

Ralph Woodrow
PO Box 21
Palm Springs, CA 92263-0021

March 2025



KING JAMES ONLY? (Part Four)

President Harry Truman is quoted as saying, “I always read the *King James Version*, not one of those damn new translations that they’ve got out lately” (p. 231, *Plain Speaking, an Oral Biography of Harry S. Truman*).

There are a lot of people who would agree with Truman on this (though not necessarily his language). They have been taught that the King James Version (KJV) is the *real* Bible, that it is the only “authorized” version, and that newer versions are *perversions* that have watered down the truth.

There are those who loudly proclaim: “These modern versions have left out the virgin birth, the blood of Jesus, and his Deity!” This is simply not true and has been disproved over and over.

I am not against Christians reading (or even preferring) the KJV; I use it myself. It has had a noble history for over 400 years. But I also appreciate the clarity and accuracy that is provided in more recent translations. I am not KJV *ONLY*.



Before me is a copy of a 700-page book which opposes all translations *except* the KJV. The drawing of a Dragon on the cover implies that every other translation is inspired by **Satan!** (cf. Rev. 20:2).

Another KJV *ONLY* author says translations (other than the KJV) are a **Satanic** attempt by homosexuals and heretics to pervert God’s word—that “true” Christians do not use them!

The King James translators themselves were not KJV *ONLY*. As the title page acknowledges, they “diligently compared” previous English translations.

The writers of the New Testament—men like Peter, James, John, Paul, etc.—when quoting from the Old Testament, did not always use the same version—sometimes the Masoretic, often the Septuagint. And, on occasion, they even **paraphrased** passages, like when Stephen cited Amos 5:25-27 (Acts 7:42,43).

None of the KJV translators claimed to be “infallible.” But even if they had produced a **perfect** translation, in over 400 years some words change in meaning. This should not be ignored.

There are words in the KJV that are no longer used today. But some contain similarities that provide hints as to their intended meaning.

“Three days **AGONE** [**ago**] I fell sick” (1 Sam. 30:13). Because of the similarity, we realize that “agone” is simply an old way of saying “ago.”

“The fishes of the sea...they take them up with the **ANGLE** [**fishhook**]” (Hab. 1:15). In today’s English, we would not call a fishhook an “angle,” but a fisherman *is* called an **angler**.

“[Ruth] gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her **HAP** was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz” (Ruth 2:3).

Our word “happened” comes to mind. The meaning is she **HAPPENED** to come to that part of the field.

“Cyrus, whose right hand I have **HOLDEN** [**held**], to subdue nations before him” (Isa. 45:1). Our word “hold” provides a hint on this one.

Three young Hebrew men “were bound in their coats, their **HOSEN**, and their hats, and...were cast into the burning fiery furnace” (Dan. 3:21). Though the word “nylons” is more common, the old word “hose” is still used of leg coverings. Newer translations have replaced “hosen” with **trousers**.

“Then they cried with a loud voice...to **AFFRIGHT** [**frighten**] them” (2 Chron. 32:18). Although “affright” is not used today, it is close enough that we can figure out the meaning.

“Let them **IMPLEAD** [**press charges**]...in a lawful assembly” (Acts 19:38). This is similar to a court room question: “How do you *plead*?”

“**NEESINGS**” (Job 41:18) might cause us to think of the word “sneezing” which is the intended meaning.

“Take two onyx stones, and **GRAVE** [**engrave**] on them the names of the children of Israel” (Exod. 28:9).

“God...spake unto me **YESTERNIGHT** [**last night**]” (Gen. 31:29). We still use “yesterday,” but not *yesternight*, which is now archaic.

“Go write it...in a **TABLE** [**tablet**]...note it in a book” (Isa. 30:8). We would not speak of writing in a *table*, but we do retain the term *Table of Contents*.

“Paul...**HASTED** [**made haste**] to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost” (Acts 20:16). “Hasted” (used 24 times in the KJV) is better translated *hastened* or *hurried*.

“[Josiah] set the priests in their **CHARGES** [that which they were in **charge** of] and encouraged them” (2 Chron. 35:2).

