guesses based on a lack of information, which is why they included marginal notes:

There be many words in the Scriptures, which be never found there but once (having neither brother nor neighbor, as the Hebrews speak), so that we cannot be helped by conference of places. Again, there be many rare names of certain birds, beasts and precious stones, etc. ... Now in such a case, does not a margin do well to admonish the Reader to seek further, and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily?

-“The Translators to the Reader,” Preface to the 1611 KJV

Here we see that the KJV translators had no concept of an “inspired translation.” If they did, they wouldn’t have put alternative renderings for certain words in the margins of their translation. They acknowledged the need for revision and correction over time as new information became available.

Once again, the KJV translators were not KJV-Onlyists. They defended the need for a modern translation in the common language and acknowledged their limitations in their translation and the need for revision and correction. These facts fly in the face of KJV-Onlyist claims that the KJV is itself inspired and that modern translations are perversions.

## **Does the KJV contain translational errors?**

Let’s challenge this KJV-Only claim directly. Is it true that the KJV is without error, which means that it cannot be improved upon by definition? Is it true that there’s no verse in the KJV that can be translated better? No, not at all. While the KJV is a good translation, it’s not a perfect translation. And this can be proven. We’ll just give a few examples:

### **Acts 12:4, KJV**

[And when he had apprehended him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after \*\*Easter\*\* to bring him forth to the people.](#)

You’ll notice that this verse mentions Easter. The problem is that the word isn’t Easter but Passover, translated from the Greek *pascha*. There was no distinct Christian holiday called “Easter” when Luke wrote the Book of Acts. To use the word Easter is, therefore, anachronistic and misleading. This is why all modern translations—the NKJV, HCSB, ESV, NASB, etc.—render the word “Passover.” To render *pascha* as “Easter” is an error.

KJV-Only advocates will try to find creative ways around this fact. Many claim that Easter is the correct translation because the text refers to a pagan holiday celebrated by Herod Agrippa. But that is forcing something onto the text. The verse directly before this one says that this was during the days of Unleavened Bread, which is directly connected to Passover. In fact, the term “Passover” is often used to refer to the entire celebration, including the seven days of Unleavened Bread. So when Luke uses Passover, he’s likely referring to the whole festival of Unleavened Bread. The idea that Pascha is

referring to a pagan holiday doesn't fit the context but is imposed onto the text; it's eisegesis.

There is no way around it. Translating *pascha* as Easter is a mistake. Let's look at another example:

### **Luke 9:1, KJV**

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power [*dynamis*] and authority [*exousia*] over all devils [*daimonion*], and to cure diseases.

So Yeshua gave his disciples "power and authority over all devils." The first problem is that the word translated "devils" should be demons. Devil is the Greek word *diabolos*, but the word here is *daimonion*. That's why modern translations have corrected this error. But putting that aside, notice that Yeshua gave his disciples "power," which is the Greek word *dynamis*, and "authority," which is the Greek word *exousia*. Now let's look at a passage from the following chapter:

### **Luke 10:19, KJV**

Behold, I give unto you power [*exousia*] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power [*dynamis*] of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

You'll notice that the first time "power" appears in this verse, it is translated from *exousia*. But *exousia* doesn't mean power. It means authority. It was translated correctly as "authority" in Luke 9:1 but incorrectly as "power" in Luke 10:19. Both passages are from the same author, and they are in a similar context. This is simply a mistake in translation. Again, this is why modern translations have fixed this error and have rendered the word in this verse correctly as "authority."

Now, these errors are certainly trivial in the grand scheme of things, but the fact remains that they are errors. The existence of these errors refutes the notion that the KJV cannot be improved upon.

Also, while not an error per se, there is the problem of the KJV translators rendering the Greek *iesous* as "Jesus" when "Joshua" is what is meant by the text. Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 both say "Jesus," but the context clearly reveals that it's supposed to be Joshua. At best this is an inconsistency on the part of the KJV translators, since they use the name Joshua for this figure everywhere in the Old Testament. Modern translations, including the NKJV, render the name as "Joshua."

So, we've just reviewed several passages where it is clear that the KJV translation could be improved upon. If you're interested in more examples, we recommend Dr. James White's book, *The King James Only Controversy*, specifically pages 276-296.

If KJV-Onlyists want to claim that the KJV version is without error, they need to explain why these blatant translational errors aren't actually errors.

## **What about the "Missing Verses"?**

As we've seen, the fundamental assumption of KJV-Onlyism is flawed. Once again, it's fine to use the KJV and appreciate it for what it is, but *KJV-Onlyism* is demonstrably false.

Nevertheless, KJV-Onlyists have presented a challenge that is worthy of addressing. One thing you'll often hear KJV-Onlyists say is that modern translations have removed verses from the Bible. There are around 17 New Testament verses alleged to have been removed. There is a meme that often gets passed around on social media citing all these "missing verses" and trying to imply that something sinister is

going on.

