

# Is The King James Version Of The Bible Infallible?

## Preface

Years ago, I spoke to a sweet old lady after a church service in Austin, Texas. The topic of bible translations came up. She told me, “We should all be using the King James Bible because that’s the language we’ll be speaking in heaven.” I told her that the original texts were in Greek and Hebrew, that perhaps we should re-think her position. She smiled and shuffled off.

It’s challenging trying to bring today’s youth to Christ using the King James Bible. I applaud those young folks who do use it instead of the so-called “teen” Bibles so prevalent today.

Any good Bible expositor uses several translations in a study. Even the original authors of the KJV hoped that their translation would not be the last. However, many view a particular translation as some magic formula, where the words must be written in a certain way so the Holy Spirit can do its work.

I do not oppose the KJV, merely the extremism surrounding it. It is a good bible. But let’s be honest, folks: we don’t speak the 16th Century "king's" English. And if you’re going to be successful in your preaching ministry, it’s best you concern yourself more with winning souls than promoting a dogmatic extremism of what you think is a correct bible translation.

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(In this article KJV means the King James Version. NASB means the New American Standard Bible. NIV stands for the New International Version.)

- x Many people today say the KJV is the perfectly preserved Word of God in English and is the only Bible for us today.
- x If I can show the KJV has many mistakes, statements that do not make sense and verses that slander God, then obviously it is not perfect.
- x Please understand that I am not attacking the Word of God, I am pointing out errors in a translation. God’s Word is perfect but translations are not. God inspired the apostles and prophets when they wrote, but there is not one verse in the Bible that says translations are inspired.
- x The things I point out will help you better understand your KJV. It is a very accurate translation in most places. However, it has a few places where the reader will need help to find out what God actually said.

In Hebrews 9:26 the KJV says, “But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” The end of the world has not come, yet Christ has already appeared. Therefore this is a false statement. The New American Standard Bible (NASB) says “but now once at the consummation of the ages He has been manifested.” It was at the end of the

Old Testament ages that Christ appeared, not at the end of the world. The KJV mistranslates this Greek word *aión* as ‘world.’ The word means *age*. The KJV does this about 40 times. Each time is a mistake and misleads the reader.

- x The KJV calls the Holy Spirit an “it” in Romans 8:16, 26. The NASB corrects this error and says the “Spirit Himself.” The context of the whole Bible shows the Holy Spirit is not an “it.” Can you, dear reader, feel comfortable calling the third person of the Trinity an “it”?
- x The KJV calls the Holy Spirit, “the Holy Ghost.” The Bible says, “God is a Spirit.” (John 4:24) Sometimes the KJV translates the same word as Ghost and sometimes Spirit. About 70 times they call the Holy Spirit a “Ghost” and about 250 times they translated it as “Spirit.” An example is Acts 5:3, 9. In verse 3 we read “Ghost” and in verse 9 we read “Spirit.” It is the same word in the Greek. The NASB always translates the word as “Spirit.” God is a Spirit, not a Ghost.
- x Acts 12:4 in the KJV says Herod was planning “after Easter” to bring Peter out. The KJV translates this same Greek word as “Passover” 28 times. This is the only time they translate this Greek word as “Easter.” Either the translators were wrong 28 times or they are wrong in Acts 12:4. The NASB translates this Greek word as Passover all 29 times.
- x In James 5:11 the KJV says, “The Lord is very pitiful.” This term is old English for God is full of pity. But still today the KJV says the Lord is “very pitiful.” This is a slander against God which should be updated. The NASB says, “The Lord is full of compassion.”
- x Philippians 4:6 in the KJV says, “Be careful for nothing.” In every day English today this verse says “be careless about everything.” The NASB correctly translates it, “Be anxious for nothing.”
- x Philippians 3:20 in the KJV says, “Our conversation is in heaven.” Obviously we are not talking to one another in Heaven. We are still on the earth. The NASB correctly says, “Our citizenship is in heaven.”
- x In 2 Thessalonians 2:7 the KJV says, “Only he who now letteth will let.” This is speaking of the Holy Spirit who hinders the forces of sin. The English word “let” once meant “to restrain” but today it has completely reversed in meaning. The NASB says, “He who now restrains will do so.” This gives the meaning of what God actually said.
- x In modern English the word “meat” means the flesh of animals. In the KJV it means anything to eat. A “meat” offering is described in Leviticus chapter 2 but the contents contain no meat at all. In Leviticus 14:10 the KJV says, “Fine flour for a meat offering.” The NASB calls it a grain offering. Many times the KJV uses the word “meat” to refer to food that has no meat in it whatsoever.

