

The History of the Bible

KING JAMES ONLYISM

Definition: King James Version Onlyism (KJVO) is the idea that only the King James Version of the Bible can claim to be the Word of God in English.

KJV-Onlyism Is Not:

1) expressing a preference for the King James Version.	2) when a church that uses the King James Version in their worship services.	3) arguing/believing the King James Version is the <u>best</u> translation.
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My Struggle When I Was KJVO:


- I would have to explain from Scripture why it is right. The Bible itself is our rule of faith and practice. I could not find compelling Biblical arguments.
- If I held a position that God promised perfect translations, then I also had to admit that all Christians of all time had that promise. But, if an English speaker before 1611 had that promise ... what was their perfect translation?
- It was not enough to show the King James and modern translations read differently. I had to be able to show that the KJV was right (or modern translations wrong) in all those places.
- I needed explain how the doctrine of KJV-Onlyism – which by definition can't be more than about 400 years old – is a foundational part of the faith once delivered to the saints over 2,000 years ago.

Several Different 'Flavors' of KJV-Onlyism


1) Some people hold to KJV-Onlyism because it is what they've been taught. Unless we're experts in Greek, Hebrew and Textual Criticism, we all choose authorities we trust. But our ultimate authority must be the Word of God itself. KJV-Onlyism cannot be held as a matter of faith because it is not found in Scripture.

2) Some hold KJV-Onlyism because they see other translations as problematic. The issues they see with modern translation can vary from a concern about a verse to a belief that modern versions have intentionally altered doctrine.

How KJV-Onlyism argues:

	1 TIMOTHY 3:16a
KJV	And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh ...
NIV	Beyond all question, the mystery from which true godliness springs is great: He appeared in the flesh ...
CSB	And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh ...

What KJV-Onlyism Won't Show:

	JOHN 1:18
KJV	No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son , which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared <i>him</i> .
NIV	No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.
CSB	No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he has revealed him.

3) Some people advocate for the KJV-Only position because the 'high and lofty language' just sounds like God's Word.

There's no denying the King James Version is written in a beautifully crafted language, reminiscent of Shakespearean prose. However, this is only an argument for how the sound of the words make you feel, not what the words actually mean. Do we want missionaries translating the Bible into 400-year-old versions of native languages?

Mark 1:3 KJV

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord ...

Mark 1:3 CEV

In the desert someone is shouting, 'Get the road ready for the Lord!' ...

4) Some argue for KJV-Onlyism because the modern translations 'dumb down' God's Word.

This is an argument that deserves to be taken seriously. The Apostle Peter affirms in 2 Peter 3:15-16 that some portions of the Bible are hard! But if the goal is to be hard to understand, then why are we translating at all? *The King James Translators' Preface to the Reader* says:

But how shall men meditate in that, which they cannot understand? How shall they understand that which is kept close in an unknown tongue? as it is written, "*Except I know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh, a Barbarian, and he that speaketh, shall be a Barbarian to me.*" (quoting 1 Corinthians 14:11 in the Geneva Bible)

The goal of translation is not to make hard truths easy. It is to convert the text into understandable vocabulary, making the difficult truth evident to all.

5) Some are KJV-Onlyists because they hold to the Textus Receptus only.

This TR-Only position tends to ignore several facts, including:

- The Textus Receptus is not a manuscript. It is a work of textual criticism by a Catholic priest in the early 1500s. No known manuscript exactly matches the TR.
- TR-Onlyism is really an argument for re-inspiration of the Bible. It's actually a denial that God preserved His Word perfectly until Erasmus published it in 1516.
- The TR has gone through almost 40 edits and reprints. The TR-Onlyists have the explain which TR is right because there's been a lot of them.
- There are modern translations from the TR. The *New King James Version*, the *Modern English Version* and the *World English Bible* each us the TR for the source.