



## Ralph Woodrow Evangelistic Association

P.O. BOX 21, PALM SPRINGS, CA 92263-0021

### KING JAMES ONLY? (Part Two)

Over 400 years have now passed since the King James Version (KJV) was issued in 1611. Many words used in the KJV—proper and understandable at the time—have now become archaic; that is, are no longer a normal part of the English language. Words that the general population can no longer understand become obsolete. Few of us would know the meaning of the following words from the KJV; we would find them difficult to use in a sentence:

Abjects, agone, amerce, asswage, bakemeats, besom, bethink, betimes, brigandine, chapmen, collops, countervail, cockle, cor, cracknels, daysman, descry, emerods, familiars, habergeon, hap, helve, holpen, knop, meteyard, neesing, ouches, seethe, several house, sith, sottish, taches, trow not, wen, wist, wot.

**The KJV often reflects ways of saying things that are now obsolete. To illustrate, let's start with the letter "a":**

2 Chron. 2:18, "set the people **a** work."  
 1 Cor. 9:7, "who goeth **a** warfare any time at his own charges?"  
 2 Cor. 10:6, "having in **a** readiness to revenge."  
 1 Peter 3:20, "while the ark was **a** preparing."  
 John 21:3, "I go **a** fishing."

Does anyone really believe it is more spiritual to insist on using a translation with outdated grammar? Is it somehow more effective to say "I go *a fishing*," instead of "I am going fishing"?

In the old English of the KJV, it is not uncommon for "a" to be added to words:

Matthew 25:44, "when saw we thee...**athirst**?" Today we would just say *thirsty*.

Mark 14:8, "she is come **aforehand** to anoint my body to the burying." Today we would simply say *before*.

Mark 1:30, "Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and **anon** they tell him of her." The meaning is that Jesus was told about her condition *at once*.

Sometimes the KJV uses "an" in archaic ways. For example:

Matt. 4:2, "he was afterward **an** hungred."  
 Matt. 25:35, "for I was **an** hungred."  
 Luke 9:28, "about **an** eight days."

In today's English, we would simply say "he was hungry" or it was "about eight days." No purpose is now served by needlessly inserting the word "an" in this way.

Sometimes the KJV uses "and" in archaic ways, as in the phrase "but and if":

Matt. 24:48, "**But and if** that evil servant shall say..."  
 1 Cor. 7:28, "**but and if** thou marry."  
 1 Peter 3:14, "**But and if** ye suffer."

Today we would simply say *but if*, not "but and if."

The old English of the KJV uses "as" in places where it would be omitted today. The phrase "as concerning" provides examples:

Lev. 4:26, "an atonement for him **as concerning** his sin."  
 Rom. 9:5, "of whom **as concerning** the flesh Christ came."  
 2 Cor. 11:21, "I speak **as concerning** reproach."

Today we would simply use the word *concerning*—not "as concerning."

Or consider "when as": Matt. 1:18: "**When as** his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph." In today's English, "as" would be omitted and "when" would remain. No newer translation uses *when as*.

Sometimes the KJV uses "at" in an archaic way:

Exod. 19:15, "come not **at** your wives."  
 Num. 6:6, "he shall come **at** no dead body."  
 1 Sam. 30:9, "David enquired **at** the LORD."  
 Dan. 2:10, "no king...asked such things **at** any magician."

In these passages, newer translations never use "at."

The little word "be" is sometimes used in an archaic way in the KJV:

Gen. 42:31,32, "We are not spies: we **be** twelve brethren."  
 Judges 16:9, "The Philistines **be** upon thee, Samson."  
 Matt. 9:2, "Thy sins **be** forgiven thee."

Today "be" would be replaced by *are*.

2 Chron. 6:37, "if they shall **bethink** themselves...and repent." Again, we would omit "be" and retain the meaning of *think* or, as some translate it, *when they come to themselves*.

Five times the KJV uses the archaic word "betimes": Gen. 26:31, "And they rose up **betimes** in the morning." The meaning is simply that the time they rose up was *early*.