- x The word “corn” is used in the KJV 101 times. It never once means corn, as we know it today. It refers to any kind of grain. Genesis 42:1-3, 5; Matthew 12:1 are examples. Remember it was the American Indians who gave us corn or “maize.” The white man knew nothing about corn until after the discovery of America. Therefore, the original Bible writers could not have been referring to “corn” but rather to “grain.”
- x Revelation 22:14 teaches salvation by works in the KJV. It says, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.” This is a verse taken from the Latin Vulgate and inserted by Erasmus because he did not have a complete Greek manuscript of the book of Revelation. The KJV translators continued this error. There is no Greek manuscript in existence that has the KJV reading. The NASB says, “Blessed are they who have washed their robes, that they may have right to the tree of life.”
- x The KJV says, “The love of money is the root of all evil,” (I Timothy 6:10). This statement is certainly false. Adam and Eve did not sin for the love of money. Satan’s fall was because of pride, not love of money. The adulterer and the fornicator do not do it for money, neither does the rapist. What God actually said was that money can be a root of all sorts of evil. People will do any kind of sin for money. The NASB says, “The love of money is a root of all sorts of evil.”
- x In Acts 5:30 the KJV says, “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.” This verse says that they killed Jesus and then hung his corpse on a tree. Of course this contradicts all of the Gospel accounts. The NASB says, “Whom you put to death by hanging on a tree.” It is easy to see which is right. The KJV makes the same mistake again in Acts 10:39, “Slew and hung on a tree.”
- x In James 3:2, the KJV says we offend every-body. “In many things we offend all.” The NASB says, “For we all stumble in many ways.” I can agree with the NASB but not with the KJV.
- x In Acts 9:7 when Paul was converted, it says in the KJV the men “stood speechless hearing a voice, but seeing no man.” In Acts 22:9 it says, “They heard not the voice of him that spake with me.” Of course these verses make the Bible contradict itself. The NASB says, “Did not understand the voice of the one who spoke with me.” The actual meaning of these verses is that the men heard but did not understand. The KJV makes the Bible contradict itself. The NASB does not.
- x In Acts 19:2 the KJV says, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” Much false doctrine has been built on this verse. The NASB says, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” This translation is more accurate. It is more in line with the other Scripture teaching. The Bible clearly teaches you receive the Holy Spirit when you believe, not at some subsequent time. Ephesians 1:13 tells us, “having believed you were sealed.”

- x In Song of Solomon 2:12 the KJV says, the “turtle” was singing. The NASB says the “turtle-dove.” We all know that turtles do not sing but turtledoves do.
- x The KJV uses the word “charity” for love. This is confusing because charity today means giving to the poor or needy. In I Corinthians 13:3 the KJV says, “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity.” Actually giving to the poor is charity, so the statement is a paradox. The NASB uses the word love, which makes more sense.
- x The KJV uses the word conversation about 20 times, but it never means “people talking to one another” as we use the word today. I Peter 3:1-2 is a good example of the confusion this brings to the modern reader. Here the Bible is telling the wife with an unsaved husband not to talk to win her husband but to win him by her actions, her spirit and her obedience. However, the KJV tells her to win him by her conversation; just the opposite of what God actually said. The NASB says the wife is to win the unsaved husband with her “behavior.”
- x In Genesis 8:1 the KJV, speaking of the flood waters of Noah, says the “waters asswaged.” I do not believe you will find this word in any dictionary. The NASB says, “the waters subsided.” I can understand the NASB but I am not sure about the KJV.
- x In the KJV it says in I Kings 4:26 that Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses and in 2 Chronicles 9:25 it says he had four thousand. These verses are an obvious contradiction. The NIV says four thousand in both places. Who would say the KJV is superior here?
- x In the KJV it says in 2 Kings 8:26 that Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he began to reign. In 2 Chronicles 22:2 it says he was forty-two years old when he began to reign. Of course, this is a contradiction. The NIV says he was twenty-two years old in both places. Everybody knows this is better.
- x In the KJV it says in 1 John 3:9, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.” This contradicts plain scriptures in many places. Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, “There is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not.” The NASB says in 1 John 3:9, “No one who is born of God practices sin.” This translation is more in harmony with other scripture and with Christian experience. We sin but we do not practice sin. Our life is not characterized by sin.
- x In Exodus 25:31-38 the KJV describes the making of the candlestick for the tabernacle, but no candles are mentioned in this passage. Verse 37 says, “make the lamps thereof.” The description that is given to us is a lampstand with seven branches, a beautifully wrought stand for seven lamps. The oil which the lamp would burn is described in Exodus 27:20. Throughout the KJV, the translators call a lampstand a candlestick.

