

REMINDER

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The King James Version of 1611: The Myth of Early Revisions

By the late Dr. David F. Reagan
(continued from last week)

II. THE FOUR SO-CALLED REVISIONS OF 1611 KJV

3. TEXTUAL CHANGES -

Almost all of the alleged changes have been accounted for. We now come to the question of actual textual differences between our present edition and that of 1611. There are some differences between the two, but they are not the changes of a revision. They are, instead, the correction of early printing errors.

That this is a fact may be seen in three things: 1) the character of the changes, 2) the frequency of the changes throughout the Bible, and 3) the time the changes were made. First, let us look at the character of the changes were made. First, let us look at the character of the changes made from the time of the first printing of the Authorized English Bible.

The changes from the 1611 edition that are admittedly textual are obviously printing errors because of the nature of these changes. They are not textual changes made to alter the reading. In the first printing, words were sometimes inverted. Sometimes a plural was written as singular or visa versa. At times a word was miswritten for one that was similar. A few times a word or even a phrase was omitted. The omissions were obvious and did not have the doctrinal implications of those found in modern translations. In fact, there is really no comparison between the corrections made in the King James text and those proposed by the scholars of today.

F. H. A. Scrivener, in the appendix of his book, lists the variations between the 1611 edition of the KJV and later printings. A sampling of these corrections is given below. In order to be objective, the samples give the first textual correction on consecutive left-hand pages of Scrivener's book. The 1611 reading is given first; then the present reading; and finally, the

date the correction was first made.

1. this thing - this thing also (1638)
2. shalt have remained - ye shall have remained (1762)
3. Achzib, nor Helbath, nor Aphik - of Achzib, nor of Helbath, nor of Aphik (1762)
4. requite good - requite me good (1629)
5. this book of the Covenant - the book of this covenant (1629)
6. chief rulers - chief ruler (1629)
7. And Parbar - At Parbar (1638)
8. For this cause - And for this cause (1638)
9. For the king had appointed - for so the king had appointed (1629)
10. Seek good - seek God (1617)
11. The cormorant - But the cormorant (1629)
12. returned - turned (1769)
13. a fiery furnace - a burning fiery furnace (1638)
14. The crowned - Thy crowned (1629)
15. thy right doeth - thy right hand doeth (1613)
16. the wayes side - the way side (1743)
17. which was a Jew - which was a Jewess (1629)
18. the city - the city of the Damascenes (1629)
19. now and ever - both now and ever (1638)
20. which was of our father's - which was our fathers (1616)

Before your eyes are 5% of the textual changes made in the King James Version in 399 years. Even if they were not corrections of previous errors, they would be of no comparison to modern alterations. But they are corrections of printing errors, and therefore no comparison is at all possible. Look at the list for yourself and you will find only one that has serious implications. In fact, in an examination of Scrivener's entire appendix, it is the only variation found by this author that could be accused of being doctrinal. I am referring to Psalm 69:32 where the 1611 edition has "seek God."

Yet, even with this error, two points demonstrate that this was indeed a printing error. First, the similarity of the words "good" and "God" in spelling shows how easily a weary typesetter could misread the proof and put the wrong word in the text. Second, this error was so obvious that it was caught and corrected in the year 1617, only six years after the original printing and well before the first so-called revision. The myth that there are several major revisions to the 1611 KJV should be getting clearer. But

there is more.

Not only does the character of the changes show them to be printing errors, so does their frequency. Fundamentalist scholars refer to the thousands of revisions made to the 1611 as if they were on a par with the recent Bible versions. They are not. The overwhelming majority of them are either type style or spelling changes. The few which do remain are clearly corrections of printing errors printing process. The sample list given ABOVE will demonstrate just how careful Scrivener was in listing all the variations. Yet, even with this great care, only approximately 400 variations are named between the 1611 edition and modern copies. Remember that there were 100 variations between the first two Oxford editions which were both printed in 1611.

Since there are almost 1,200 chapters in the Bible, the average variation per chapter (after 399 years) is one third, I.E. one correction per every three chapters. These are changes such as "chief ruler" and "And Parbar" to "At Parbar." But there is yet one more evidence that these variations are simply corrected printing errors: the early date at which they were corrected.

The character and frequency of the textual changes clearly separate them from modern alterations. But the time the changes were made settles the issue absolutely. The great majority of the 400 corrections were made within a *few years* of the original printing. Take, for example, our earlier sampling. Of the twenty corrections listed, one was made in 1613, one in 1616, one in 1617, eight in 1629, five in 1638, one in 1743, two in 1762, and one in 1769. That means that 16 out of 20 corrections, or 80%, were made within twenty-seven years of the 1611 printing. *That is hardly the long drawn out series of revisions the scholars would have you to believe.* In another study made by examining every other page of Scrivener's appendix in detail, 72% of the textual corrections were made by 1638. There is no "revision" issue.