“They are **MINISHED** [**diminished**] and brought low through oppression” (Psa. 107:39).

The word **BEEVES** (used 7 times in the KJV), as we might surmise, is simply an old English plural of the word “beef.”

“Thou shalt...couple the curtains together with the **TACHES**” (Exod. 26:6). “Tatch” is not used today. But the word “**attach**” is familiar. Tatches were hooks or clasps used to *attach* curtains in the wilderness tabernacle.

“Art” is defined as an expression of creative skill, such as a painting or sculpture. But in the KJV (in nearly **500** verses!) it has a *different* meaning! Here are a few examples:

“Where **art** thou?” (Gen. 3:9). “Dust thou **art**” (Gen. 3:14). “Nations...mightier than thou **art**” (Deut. 4:38). “O LORD, thou **art** our father” (Isa. 64:8). “Our Father which **art** in heaven” (Matt. 6:9). “Because thou **art** lukewarm...” (Rev. 3:16).

“Art” is not too hard to figure out, being similar to “**are**.” But is anything gained by saying **ART** instead of **ARE**?

The final references to “art” are in Revelation 16:5: “Thou ART righteous, O Lord, which ART, and WAST, and shalt be.” Notice “**wast**.” Out of the 66 times the word “wast” appears in the KJV, here are three examples: “Who told thee that thou **wast** naked?” (Gen. 3:11). “Thou **wast** a servant in the land of Egypt” (Deut. 5:15). “How **wast** thou not afraid?” (2 Sam. 1:14).

Is using an archaic word like “WAST” somehow better, or *more spiritual*, than simply saying “WAS”?

“David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house...and there followed him a MESS of meat [food] from the king” (2 Sam. 11:8 KJV). The most common way “mess” is used today has to do with someone messing things up—a negative. But an old meaning is still reflected in the military term “Mess Hall,” where soldiers eat.

“The POSTS went with the *letters*...throughout all Israel” (2 Chron. 30:6 KJV). The Hebrew word here translated “posts” meant **runners**. It was a word commonly translated *run*. Today we think of a *post*—like a fence post—as something *stationary*. But we do retain “post” in terms like **postman** and **post office**.

“Walk about Zion, and go round about...TELL [count] the towers thereof” (Psa. 48:12 KJV). We don’t commonly use the word “tell” as meaning *count*, but someone in a bank who counts money is called a **teller**.

“They LADED [loaded, provided] us with such things as were necessary” (Acts 28:10 KJV). “Laded” is not used today, but the term “Bill of Lading” remains.

These are examples of archaic words that are somewhat similar to words we use today. But there are other words in the KJV that provide little or no hint as to their present-day meaning:

The traditional Christmas song, “Deck the Halls with Boughs of Holly,” uses the words, “don we now our GAY apparel...” When this was written, and when James spoke of “GAY clothing” (James 2:3), it referred to bright clothing, the type that might be worn on festive occasions. It had no *homosexual* meaning.

Samson “brake the WITHS [cords], as a thread of TOW [yarn] is broken when it touches the fire” (Judges 16:9). Today the word “tow” means *to pull along*. “He **towed** a trailer behind his car.” “Withs” is also obsolete.

Several times the KJV uses the term “BY AND BY” (Mark 6:25; Luke 21:9). Hymns talk about Heaven as the sweet “by and by”—something that will happen eventually (future). But in the KJV “by and by” had an *opposite* meaning: **immediately!**

“The men were very good unto us...as long as we were CONVERSANT with them” (1 Sam. 25:15 KJV). “Conversant” might cause us to think of “conversation.” But the meaning here is: “...as long as we **accompanied** them” (NKJV).

As a young traveling evangelist, I often used 1 Timothy 4:12 as a text: “Let no man despise thy *youth*, but be thou an *example* of believers in...CONVERSATION.” I supposed that “conversation” had to do with the way we *talk*. That is important, of course. But 400 years ago, “conversation” meant **conduct**.