Examples in the New Testament where “candlestick” should be “lampstand” are Matthew 5:15 and Revelation 1:13, 20. The NASB always says lampstand. Certainly this is clearer.

- x In the KJV the word “quick” never means “fast.” It means living or alive. In Hebrews 4:12 it says the word of God is “quick and powerful.” The NASB says it is “living.” The KJV says Christ will judge the “quick and the dead.” (2 Timothy 4:1) The NASB says the “living and the dead.” It is easy to see which is more accurate.
- x In the KJV the word “prevent” is used 15 times in the Old Testament and twice in the New. Today the word “prevent” means to hinder or to stop. The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:147, “I prevented the dawning of the morning.” He does not mean he hindered the dawning. The NASB says, “I rise before dawn.” In 1 Thessalonians 4:15, the KJV says when Jesus comes the living will not “prevent” them which are asleep. The NIV says they shall not “precede” them. The Bible teaching here is that the living Christians and those who are asleep will go up together. Seventeen times the KJV obscures the meaning of the scripture by using the word “prevent.” In all these cases the NASB or the NIV is much clearer.
- x In Matthew 19:9 and 5:32 the KJV gives “fornication” as the only grounds for divorce under the law. Today this word means premarital sex. These verses in the KJV say the only grounds for divorce are something you did before you married. This translation grossly confuses the Bible teaching about divorce. The Greek word used here is “porneia.” Both STRONG’S CONCORDANCE and VINE’S word studies say the word is not confined to illicit sex between the unmarried but it covers all kinds of sexual immorality. It means harlotry, adultery, incest or idolatry. The NIV translates the word as “marital unfaithfulness.” The NASB says “unchastity” or “immorality.” Certainly this makes more sense.
- x In the KJV the word “nephew” actually means “grandson.” The Hebrew word means “sons of sons.” In Judges 12:14 the “thirty nephews” are changed to “thirty grandsons” in the NASB. The word “nephews” in I Timothy 5:4 in the KJV means grandchildren in the Greek. The NIV says “grandchildren.” The KJV can bring confusion here because it is telling us who is responsible to take care of the destitute widows in our family. The KJV says children and nephews are responsible. The NIV says children and grandchildren are to do it. It is easy to see which is right.
- x In the KJV Paul says, “I know nothing by myself.” (1 Cor 4:4) The NASB says “against myself.” This translation agrees with the Greek and with the context where Paul is defending himself against the accusations of the Corinthians. He is telling them that they may accuse him but his conscience is clear.
- x In the KJV Paul says, “Let your moderation be known to all men.” (Phil 4:5) People use this verse to justify mediocrity and use it to justify moderate drinking of alcoholic beverage. “Moderation” in the Greek means “gentle, kind, forbearing.” The NASB says,

“Let your forbearing spirit be known to all men.” The NIV says, “Let your gentleness be evident to all.” Either of these is closer to the true meaning than the KJV.

- x The word “naughty” as used in the KJV can be misleading. The Hebrew and Greek words mean “very wicked.” To us “naughty” means something trivial that a child or an adult might do. For example, “You naughty boy.” In the KJV Jeremiah 24:2 says the figs were “so naughty” they could not be eaten. This shows the true meaning of the word by the context. The NASB says they were “very bad.” The NIV and the NASB always use a better word than “naughty”.

Many people complain that the new versions leave out things that are in the KJV. The question is not whether something is in the KJV or some other version, but rather is it in the original Hebrew and Greek? Below are some examples of phrases and words that are left out of the KJV but are in the NIV.