Sometimes the KJV uses the archaic term “for because”:

Gen. 22:16, “**for because** thou hast done this thing.”

Judges 6:22, “**for because** I have seen an angel of the LORD.”

In today’s English, we would not say “for because,” but simply *because*.

1 Tim. 4:13, Paul wrote to Timothy, “**give attendance** to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.” Today we use the word in phrases like church attendance. But in this passage, “attendance” simply means *give attention to*.

Acts 13:16, Paul said, “Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, **give audience.**” We would not use the expression “give audience,” but simply: *listen*.

Acts 20:23, Paul said he did not know what he would face in Jerusalem, “save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions **abide me.**”

Today we would not say afflictions “abide me,” but afflictions *await* me. Also, in today’s English, “save” in this verse would be *except*, “Ghost” would be *Spirit*, and “witnesseth” would be *witnesses*.

The KJV uses the archaic wording “over against,” not in just a few isolated instances, but 91 times! A few examples:

Matt. 21:2, “the village **over against** you.”

Mark 13:3, “the mount of Olives **over against** the temple.”

Mark 15:39, “the centurion, which stood **over against** him.”

Today we would simply say *in front of*.

Consider how the KJV uses the suffix “-ward” in outdated ways:

Eph. 3:2, “the grace of God which is given me to **you-ward.**”

1 Thess. 1:8, “your faith to **God-ward.**”

1 Sam. 19:4: “his works have been to **thee-ward** very good.”

2 Peter 3:9: “The Lord... is longsuffering to **us-ward.**”

Today we would simply say *toward* us, *toward* God, *toward* you, etc.

Consider the word “alway” in the KJV:

Matthew 28:20, “Lo, I am with you **alway.**”

Titus 1:12, “The Cretians are **alway** liars.”

Some of the 47 KJV translators choose *alway* (23 places) and others preferred *always* (62 times). Today we would say always, *with* an s. On the other hand, we would say “while” *without* an s. But consider “whiles” in the KJV:

Ezek. 21:29, “**Whiles** they divine a lie unto thee.”

Ezek. 44:17, “**Whiles** they minister in the gates court.”

Dan. 5:2, “Belshazzar, **whiles** he tasted the wine.”

Dan. 9:21, “And **whiles** I was speaking in prayer.”

Acts 5:4, “**Whiles** it remained, was it not thine own?”

Sometimes the KJV uses “what” in places where we would say “why”:

2 Kings 6:33, “**what** should I wait for the Lord any longer?”

Luke 22:71: “**What** need we any further witness.”

What about wording like “can skill” or “could skill of”?

2 Chron. 2:8, “thy servants **can skill** to cut timber.”

2 Chron. 34:12, “all that **could skill of** instruments of musick.”

These are obsolete terms today. But we might speak of people having skill to cut down trees or as being skillful with music. Also, let it be noted, we would say “music,” not *musick*!

**Though not incorrect 400 years ago, there are many words in the KJV that are spelled differently now:**

Gen. 32:15: **milch** [milk]

Exod. 8:10: **to morrow** [tomorrow]

Exod. 21:28: **quit** [acquit]

Exod. 28:9: **grave** [engrave]

Lev. 21:20: **crookbackt** [crooked back]

Deut. 28:27, **emerods** [hemorrhoids]

Josh. 14:7: **espy** [spy]

Ruth 2:3: **hap** [happened]

1 Sam. 30:13, **agone** [ago]

1 Sam. 21:13: **scrabbled** [scratched]

1 Kings 6:15: **cieling** [ceiling]

2 Chron. 6:40: **attent** [attentive]

Job 41:18, **neesings** [sneezing].