It's true that some verses that appear in the KJV aren't included in modern versions. For example, there is no John 5:4 in modern versions. It goes straight from verse 3 to verse 5. Usually, there will be a footnote with the verse, but it doesn't appear in the actual text. Sometimes the verse will appear in brackets to indicate that it isn't meant to be read as part of the biblical text. Why is this?

KJV-Onlyists will often say that these verses were "removed" in some satanic attempt to distort the Word of God. But this is false. First, if that were the case, you'd think the verses that were "removed" would be more significant doctrinally. But the verses in question are pretty minor in significance, and none of them really impact biblical doctrine at all.

Second, as opposed to some grand satanic conspiracy, there is a much simpler and more reasonable explanation for the "missing verses" in modern translations. In actuality, modern versions that omit these verses are more faithful to the biblical text as it was originally written.

To put it simply, the KJV translators used a Greek manuscript called the Textus Receptus—Latin for "Received Text"—from which they translated the New Testament. This was what was available at the time. But archeologists have discovered many more Greek manuscripts since that time; manuscripts that predate the Textus Receptus. According to scholars and textual critics, these older manuscripts more accurately reflect the original writings. The older and more reliable Greek manuscripts don't contain the verses found in the later manuscripts from which the KJV was translated.

In other words, modern Bible versions didn't "remove" any verses from God's Word. Since the verses in question aren't found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts, modern versions don't include them in the actual text and simply place them in footnotes or brackets since they probably were added much later.

How could verses have been added to the biblical text in these later Greek manuscripts? In some cases, it could merely have been a matter of a scribe adding a marginal note, giving a commentary of sorts on a particular verse, to help the reader understand the passage. But then, as later scribes copied from that scribe's manuscript, the marginal note was moved to the actual text. Perhaps later scribes saw the note and thought it was the scribe attempting to correct a mistake and that the note actually belonged in the text. That's what many scholars believe happened with John 5:4, for example.

So, there is no satanic conspiracy to remove verses from the Bible. The translators of modern versions are working with the evidence they have to be as true as possible to the biblical text as it was originally written. The KJV translators worked with the evidence they had. If the KJV translators had access to all the manuscripts that modern translators have, then the King James Bible would probably have left out many of the same verses that modern translations do.

In conclusion, while much more could be said, the fundamental assumption of KJV-Onlyism is demonstrably false. As we've seen, the KJV translation is not without error. The KJV translators themselves acknowledged their limitations and even offered alternative renderings of some words in the margins, proving that not even they considered their translation to be perfect. Moreover, the idea that modern versions have removed verses from God's Word is a misunderstanding. According to the available evidence, which wasn't available during the time the KJV was translated, the verses in question appear to have been added later. In this regard, by putting the verses in question into footnotes or brackets, modern versions are more faithful to the biblical text as it was originally written.

So we see that while the King James Version can be appreciated for what it is, it is far from being a “perfect” translation or the only acceptable translation.

Before we end this teaching, why is this an important issue that we felt needed to be addressed? Who cares that there is a group that believes we should only use the KJV? Well, there are several reasons we should care.

First, as we heard earlier from Steven Anderson, some KJV-Only teachers have turned this into a salvation issue. This is a huge problem. They are literally teaching a different gospel. To people like Steven Anderson, salvation is no longer only by grace through faith in the Messiah. No, you have to use the correct English Bible translation too! Those who teach this false gospel are causing massive confusion, and they need to be called out.

Second, KJV-Onlyism undermines people’s confidence in the Scriptures. KJV-Onlyists insist that every English translation besides the KJV is error-ridden and unreliable. Anderson goes so far as to say other versions are “of the devil.”

Third, KJV-Onlyists call into question the sincerity of Christian scholars and organizations. They spread baseless conspiracy theories and accuse faithful believers of attempting to deceive the masses with their modern translations. These types of accusations create unjustified suspicion toward good, godly scholars and leaders within the body. It’s slander.

Fourth, not surprisingly, KJV-Onlyism has caused unnecessary division within the body of Messiah. Believers who desire to read God’s word are being condemned over simply preferring other versions because they find them easier to read. Also, KJV-Onlyists often have an unjustified sense of superiority because, in their mind, they go by the “true” Scriptures as opposed to the “corrupted” versions. All of this unnecessary division does nothing but hinder the work of Messiah’s body.

Scripture says to test everything. The second part of that admonition is to “hold fast what is good” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). We’ve seen that KJV-Onlyism is a false doctrine. There is no value in promoting it, and doing so seems to cause only unnecessary strife within the body of Messiah. It is not good. Let it go.

*We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.*

*Remember, continue to test everything.*

*Shalom!*

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

**EMAIL:** [Info@119ministries.com](mailto:Info@119ministries.com)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/119Ministries](http://www.facebook.com/119Ministries)

**WEBSITE:** [www.TestEverything.net](http://www.TestEverything.net) & [www.ExaminaloTodo.net](http://www.ExaminaloTodo.net)

**TWITTER:** [www.twitter.com/119Ministries#](https://twitter.com/119Ministries#)