The character of the textual changes is that of obvious errors. The frequency of the textual changes is sparse, occurring only once per three chapters. The chronology of the textual changes is early with about three fourths of them occurring within twenty-seven years of the first printing. All of these details establish the fact that there were no true revisions in the sense of updating the language or correcting translation errors. There were only editions which corrected early typographical errors. Our source of authority for the exact wording of the 1611 Authorized Version is not in the existing copies of the first printing. Our source of authority for the exact wording of our English Bible is in the preserving power of Almighty God. Just as God did not leave us the original autographs to fight and squabble over, so He did not see fit to leave us the proof copy of the translation. Our authority is in the hand of God as always. You can praise the Lord for that!

IV. CHANGES IN THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

An in-depth study of the changes made in the book of Ecclesiastes should help to illustrate the principles stated above.

The author is grateful to Dr. Dave Reese of Millbrook, Alabama, for his work in this area. By comparing a 1611 reprint of the original edition put out by Thomas Nelson & Sons with a recent printing of the King James Version, Dr. Reese was able to locate four variations in the book of Ecclesiastes. The reference is given first; then the text of the Thomas Nelson 1611 reprint. This is followed by the reading of the present editions of the 1611 KJV and the date the change was made.

1. 1:5 the place - his place (1638)
2. 2:16 shall be - shall all be (1629)
3. 8:17 out, yea further - out, yet he shall not find it; yea farther (1629)
4. 11: 17 thing is it - thing it is (?)

Several things should be noted about these changes. The last variation ("thing is it" to "thing it is") is not mentioned by Scrivener who was a very careful and accurate scholar. Therefore, this change may be a misprint in the Thomas Nelson reprint. That would be interesting. The corrected omission in chapter eight is one of the longest corrections of the original printing. But notice that it was corrected in 1629. The frequency of printing errors is average (four errors in twelve chapters). But the most outstanding fact is that the entire book of Ecclesiastes reads *exactly* like our present editions without even printing errors by the year 1638. That's approximately 370 years ago. By that time, the Bible was being printed in Roman type. Therefore, all (and I mean all) that has changed in 370 years in the book of Ecclesiastes is that the spelling has been standardized! As stated before, the main purpose of the 1629 and 1638 Cambridge editions was the correction of earlier printing errors. And the main purpose of the 1762 and 1769 editions was the standardization of spelling.

V. THE SO-CALLED JUSTIFICATION FOR OTHER REVISIONS -

Maybe now you see that the King James Version of 1611 has not been revised but only corrected. But why does it make that much difference? Although there are several reasons why this issue is important, the most pressing one is that many "scholars" are using this myth of past revisions to justify their own tampering with the text. The editors of the **New King James Version** have probably been the worst in recent years to use this propaganda ploy. In the preface of the New King James they have stated, *"For nearly four hundred years, and throughout several revisions of its English form, the King James Bible has been deeply revered among the English-speaking peoples of the world."* In the midst of their flowery rhetoric, they strongly imply that their edition is only a continuation of the revisions that have been going on for the past 399 years. This implication, which has been stated directly by others, could not be more false. To prove this point, we will go back to the book of Ecclesiastes:

An examination of the first chapter in Ecclesiastes in the New King James Version reveals approximately 50 changes from our present edition. In order to be fair, spelling changes (cometh to comes; labour to labor; etc.) were not included in this count. That means there are probably about **600 alterations** in the book of

Ecclesiastes and approximately **60,000** changes in the entire Bible. If you accuse me of including every recognizable change, you are correct - but I am only counting the sort of changes which were identified in analyzing the 1611 King James. That's only fair. Still, the number of changes is especially baffling for a version which claims to be an updating in the same vein as earlier revisions. According to the fundamentalist scholar, the New King James is only a fifth in a series of revisions. Then pray tell me how four "revisions" and 399 years brought only 400 changes while the fifth revision brought about **60,000** additional changes? That means that the fifth revision made 150 times more changes than the total number of changes in the first four! That's preposterous!

Not only is the frequency of the changes unbelievable, but the character of the alterations are serious. Although many of the alterations seem harmless enough at first glance, many are much more serious. The editors of the New King James Version were sly enough not to alter the most serious blunders of the modern bibles. Yet, they were not afraid to change the reading in those places that are unfamiliar to the average fundamentalist. In these areas, the New King James Version is dangerous. Below are some of the more harmful alterations made in the book of Ecclesiastes. The reference is given first; then the reading as found in the King James Version: and last, the reading as found in the New King James Version.