- x In Jude verse 25, the NIV says that God gets glory “through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The KJV leaves this phrase out.
- x In Acts 4:25, the KJV says that God spoke through the mouth of David. The NIV says that God “spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of David.” The KJV leaves out the “Holy Spirit.”
- x In Acts 16:7 the KJV says, “the Spirit suffered them not.” The NIV says, “the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.” “Of Jesus” is left out of the KJV.
- x In Philippians 1:14, “of God” is left out of the KJV. The NIV says the “word of God.” The KJV simply says “word.”
- x In Colossians 2:9, the KJV says “in Him.” The NIV says “in Christ.”

When things are left out of the modern versions, some people claim there was a conspiracy or the translators were biased against the deity of Christ, etc. Why did the KJV leave these words and phrases out?

Some people say the NIV and the NASB are weak on the deity of Christ. This is a lie. I will show you some key verses on the deity of Christ and anyone can clearly see the KJV is the weakest on this subject.

- x Jude 4 in the KJV says, “denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” By adding an “and,” the KJV makes it appear like God and the Lord Jesus are different persons. The NIV says, “deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” The KJV separates God and Christ. The NIV makes God and Christ one. Also, “Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord” is stronger than “our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- x In Titus 2:13, the KJV inserts the word “our” and makes it sound like God and Jesus are different. It says, “The great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” The NIV and NASB both say, “Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” They make it clear that the great God is the same as the Savior Jesus Christ. Three times in Titus the expression, “God our Savior” is

used. (Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4) In Titus 2:13 when he finally reveals who the “God and Savior” is, the KJV obscures it. This mistake affects at least four verses about the Deity of Christ.

- x The KJV adds “our” again in 2 Peter 1:1, “Righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ.” The NIV says, “God and Savior Jesus Christ.” The KJV makes it appear like “God and Saviour” are two different persons. The NIV and NASB make it clear they are one and the same.
- x In Colossians 2:9 the KJV says, “For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” The NIV says, “For in Christ all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form.” The NIV is definitely clearer and stronger.
- x In Philippians 2:6 the KJV says, “Who, being in the form of God.” The NIV says, “Who, being in the very nature of God.” The “very nature of God” is certainly better than “the form of God.”
- x In Romans 9:5 the KJV says, “of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever.” The NIV says, “from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised.” It is hard to see the deity of Christ in the KJV but it is crystal clear in the NIV.
- x In John 1:18 the KJV says, “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.” The NIV says, “No man has ever seen God, but God the one and only, who is at the Father’s side, has made Him known.” Certainly “God the one and only” is stronger and better than “only begotten Son.” All Christians are “begotten” by God. (I John 5:1,18.) Christ alone is “God the one and only.”

These examples were given to show anyone who is willing to see that the NIV is stronger than the KJV on the deity of Christ in many places. The KJV obscures the deity of Christ in some places. The NIV reinforces the teaching of the deity of Christ. There have been many lies told about this subject but now you know.

The KJV sometimes uses the word “charity” in the place of love. Most people probably think charity is old English for “love.” That is not the case. William Tyndale, who translated the first English version in 1525, used only the word “love.” So did the other versions that followed (Coverdale, Matthew, Great Bible and Geneva Bible). Only the second edition of the Bishops Bible and the KJV use the word “charity”. The noun “agape” is used 114 times in the Greek. The KJV translates it “love” 87 times and “charity” 26 times. This shows they knew the Greek word means “love.” Yet they purposely translated the word as “charity” in some places. “Charity” means giving and helping the needy. Love is described in I Corinthians 13. The KJV weakens this basic Christian doctrine about God and man by substituting “charity” for “love.” They did it in about 18 other places. The modern versions undergird it by rightly translating agape as love.

## **Conclusion**

Anyone who is not willingly ignorant and blind can see that the King James Version is not perfect and not infallible. It is a human translation. It is a good and accurate version in most places. But sometimes you will need the good modern translations. Other translations can really help you understand what God actually said in some verses. Don't let anyone deprive you of this help.

Please understand that I am not putting down the KJV. I am not saying it is inferior or that the NIV is superior. I am saying the KJV is not perfect. The NIV and the NASB can help you sometimes. The KJV translators themselves said, "A variety of translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures...must needs do good, yea, is necessary, as we are persuaded." (TO THE READER section, 1611 KJV)

Don't let anyone lie to you saying the KJV is God's perfectly preserved word without error, and don't listen to the slander against the NIV and the NASB.

Again let me say, I am not against the KJV. I am against the KJV-only extremism.

Robert Joyner