Peter wrote that Christian wives may win unbelieving husbands to the Lord, not by their **words**, but “by their CONVERSATION [conduct]...while they *behold* your chaste CONVERSATION [conduct]” (1 Peter 3:1, 2 KJV). If “conversation” (as used in the KJV) meant *talking*, this would make no sense!

On one occasion, David, pretending to be insane, “SCRABBLED on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon

his beard” (1 Sam. 21:13). “Scrabbled” may cause *us* to think of the popular board game **Scrabble**. But totally unrelated, *scrabbled* here meant *scratched!*

There are *numerous* words in the KJV that now, after 400 years, have an *entirely different meaning!* Beginning in Genesis 3:6, the KJV uses the word “HUSBAND” 120 times. No one misunderstands this. But then we read the word “husbandman.” Wouldn’t this be a “man” who is a “husband”? So it might seem! But at the time the KJV was translated, husbandman meant a person who cultivates the ground, a **farmer!**

“Noah began to be an HUSBANDMAN, and he planted a vineyard” (Gen. 9:20). “The HUSBANDMAN waiteth for the precious fruit...and hath long patience for it” (James 5:7).

The KJV uses the word “bride” 14 times. No one misunderstands this word. We speak of a “bride” and “groom.” But when the KJV was translated, a “groom” was called “bridegroom” (24 times)! Several times *both* terms are used in the same verse: “...as a **bridegroom** decketh himself with ornaments, and as a **bride** adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isa. 61:10). Today we don’t call a groom the *bridegroom*.

If we “let” something happen, we **allow** it. But in the KJV, one of the words translated “LET” has an opposite meaning: to **hinder!** (Rom. 1:13; 2 Thess. 2:7).

“Whither have ye made a ROAD to day?” (1 Sam. 27:10). Unlike the way we use “road,” the meaning here is: “Where have you made a RAID today?” (NKJV). David was not a road builder!

“Harness the horses...furbish the spears and put on the BRIGANDINES [armor]” (Jer. 46:4).

“The oxen...that **ear** the ground” (Isa. 30:24). Unlike our common word “ear,” the word used here means to *plow*.

The KJV used the term “a PECULIAR [special] people” (Deut. 14:2; Titus 2:14; 1 Peter 2:9) which back then meant “belonging to one person.” Today “peculiar” has acquired the meaning of “**strange**.” I have actually heard people say—having done something goofy or oddball—“The Bible says God’s people are a PECULIAR people!”

“King Solomon loved many STRANGE women” (1 Kings 11:1). That some of them were “strange” in the way we use the term today—silly, odd, eccentric or ridiculous—was probably true. But “strange,” as used here, referred to women from *foreign* countries, as this verse goes on to show.

“Likewise must the deacons be GRAVE [honest]...even so must their wives be GRAVE [honest]” (1 Tim. 3:8, 11). This is certainly a different meaning of the word **grave**.

“How long will ye love vanity, and seek after LEASING?” (Psa. 4:2). We might speak of someone “leasing” a house. The meaning here is unmistakably that of telling **lies**.

“Huldah the prophetess...dwelt in Jerusalem in the COLLEGE” (2 Kings 22:14 KJV). We use the word “college” in a totally different way. Here it simply meant she lived in the “Second District” of Jerusalem.

“Coast” is defined today as land along the ocean. But in the old English of the KJV, it simply meant a *border* or *boundary*. “Jesus...came into the **coasts** of Judaea beyond Jordan” (Matt. 19:1). “The Jews expelled them out of their **coasts**” (Acts 13:50). The words “coast” and “coasts” appear 113 times in the KJV.

“I have learned by EXPERIENCE that the LORD hath blessed me for thy sake” (Gen. 30:27). “Learning by *experience*,” as we understand it, is not the meaning here. The Hebrew word is,

elsewhere, translated *enchantments* and *divination*. Some expositors believe it involved serpents.

What was said of Rebekah—that “she was FAIR to look upon”—was said of several women in the Bible (Gen. 26:7; Est. 1:11, Job 42:15, etc.). If *we* refer to a woman’s appearance as being “fair,” it would imply she is not ugly, but not beautiful either. *Average*. She is fair-looking. But “fair” as used in the KJV meant a woman who was exceptionally good looking.

