

# IS THE KJV GOD'S INSPIRED WORD (BIBLE) OR, IS IT 'ONLY' A VERSION?

By Ron Tottingham, PhD, LitD

The folks I pastor, and often find myself preaching to, are NOT Biblical technicians concerning language, semantics, etc., so it becomes necessary to "...*make it plain...*" (Hab. 2:2) and "...*distinctly...*" to give the sense that causes "...*them to understand.*" (Neh. 8:8). Plain people, in all the communities across the world that make up the membership of true churches, are not technicians in matters of Biblical language enough to discern the clearness Biblical language scholars might understand. I fully agree with the position and reason for holding to word preciseness or meaning exactness though. I understand the concern and necessity that we be superbly accurate, and I agree to the necessity in the technical world of words. I also agree that we need those in that world to search by detail to really know such things. I agree wholly, and without reservation. There is surely a time and place for both needs.

My issue is when I preach I'm generally preaching to non-Biblical language technicians and they need clarity and plainness in simplicity. I need to not "...beat around the bush..." with phrases and words not understood by them. We are told of "...*dotting about...strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings.....*" (1 Tim 6:4) and "...*charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers...*" (2 Tim 2:14). However, I do fully understand the need to "*Hold fast the form of sound words...*" (2 Tim 1:13). While preaching, however, I need to clearly tell those in the congregation that the KJV is God's inspired words as preserved without error. If it is not thus preserved fully with accuracy, the inspired original, then it is no better than the other English versions.

What scholarship needs to do to maintain and contend for the truth in this area of technicality can become a source of confusion and drawing away from "...the simplicity that is in Christ..." (2 Cor 11:3). If a choice must be made I choose to be "...all things to all men that I might by all means save some..." (1 Cor 9:22), even to "...please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved..." (1 Cor 10:33).

I do not believe I will always be able to check myself if I readily preach that "the KJV is God's accurately translated, inspired, preserved, infallible Word of God..." or that "the KJV I hold in my hand is God's inspired, preserved Word, fully trustworthy." If I am supposed to, in my preaching, only say of the Bible that it is "only inspired in the original transmission from God and accurately preserved in the Authorized Version," making sure I never slip and call the KJV inspired, I might slip up. I'm not sure I can hold two minds, nor if I even want to attempt to.

Again, let me state. I fully agree with the need to be precise and technical, but I just don't wish to give up plain simplicity and "cutting to the chase" to those common members found in churches all around the world where I've traveled and preached. In the 29 countries I've traveled and preached, time and opportunity for such technical phrasing is not generally led of the Lord, and "to the point" simplicity generally has been.

I know that the technicians are looking at this from one side and I, as a pastor, am looking at this from the other side. And both are holding for the truth, accurate truth, from two sides of this

issue. Balance, my experience has taught me, is where the Lord generally stands.

Besides, if the KJV is, in fact, God's accurate preservation of the original, would it not be the sole translation, the sole inspired (as originally given and still contained in) Bible in the English? I often hesitate to call it a "version" even, as that almost seems to lower it to the level of all the other versions. The KJV is actually not, simply, as the other versions. It is the accurate preservation of the original "sense" (Neh 8:8) and words (Matt 4:4, Psa 12:7) of God's Word.

It was not "re-inspired" through the KJV translators as some claim. And, why would it be, unless God needed to make corrections (as some claim), and that would (if so) end His claim that it was perfect as originally given. That would be blasphemy! Preserved, then is our greatest issue, accurately preserved. If the KJV is the sole accurate preservation of God's Word in English, then it is NOT equal to any other "version," though it be one! And it would be, in fact, God's current collection of the inspired words of God as translated accurately into English. Why then would it be so bad to hold it up and claim to all hearers that "the KJV is God's inspired Word", preserved infallible for us today?

But the language technicians would revise this to say instead, "the KJV is an accurate translation of God's inspired Word, preserved infallible for us today?" I understand their reasoning to be that "we should never use words that might convey the sense to our hearers that we believe that the KJV's words were 'breathed-out by God.' Well, I certainly do not believe the English words 'given by inspiration,' BUT I do believe they are inspired! That would be double inspiration and a confession that God made mistakes in the original. I do, however, believe that being translated accurately, the KJV is, in English, the inspired (as originally given by God and kept by preservation through accurate translating) Word of God! And, I do not believe that requires explaining every time we state it.

Someone stated that "Using the term 'inspired' for the KJV might lead some people to believe that the English words themselves were "breathed-out" of God. If one worries about everything that someone "might" or might not think we mean they are likely to go mad! Sometimes we might get so involved defending that we find that we have been rendered useless at offensive strategy. Offensive strategy is as useful as defensive in its assigned time and place.

I think there are times and places where we need to defend the precise accuracy of language to the utmost degree. However, I also hold that there are times and places that we need to simply pronounce the KJV as "God's inspired, infallible, inerrant and preserved Word in English." Without explanation, qualification or apology! Because I truly believe it is the preserved words as given by original inspiration in Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek, and as accurately translated without error into English for English readers today.

How say some then that we are using "inspired" in two different ways when by inspired we are solely referring to the original Words in Hebrew / Aramaic / Greek when accurately translated and preserved in the English KJV, and saying "*the KJV is God's inspired Word, preserved infallible for us today?*" Is it not? I think we confuse 'folks' when we imply that the Word of God is only inspired in the original Hebrew / Aramaic / Greek copies, **and** in accurately translated copies in other languages, then we are without it. And that has nothing to do with double inspiration, it has to do with preserving the "original inspiration of Hebrew / Aramaic / Greek in copies and translations. Which would, in common terms, make them "God's inspired Word." A scholar friend recently wrote me stating that our King James Bible certainly 'is God's Words intact in English.' And "God's Words are His Words, and in the English they are the King James Bible...KJV / KJB.

This is where I stand. ✧

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email: [gracemissionary@bellnet.ca](mailto:gracemissionary@bellnet.ca)