Psa. 78:11: **forgat** [forgot]

Ecc. 2:8: **gat** [got]

Jer. 5:12, **belied** [lied]

Jer. 36:6: **roll** [scroll]

Ezek. 24:17, **tire** [attire]

Ezek. 35:6: **sith** [since]

Matt. 13:21: **dureth** [endure]

Mark 1:34: **divers** [diverse]

Luke 9:58: **not where** [nowhere]

Luke 17:8, **sup** [supper]

Acts 14:6: **ware** [aware]

Rom. 1:2, **afore** [before]

Rom. 16:25: **stablish** [establish]

1 Cor. 11:26: **shew** [show]

Phil. 1:23: **betwixt** [between]

2 Thess. 3:9: **ensample** [example]

Heb. 13:8: **for ever** [forever]

1 Tim. 5:8: **specially** [especially]

2 Tim. 3:17: **thoroughly** [thoroughly]

James 1:25: **whoso** [whosoever]

**As in this list, some of the archaic words in the KJV contain similarities to present-day words. Sometimes these similarities provide clues to help figure out the meaning:**

Isaiah 19:8, “All they that cast **angle** into the brooks.”

As used here, “angle” is an old word for fish hook (cf. Hab. 1:5). We have a clue to the meaning because of our word “angler,” one who fishes with a hook. But the wording “they that cast angle” would be obsolete now.

Luke 14:32, “he sendeth an **ambassage**, and desireth conditions of peace.” Though “ambassage” is obsolete, it might cause us to think of *ambassadors*, the intended meaning.

Matt. 26:73, “thy speech **bewrayeth** thee.” Similarity helps us correctly guess the meaning here: “bewray” means *betray*.

1 Kings 14:3, a prophet was given “ten loaves, and **cracknels**, and a cruse of honey.” At first glance “cracknels” may puzzle us. But the word we would use, “crackers,” is similar.

Gen. 41:18, 19, mentions cattle—some **fatfleshed** and others **leanfleshed**. We can figure out the meaning, even though these are not words we would use today.

Job 28:1: “Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold where they **fine** it.” Today we would not say “fine” in this context, but would use a word quite similar: *refine*.

Gen. 40:17, “all manner of **bakemeats** for Pharaoh.” The word “bakemeats” became obsolete soon after the KJV was issued. But it does bring to mind *bakery* or *baker*. The meaning is *all sorts of food made by a baker*.

Hab. 2:7, “thou shalt be for **booties** unto them.” Realizing this is not a misspelling for baby shoes, we could probably figure out that it refers to *booty*, plundered goods, spoils of war.

Matthew 7:2,3, “with what measure you **mete**, it shall be measured to you again.” While “mete” is no longer in use, we do use the term *meter* for an instrument that measures—a gas meter, electric meter, water meter, etc.

Lev. 19:35, “Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in **meteyard**, in weight.” Again, the idea is that of *measurement*.

Lev. 11:35 mentions an “oven, or **ranges** for pots.” The word “ranges” here is obsolete, yet even today we sometimes refer to an appliance for cooking as a gas range, electric range, etc.

John 6:24, “they also **took shipping**, and came to Capernaum.” Because the setting here is the Sea of Galilee, we could correctly assume that ships were involved. But today we would not say they “took shipping,” but simply they *got into boats*.

Exod. 26:6. “And thou shalt make fifty **taches** of gold, and couple the curtains together with the **taches**.” The word “tache” is unfamiliar to most of us. But our word “attach” provides a clue. Indeed, a “tache” was what was used to *attach* curtains in the tabernacle.

1 Kings 10:18,19, “the king made a great throne... and there were **stays** on either side on the place of the seat.” These “stays” were what we would call *armrests*. At first glance there seems to be no connection, yet with a little thought, a stay was a place for the arm to stay, to rest on, an armrest!

Matt. 1:18, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this **wise**.” We do not use the word “wise” in this way today, but because English has retained “likewise,” we can figure this out. We would say: “The birth of Jesus Christ was this *way*.”

**While some archaic words, as we have seen, provide clues as to their meaning, other words are totally obscure.**

How many of us would understand or be able to explain “the four corners of the **settle**”? (Ezek. 43:20).

Psalms 35:15, “The **abjects** gathered themselves together against me.” The meaning of “abjects” is clarified by newer translations which use words like “attackers.”

Deut. 22:19, “they shall **amerce** him in an hundred shekels of silver.” Today we would simply say he would be *fined* this amount.