Then there is the word “fairs” (found 7 times in Ezekiel 27): “Tarshish was thy merchant...with silver, iron, tin, and lead, they traded in thy FAIRS” (Ezek. 27:12 KJV). The Hebrew word translated “fairs” means *wares, merchandise*. It never means “fairs” as we might speak of community events like a county fair.

The word “champaign” may cause some to think of “Champagne,” the sparkling wine. But, totally unrelated, at the time the KJV was translated, champaign meant *plain!* “They dwell...in the CHAMPAIGN [**plain**]” (Deut. 11:30).

We use the word “halt” as meaning to **stop**. But at the time of the KJV it meant **lame** (people unable to walk properly). “...it is better for thee to enter into life HALT or maimed...” (Matt. 18:8). “...bring in hither [here] the poor, and the maimed, and the HALT, and the blind” (Luke 14:21).

“...neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not CONVENIENT” (Eph. 5:4 KJV). People today who tell dirty jokes often find it *convenient* to do so! The words “not convenient,” as in the KJV, referred to talk that was “not **decent**.”

Years ago, I heard a preacher use the text: “I will stand upon my WATCH” (Hab. 2:1 KJV). He repeated the phrase several times. I wondered if some of the younger people might be thinking: “Why would a man stand on his [wrist] watch?” Most understand, of course, this verse referred to a night watchman.

Because a night watchman was awake when others were sleeping, the word “watchings” came into use. Along with other troubles Paul encountered, he was “in WATCHINGS often” (2 Cor. 11:27 KJV). When the KJV was translated, “watchings” referred to nights when one was unable to sleep. Newer translations use the term “**sleeplessness**.”

Translation work on the KJV was divided among 47 scholars. Because some preferred one spelling over another, sometimes the same word is spelled different ways:

PLACES: Armenia / Ararat; Canaan / Charran; Gomorrha / Gomorrah; Juda / Judaea; Midian / Madian; Mount Sinai / Mount Sina; Sodom / Sodoma; Tarshish / Tharshish; Tyre / Tyrus; Zion / Sion; **etc.**

WORDS: Ago / agone; attentive / attent; attire / tire; aware / ware; before / afore; between / betwixt; bull / bullock; endureth / dureth; especially / specially; establish / stablish; example / ensample; lied / belied; milk / milch; plow / plough; practice / practise; scroll / roll; shall / shalt; since / sith; spy / espy; supper / sup; thoroughly / throughly; three / thrice; whosoever / whoso; veil / vail; **etc.**

NAMES: Boaz / Booz; Elijah / Elias; Elisha / Eliseus; Emmor / Hamor; Enos / Enosh; Gideon / Gedeon; Hosea / Osee; Isaiah / Esaias; Jechonias / Coniah; Jephthah / Jephthae; Jeremiah / Jeremias; Jonah / Jonas; Josiah / Josias; Melchizedek / Melchisedec; Nebuchadnezzar / Nebuchadrezzar; Noah / Noe; Rahab / Rachab; Sarah / Sara; Silas / Silvanus; Timothy / Timothus; **etc.**

Is there any reason why a translation—*especially* a translation of a book as highly regarded as the Bible—should not use spelling that is *uniform*?

Instead of “today” being one word, the KJV uses two words: **to day** (76 times). Instead of “tomorrow” being one word, the KJV uses two words: **to morrow** (56 times). Instead of “forever” being one word, the KJV uses two words: **for ever** (390 times).

Some—myself included—while using a computer program have tried to look up words like “forever” in the KJV, only to be informed that “forever” appears “0” times in the KJV! This is because the KJV always spells it as *two* words. For example, Hebrews 13:8: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and FOR EVER.”

According to present-day grammar, “WHO” is used when referring to **people**, and “THAT” when referring to **things**. In the KJV, this rule is *sometimes* followed, as in 1 John 4:21: “He WHO loveth God...” But starting in Genesis 15:4 there are *literally hundreds* of “he THAT” verses! For one example: “Where is he THAT is born King of the Jews?” (Matt. 2:2). Better wording would be: “Where is he WHO is born King of the Jews?”