- * 1:13 sore travail; grievous task
- * 1:14 vexation of spirit; grasping for the wind
- * 1:16 my heart had great experience of wisdom; My heart has understood great wisdom
- * 2:3 to give myself unto; to gratify my flesh with
- * 2:3 acquainting; guiding
- * 2:21 equity; skill
- * 3:10 the travail, which God hath given; the God-given task
- * 3:11 the world; eternity
- * 3:18 that God might manifest them; God tests them
- * 3:18 they themselves are beasts; they themselves are like beasts
- * 3:22 portion; heritage
- * 4:4 right work; skillful work
- * 5:1 Keep thy foot; Walk prudently
- * 5:6 the angel; the messenger of God
- * 5:6 thy voice; your excuse
- * 5:8 he that is higher than the highest; high official
- * 5:20 God answereth him; God keeps him busy
- * 6:3 untimely birth; stillborn child
- * 7:29 inventions; schemes
- * 8:1 boldness; sternness
- * 8:10 the place of the holy; the place of holiness
- * 10:1 Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; Dead flies putrefy the perfumer's ointment
- * 10:10 If the iron be blunt; If the ax is dull
- * 10:10 wisdom is profitable to direct; wisdom brings success

* 12:9 gave good heed; pondered

* 12:11 the masters of assemblies; scholars

This is only a sampling of the changes in the book, but notice what is done. **Equity**, which is a trait of godliness, becomes **skill** (2:21). **The world** becomes **eternity** (3:11) Man without God is no longer a **beast** but **just like a beast** (3:18). The clear reference to deity in Ecclesiastes 5:8 ("**he that is higher than the highest**") is successfully removed ("**higher official**"). But since success is what wisdom is supposed to bring us (10:10), this must be progress. At least God is keeping the scholars busy (5:20). Probably the most revealing of the above mentioned changes is the last one listed where "**the masters of assemblies**" become "**scholars**." According to the New King James, "*the words of scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd.*" The masters of assemblies are replaced by the scholars who become the source of the Shepherd's words. That is what these scholars would like us to think, but it is not true.

In conclusion, the New King James is not a revision in the vein of former revisions of the King James Version. **It is instead an entirely new translation.** As stated in the introduction, the purpose of this book is not to convince those who use the other versions. The purpose of this article is to expose a fallacious argument that has been circulating in conservative Christian circles for what it is: **an overblown myth.** That is, the myth that the New King James Version and others like it are nothing more than continuation of revisions which have periodically been made to the King James Version since 1611. There is one problem with this theory. **There are no such revisions.**

The King James Bible of 1611 has **not** undergone four (or any) major revisions. Therefore, the New King James Version is not a continuation of what has gone on before. It should in fact be called the Thomas Nelson Version. They hold the copyright. The King James Version we have today has not been revised but purified. We still have no reason to doubt that the Bible we hold in our hands is the very word of God preserved for us in the English language. The authority for its veracity lies not in the first printing of the King James Version in 1611, or in the character of King James I, or in the scholarship of the 1611 translators, or in the literary accomplishments of Elizabethan England, or even in the Greek Received Text. Our authority for the infallible words of the English Bible lies in the power and promise of God to preserve His Word! God has the power. We have His Word. ■



NURSERY MINISTRY WORKERS FOR THIS WEEK

10:50 a.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Mary Byars
Cradle Roll 2: Larry Byars
6:30 p.m. Service ----- Cradle Roll 1: Piper Quinnelly
Cradle Roll 2: Ryan Quinnelly
Wed. Eve. Service ----- Volunteers Needed!

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

Week of October 10, 2010

Sunday School ----- 27
Sunday Morning Service ----- 40
Sunday Evening Service ----- 33
Wed. Eve. Service, 10/13/10 ----- 32

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

Week of October 10, 2010

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings ----- \$ 1,027.00
Insurance Fund ----- \$ 62.00
Total Received for Week of 10/10/10: \$ 1,089.00

**Average amount of Undesignated Offerings needed
to operate the church EACH WEEK,
as a minimum = \$ 1,400.00**

INSURANCE FUND REPORT FOR LAST MONTH:

Monthly Requirement ----- \$ 273.08
Amount Received for September ----- \$ 273.08
Amount Short For September: \$ 0.00

INSURANCE FUND REPORT THIS MONTH:

Monthly Requirement ----- \$ 273.08
Amount Received 10/03/10 ----- \$ 110.00
Amount Still Needed By 11/06/10: \$ 163.08

***MEN - BE SURE AND BE
HERE AT SIX O'CLOCK
TONIGHT FOR OUR
MEN'S PRAYER TIME!***

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

- 1. Admit that you are a sinner.***
- 2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.***
- 3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.***
- 4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).***
- 5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.***



Please Remember To Be Faithful to Give!

As with everything else, the costs of keeping a church going never go down - they always go **up**. Bills wait for no one, and churches are no exception to this. An extra, sacrificial gift today by everyone present would go a long way...

We encourage all of our membership to practice obedience to God by being faithful every payday to give back to Him His tithe (10%). *If every family in our church would practice this one simple discipline, we would never have weeks where we have to put off paying some bills until the following week!*

Everything is expensive, especially for a small church like ours, but ours is a BIG God, and He LOVES to bless His children when they are obedient to Him!

If you are already a tither, we thank you, and encourage you to also give offerings as well. If you're currently not tithing, won't you please start **today** - **OK?** Thank you.

Church Directory

Todd W. White ----- Pastor
Mickie Shatwell ----- Pianist
Dickie Eberle ----- Greeter, Custodian
Larry Mathews, Caryn Quinnelly, Todd W. White ----- S.S. Teachers
Larry & Mary Byars, Brian & Charity Crawford,
Dwayne English ----- Outreach
Flowers ----- Hannah and Shirley White