2 Tim. 2:24, “the servant of the Lord must... be gentle unto all men, **apt** to teach.” For us to use the word “apt” would be confusing. We would say *able to teach*.

Gen. 8:1, following the flood, “the water **asswaged**.” Instead of “asswage,” we would simply say the waters *subsided*.

Isa. 8:21, “And they shall pass through it, **hardly bestead** and hungry.” Today we would say *hard-pressed* or *greatly distressed*.

Exod. 9:31, “the barley was in the ear, and the flax was **bolled**.” Instead of “bolled,” we would say *in bloom*.

Job 9:33: “Neither is there any **daysman** betwixt us, that may lay his hand upon us both.” The term “daysman” is an out-dated word meaning *mediator* or *arbitrator*.

Job 38:12: “Hast thou... caused the **dayspring** to know his place.” Today we would say *daybreak* or *dawn*.

Proverbs 27:22, “Though thou shouldst **bray** a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him.” Bray a fool? This is an old word for *grind*.

Isa. 30:6, “they will carry... their treasures upon the **bunches** of camels.” Today we might speak of a bunch of flowers or a bunch of people. But here, “bunches” is an old word referring to the *humps* on camels.

2 Chron. 9:14, in one year Solomon received 666 talents of gold, “beside that which **chapmen** and merchants brought.” The word “chapmen” referred to traveling *buyers and sellers*.

Est. 7:4, “the enemy could not **countervail** the king’s damage.” What seems like a strange word to us today, “countervail” meant *equal*.

James 3:12, “Can a fig tree... bear **olive berries**?” We would not say “olive berries” today. Olives and berries are two different things. The meaning here is simply *olives*.

Jer. 4:22, “For my people is foolish... they are **sottish** children.” The old word “sottish” meant *stupid* or *senseless*.

2 Kings 15:5, King Azariah “dwelt in a **several house**” (2 Kings 15:5). Today we would say he lived in a *separate* house, quarantined from others because of leprosy.

Heb. 1:1, “God... at **sundry** times... spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets.” The meaning here is that God spoke *many* different times by the prophets.

Christmas programs have commonly included a reading of Luke 2:8,9, about the shepherds being “**sore** afraid.” The word “sore” appears *98 times* in the KJV, sometimes with the idea of a sore in the flesh (Deut. 28:35; Rev. 16:2), but in most places “sore” is used in a different way:

Gen. 19:19, “They pressed **sore** upon... Lot.”

Matt. 17:6, “The disciples... were **sore** afraid.”

Matt. 21:15, “The chief priests... were **sore** displeased.”

Today the word “sore” in expressions like these would be replaced with *greatly*.

Luke 2:49, “**wist** ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” Today we would say *did you not know*.

Josh. 2:4,5, “And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus... I **wist** not **whence** they were... **whither** the men went I **wot** not.” Words like *wist*, *whence*, *whither*, and *wot* are not words we use today. The meaning here is simply: “I do not know where they were, and I don’t know where they went”!

**Finally, it must be pointed out that many words in the old English of the KJV are not just obsolete, they now have a different meaning!**

I heard about a preacher that used Isaiah 52:12 for his text: “The God of Israel will be your **rereward**.” Not understanding the meaning of this outdated word, he declared: “The good Lord rewarded me and then he *re-rewarded* me!”—supposing this verse promised an *additional* reward. The word “rereward” meant a *rear guard*. God would go before them and also protect them *from behind*.

Ruth 4:4, Boaz said to Ruth, “I thought to **advertise** thee.” Today advertise would convey a different meaning, as one might use various means to market or promote a product. The meaning here is simply that he was going to *advise* her.

1 Cor. 16:15, “they have **addicted** themselves to the ministry of the saints.” The word “addicted” is now used of bad habits like addiction to drugs and alcohol. Newer translations have correctly used terms like “*devoted* themselves” to the service of the saints.

Acts 9:26, when Paul “was come to Jerusalem, he **assayed** to join himself to the disciples.” The word “assay” is used today in reference to substances being tested. Here it simply means Paul *attempted* to join the disciples.