A word considered normal at one time, may later acquire a different or, sometimes, vulgar meaning. The KJV used the word “ass” or “asses” 150 times. Newer translations, appropriately, use the word **donkey**. In verses where the KJV used “teats” and “paps” (Ezek. 23:2; Luke 11:27), newer translations use “breasts” and “nipples.” Instead of “piss” (2 Kings 18:27; 1 Sam. 25:22 KJV)—now considered vulgar—the word “urine” is used today.

Because the KJV was translated over 400 years ago, it often uses expressions that are different from the way we say things today:

Using GO TO in a sentence—like when Jesus said, “I **go to** prepare a place for you”—is normal word usage. But at the time the KJV was translated, “go to” was also used in a different way:

“GO TO, let us make brick...GO TO, let us build us a city and a tower...GO TO, let us confound their language” (Gen. 11:3-7). “GO TO, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee” (Gen. 38:16). “GO TO now, ye that say...buy and sell, and get gain...GO TO now, ye rich men, weep and howl!” (James 4:13; 5:1).

In the KJV, the end of a day is worded: “...BY THAT THE sun goeth down” (Exod. 22:26). We would say “by the time the sun goes down” or simply by *sundown*.

Notice the wording of Deuteronomy 21:22: “If a man have [has] committed a sin worthy of death, and HE BE TO BE put to death...” Today we would say if “he is to be put to death,” not “and **he be to be** put to death.”

In the KJV, 5 verses use the term “**must needs be**”: “It **must needs be** that offenses come” (Matt. 18:7); “such things **must needs be**” (Mark 13:7); “ye **must needs be** subject” (Rom. 13:5); etc. Today, “needs” would be omitted.

“And mount Sinai was altogether ON A SMOKE” (Exod. 19:18). That is not the way we would express it now.

“Pray,” as used today, involves communication with GOD, and is often used this way in the KJV. But it also uses “pray” in another way (now archaic), involving praying to *people!*

“They began to PRAY him to depart” (Mark 5:17). Paul prayed to the Corinthians: “We PRAY you...be ye reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20). Judah “PRAYED” to a woman he supposed was a prostitute (Gen. 38:16). We even read that Jesus “prayed” to Peter! Jesus “PRAYED him that he would thrust out [his boat] from the land” (Luke 5:3). NKJV says he “**asked**” him.

Long ago I memorized Matthew 7:8 from the KJV. How many times over the years have I quoted it! “For every one that ASK-ETH RECEIVETH, and he that SEEKETH FINDETH, and to him that KNOCKETH it shall be opened.” Words ending with **eth** are used over **3,000** times in the KJV!

The fact is, *every single page* of the KJV has words that are old, obsolete English. The words **hast, hath, saith, shalt, thee, thine, thou, thy, and ye** are used over **25,000** times in the KJV. These are not bad words—not necessarily incorrect words—but words we do not use in *normal* conversation today.

“Why TRIMMEST thou thy way to seek love? Therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways” (Jer. 2:33 KJV). **Trim-mest?** The *Contemporary English Version* provides the sense: “You are so clever at finding lovers that you could give lessons to a prostitute”! The use of the word “trimmest” is meaningless to a modern-day reader.

I realize some of this information is *technical* and may not be of interest to everyone. But for those who make the effort, a study of words *can* be interesting and informative!

The following one-liners show old English words used in the KJV, with present-day meanings in brackets:

“The **ABJECTS** [**vile men**] gathered themselves together against me” (Psa. 35:15).

“They have **ADDICTED** [**devoted**] themselves to the ministry” (1 Cor. 16:15).

“I will **ADVERTISE** [**advise**] thee what this people shall do ...in the latter days” (Num 24:14).

“That our garners may be full, **AFFORDING** [**supplying**] all manner of store” (Psa. 144:13).

“People...ran **AFOOT** [**on foot**] thither...and **OUTWENT** [**arrived before**] them” (Mark 6:33).

“They also **ALLOW** [**accept**] that there shall be a resurrection” (Acts 24:15).

