

Was the King James Version Really the Best Translation?

Comparing the King James Bible with those of Tyndale, Geneva, and the Anglican Bishops
By Johnathan Tate

It is said by many that the King James Version of the Bible, published in 1611, was the culmination of a century of translation work. The men who produced this version sought to bring out an accurate and articulate version of God's Word, and so they did. However, was the KJV the *most* accurate? There are some verses in the KJV that have caused problems over time, and where the other versions are much better and more in agreement with both the Hebrew and Greek originals as well as many of the modern versions.

Versions used:

TYN: Tyndale's New Testament, published 1526. Individual work.

GEN: Geneva Bible, published 1560, revised 1599. Calvinist.

BIS: Bishops' Bible, published 1568. Anglican.

KJV: King James Version, published 1611, revised 1769.

(NOTE: Most spelling has been modernized.)

Genesis 1.28

GEN: And God blessed them, and God said to them, Bring forth fruit and multiply, and **fill** the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the heaven, and over every beast that moveth upon the earth.

KJV (cp. **BIS**) And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish** the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

The Geneva reading does not allow for a "gap" theory, that there was a race before the fall of Satan that God destroyed.

Daniel 8.14

BIS (cp. **GEN**): And he answered me: Unto the **evening and the morning**, two thousand and three hundred: then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

KJV: And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred **days**; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.

The Hebrew is clear that these represented literal days (evenings and mornings), and not symbolic days.

Matthew 23.24

TYN (cp. **GEN/BIS**): Ye blind guides, which strain **out** a gnat, and swallow a camel.

KJV: Ye blind guides, which strain **at** a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Even the original 1611 KJV had "out", which is of course correct.

Luke 16.13

GEN: No servant can serve two masters: for either he shall hate the one, and love the other: or else he shall lean to the one, and despise the other. Yee can not serve God and **riches**.

KJV (cp. **TYN/BIS**): No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and **mammon**.

Geneva is more understandable here as it translates the word rather than transliterating.

John 3.16

TYN: God so loved the world, that he gave his **only** son for the intent, that none that believe in him, should perish: But should have everlasting life.

KJV (cp. **GEN, BIS**): 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.

Tyndale correctly translates μονογενης (monoyenis) as "only" (in the sense of "unique") rather than "only begotten"

John 14.2

GEN: In my Fathers house are many **dwelling places**: if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.

KJV (cp. **TYN/BIS**): In my Father's house are many **mansions**: if *it were not so*, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

Geneva is more accurate here as well.

Acts 12.4

GEN: And when he had caught him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to be kept, intending after the **Passover** to bring him forth to the people

KJV (cp. **TYN/BIS**) 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.

Geneva here translates πασχα (pascha) correctly as "Passover", not as the later holiday of "Easter"

Romans 8.28

TYN (cp. **GEN/BIS**): For we know well that all things work for the **best** unto them that love God, which also are called of purpose.

KJV: And we know that all things work together for **good** to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Not only does God do good things for us, but everything works out for our best.

Romans 9.5

TYN: whose also are the fathers and they of whom (as concerning the flesh) Christ came **which is God** over all things blessed for ever Amen.

GEN: Of whom are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh, Christ came, **who is God over all**, blessed for ever, Amen

BIS: Of whom are the fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh, Christ [*came,*] **which is God**, in all things to be praised for ever. Amen.

KJV: Whose *are* the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ *came*, **who is over all**, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Though phrased differently, Tyndale, Geneva, and the Bishops all more clearly proclaim Christ's true divinity and are much more in line with the Greek.. The KJV is not only unclear, but also bad grammar.

II Peter 1.1

GEN (cp. **BIS**): Simon Peter a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to you which have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of **our God and Savior Jesus Christ**:

KJV (cp. **TYN**): Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness **of God and our Savior** Jesus Christ:

*Again, the divinity of Christ is proclaimed here by Geneva and the Bishops (in line with the Greek), and **not** by the **KJV** or **TYN**.*

I John 5:7-8

TYN: /For there are three which bear record in heaven, the father, the word, and the holy ghost. And these three are one./ And there are three which bear record /in earth:/ the spirit, and water, and blood: and these three are one.

KJV (cp. **GEN/BIS**) For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

*Even Tyndale knew that this was spurious, so he bracketed it. The traditional closing of the Lord's Prayer is also **not** in Tyndale.*

So as we see, while the **KJV** is an excellent translation it still is not perfect. The virtual monopoly the **KJV** had for centuries (without the ability to compare with these other fine versions) brought about some questionable theology and perhaps allowed a "One Bible Only" movement to develop where it had not originally.

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