Job 15:26, “He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick **bosses** of his bucklers.” We know what a “boss” is in today’s workplace. But an entirely different meaning is intended here: a “boss” was a projection in the center of a shield.

Isaiah 3:22, “the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the **crisping pins**.” How many have supposed “crisping pins” were hair curlers! When studied out, the Hebrew word means a bag or purse! Instead of obsolete words like *mantles*, *wimples*, and *crisping pins*, newer translations say: *party clothes*, *gowns*, *capas*, and *purses*.

Rom. 1:28, “to do those things which are not **convenient**.”

Eph. 5:4, “foolish talking...jesting...not **convenient**.”

Some wrong things people do are very *convenient*!—at least the way we use this word today. But back in the fourteenth century “convenient” came into use in the sense of that which is *proper*, *appropriate*. These verses speak against actions and jokes that are *not decent*.

1 Peter 3:1,2, regarding non-Christian husbands who “obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the **conversation** of the wives; while they behold your chaste **conversation**.” Imagine a conversation without saying a word! The old word “conversation” used 13 times in the KJV has nothing to do with what we call conversation, but means one’s *manner of life*, one’s *conduct*. A slogan used today would make a similar point: “The only Bible some people read is your life and mine.”

1 Chron. 11:5, “Nevertheless David took the **castle** of Zion.” We are prone to think of the word “castle” in a different sense today. Here it means *fortress*.

The word “cottage,” in contrast to a castle, causes us to think of a cute little house, a permanent place of dwelling. But

when the KJV used the word, it had a different meaning: Isaiah 24:20, “The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a **cottage**.” The analogy here is not that of a permanent dwelling, but a *hut* or *tent* in a storm, or as in one translation: a *hammock* that sways to and fro!

Isaiah 10:28, “at Michmash he hath laid up his **carriages**.” Acts 21:15, “we took up our **carriages** and went.”

Today we think of a carriage as being pulled by horses. But the word “carriages” here simply means *baggage*—it was what people carried, *not* what carried people.

The word “porter” means *to carry*. We think of a porter on a train. But in the old English of the KJV, a “porter” was a *door-keeper* or *gatekeeper*:

2 Kings 7:10, “they...called unto the **porter** of the city.”

Mk. 13:34, “a man ...commanded the **porter** to watch.”

Job 9:25, “My days are swifter than a **post**.”

Jer. 51:31, “One **post** shall run to meet another.”

Today we commonly think of a post, a wooden post, as stationary. But “post” is an old word meaning *runner*.

Psalms 119:147, “**I prevented** the dawning of the morning.” In today’s English, to “prevent” something is to make sure it does not happen. But here it has the old meaning of *precede*. The Psalmist was simply saying he rose up before dawn!

1 Thess. 4:15, “we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not **prevent** them which are asleep.” Was Paul reassuring the Thessalonians that those who were alive and remained would not prevent the resurrection? Was this in question? Obviously, “prevent” used in the KJV, as acknowledged on all sides, is an old word that meant *precede*!

The examples we have given here (limited by space restrictions) are only the tip of the iceberg! Because there are literally *thousands* of misspelled and obsolete words in the KJV, it seems farfetched to us that some claim *only* the KJV is God’s Word! They suppose they should remain crippled, perpetuating the English of a Shakespeare play. This teaching has caused much needless confusion and division among the people of God. To say that every version but the King James Version is a *perversion*, is not only misleading, it is untrue!

Let the reader be assured that we are *not* against the KJV—it has had a grand and noble history—but we also value and appreciate the clarity provided by more recent translations. Surely we should communicate God’s message using “words *easy to be understood*,” so that by “making it *plain* he may run who reads it” (1 Cor. 14:9; Hab. 2:2).

**Offerings for the support and continuation of this ministry will be gratefully received.**

**RALPH and ARLENE WOODROW**

**P.O. Box 21**

**Palm Springs, CA 92263-0021**

**Toll free order line: (877) 664-1549**

**Email: ralphwoodrow@earthlink.net**

**Website: www.ralphwoodrow.org**