“They shall **AMERCE** [**fine**] him in an hundred shekels of silver...” (Deut. 22:19).

“...the thick **BOSSES** [**embossed shield**]” (Job 15:26).

“Let us walk honestly...not in **CHAMBERING** [**sexual immorality**]” (Rom. 13:13).

“...beside that which **CHAPMEN** [**traders**]...brought” (2 Chron. 9:14).

“As for me Daniel, my **COGITATIONS** [**thoughts**] much troubled me” (Dan. 7:28).

“Stalls for all manner of beasts, and **COTES** [**coops, shelters**] for flocks” (2 Chron. 32:28).

“The enemy could not **COUNTERVAIL** [**compensate**] the king's damage” (Est. 7:4).

“Thou shalt not take the **DAM** [**mother bird**] with the young” from a nest (Deut. 22:6).

“Joseph sent to **DESCRY** [**spy out**] Bethel” (Judges 1:23).

“There shall be...earthquakes in **DIVERS** [**various, diverse**] places” (Matt. 24:7).

“Let him **ESCHEW** [**turn away from**] evil, and do good” (1 Peter 3:11).

“And they slew...about ten thousand men, all **LUSTY** [**stout, robust**] men” (Judg. 3:29).

“It is not **MEET** [**proper**] to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs” (Mark 7:27).

“Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in **METEYARD** [**measurement of length**]” or in weight (Lev. 19:35).

“Hath any man brought him **OUGHT** [**anything**] to eat?” (John 4:33).

“Diotrephes who loveth to have the preeminence...**PRATING** [**ranting**] against us with malicious words” (3 John 1:10).

“In the morning shall my prayer **PREVENT** [**come before**] thee” (Psa. 88:13).

“Then came **PUBLICANS** [**tax collectors**] to be baptized” by John (Luke 3:12).

“Not **PURLOINING** [**stealing**], but shewing all good fidelity” (Titus 2:10).

“Peter **REHEARSED** [**explained**] the matter from the beginning...” (Acts 11:4).

“A prophet is not without honour, **SAVE** [**except**] in his own country” (Matt. 13:57).

“Solomon made two hundred **TARGETS** [**shields**] of beaten gold” (2 Chron. 9:15).

“The man wondering...held his peace, to **WIT** [**learn**] whether the **LORD** had made his journey prosperous” (Gen. 24:21).

“What I shall choose I **WOT** [**know**] not” (Phil. 1:22).

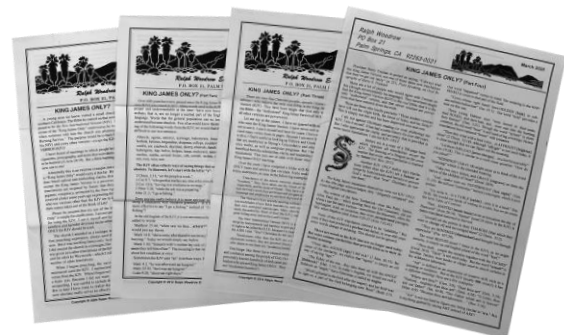
If space permitted, we could take a closer look at *many* other outdated words in the KJV:

afresh, ague, artificer, asswage, axletrees, betimes, bewray, besom, bolster, cockle, cholera, collops, cor, cracknels, durst, emerods, feloes, fens, fetcheth a stroke, heath, helve, holpen, knop, lees, matrix, maw, ouches, outgoings, penury, re-reward, selvedge, sottish, thereat, undersetters, warp and woof, wen, winefat, wist, wont, etc.

It would be difficult for most of us to use these words in a sentence!

The King James *ONLY* teaching—that *only* the KJV is God's Word and that all other translations are inspired by **Satan**—has acquired a cult-like following. Unfortunately, it has caused fruitless and needless divisions among some of God's people. —RW

A packet of all four articles I have written on this subject will be sent free upon request. (They are also available on the website ralphwoodrow.org)



RALPH WOODROW

PO Box 21

Palm Springs, CA. 92263

Email: ralphwoodrow@earthlink.net