

# The Conflict Over Different Bible Versions—Part Five

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## **False or Irrelevant Claims About the KJV [King James Version] and New Translations**

KJVO proponents characteristically make a number of false or irrelevant statements concerning the new translations and even the King James Bible itself. For example: “The KJV Was No Ordinary Translation, but Divinely Inspired.”

As noted previously, many KJVO writers argue God had the KJV written so that through the translators, He could produce an inerrant English Bible.

But once one realizes how Erasmus, who was a Roman Catholic priest, put together his authoritative Greek text from which the *Textus Receptus* and the 1611 King James edition came, it is clear that Erasmus’ text is not perfect.

Some of the problems which Erasmus bypassed in his hasty work have been summarized by noted Princeton scholar Bruce M. Metzger:

Since Erasmus could not find a manuscript which contained the entire Greek New Testament, he utilized several for various parts of the New Testament. For most of the text he relied on two rather inferior manuscripts in the university library at Basle, one of the Gospels and one of the Acts and Epistles, both dating from about the twelfth century. Erasmus compared them with two or three others of the same books and entered occasional corrections for the printer in the margins or between the lines of the Greek script. For the Book of Revelation he had but one manuscript, dating from the twelfth century, which he borrowed from his friend Reuchlin. Unfortunately, this manuscript lacked the final leaf, which had contained the last six verses of the book. For these verses, as well as at numerous passages throughout the book where the Greek text of the Apocalypse and the adjoining Greek commentary with which the manuscript was supplied are so mixed up as to be almost indistinguishable, Erasmus depended upon the Latin Vulgate, translating this into Greek. As would be expected from such a procedure, here and there in Erasmus’ self-made Greek text are readings which have never been found in any known Greek manuscript but which are still perpetuated today in printings of the so-called *Textus Receptus* of the Greek New Testament.

This evidence demonstrates that Erasmus’ text, which evolved and became the basis for the *Textus Receptus*, “...was not based on early manuscripts, not reliably edited, and consequently not trustworthy.”<sup>1</sup>

## **Do Modern Versions Corrupt the Purity of God’s Word?**

We now continue our examination of the arguments against modern versions made by KJV Only writers, especially those of Gail Riplinger in *New Age Bible Versions* (NABV).

The back cover of Riplinger’s book declares that she has the B.A., M.A., and M.F.A. degrees and has done additional post-graduate study at Harvard and Cornell Universities. What needs to be understood is that her degrees are in interior design. None of them are in biblical languages, theology, or in any area relevant to the subject of her book. This may help the reader to understand the information that follows.

KJVO proponents claim that modern versions have corrupted the doctrinal purity of

God's Word and that **only** the King James Version is doctrinally sound. For example, Dr. Logsdon, David Cloud and others assert the following, "Friends, you can say the Authorized Version (KJV) is absolutely correct. How correct? One hundred percent correct! Because biblical correctness is predicated upon doctrinal accuracy, and not one enemy of this Book of God has ever proved a wrong doctrine in the Authorized Version."<sup>2</sup>

Let's consider two key examples to see if (a) the charge of corruption in good modern translations is true and (b) the KJV itself is 100 percent doctrinally correct in its own translation. Here we will examine the doctrine of salvation by grace. (Next month we will look at the doctrine of the deity of Christ.)

First, proponents claim that only the KJV defends salvation by grace through faith alone and that in many places the new translations actually insert salvation by works. In Chapter 15 of *New Age Bible Versions*, G.A. Riplinger claims that modern versions attempt to dismantle salvation by faith and instead present a theology of works-salvation. But every one of her arguments is false, as is easily demonstrated.<sup>3</sup>

For example, on page 253 of her book, Gail Riplinger claims that, "Verses critical to an understanding of this concept [of salvation by grace through faith] are omitted from the new version [sic]." She proceeds to cite Romans 11:6, implying that the essential concept of salvation by grace has somehow been inaccurately portrayed in the NIV [New International Version] and NASB [New American Standard Bible]. But the NIV of Romans 11:6 reads, "And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace." In a similar fashion, the NASB of Romans 11:6 reads, "But if it is grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace." These verses teach salvation by grace, not by works. Nothing could be clearer.

The truth is that **all** Bible translations present salvation by grace through faith alone.

Anyone who wishes can cite **dozens** of verses from the NKJV [New King James Version], NIV, NASB, etc., and show these Bibles clearly teach that salvation is by grace through faith alone. This suggests the "conspirators" did not do a very good job of corruption. For example, Ephesians 2:8–9 in the NIV reads, "For it is **by grace you have been saved**, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—**not by works**, so that no one can boast." In a similar fashion, Galatians 2:16 in the NASB reads, "nevertheless knowing that a man is **not justified by the works of the Law** but through **faith in Christ Jesus**, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be **justified by faith** in Christ, and **not by the works of the Law**; since **by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.**"

In fact, if one uses the same logic as the KJVO proponents, and cites selected passages which **seem** to teach salvation by works, one could even argue that it is the **KJV itself** which distorts the doctrine of salvation. Remember that the **KJV** has been the favorite Bible of new religions and cults, like Mormonism, that promote salvation by works. Why? Because in many places the KJV verses are **less** clear than the reliable modern versions.<sup>4</sup>

But, of course, if members of different cults looked up the specific verses in the King James Version—verses which their organization claims teaches salvation by works, they would find that they really do not. Their organization has only distorted what the words of the KJV mean through a false interpretation. For example, the KJV of Titus 3:5 reads as follows: "**Not by works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...."

In spite of the cults' misinterpretation of the KJV or the fact that the KJV may be somewhat less clear in certain places, does this mean we should reject the KJV? Of course not. It still **clearly** teaches salvation by grace in scores of passages. It only means those who wish can misuse any translation in order to support their own preconceived beliefs.

Consider another example. Pointing out that some Catholics were involved with the Greek text of the United Bible Society (UBS), Gail Riplinger argues, "The Catholic doctrinal bend in the NIV and NASB and other 'new' Bible [sic] is substantial."<sup>5</sup>

Thus she claims, "The Catholic teachings of salvation by works, purgatory, infant baptism,... 'the Virgin'... the papacy,... [and] the Roman Catholic sacraments of penance, Holy Orders, and the 'Holy Eucharist'... **have been sewn into the new versions**...."<sup>6</sup> For example, on page 145 Riplinger points out that the KJV of James 5:16 reads, "Confess your faults [*paraptoma*] one to another," and claims, "All Greek texts have the word for faults here—not sins." She then points out that the new versions read, "Confess your sins" and argues or implies that the new versions not only mistranslate the word *paraptoma* but also support the Catholic sacrament of penance. But her argument is false.

First, the Greek word is correctly translated as "sins" as any Greek dictionary, such as W. E. Vine's *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (page 1046), or as Zodhiates' *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (page 1103) will prove. Thus, even the KJV translates the same word in Ephesians 1:7 (*paraptoma*) as *sins*.

Second, Riplinger errs when she writes that the translation "confess your sins" supports the Catholic sacrament of penance. All Christians are to confess their sins one to another. But this in no way supports the specific teachings of the Catholic doctrine of penance, which is another matter entirely. Penance specifically involves allegedly "deadly" or **mortal** sins, supposedly **restores** the on-going process of justification (in a Catholic sense) and includes mandatory confession **to a priest**.

The truth is that not **one** of the Roman Catholic doctrines cited by Riplinger can be objectively and fairly proven to be taught by the NIV, NKJV, NASB, etc. Also, why would conservative **Protestants** who produced the NASB and the NIV have any desire to produce a Bible containing **Catholic** doctrines? In fact, there is little difference in word translation between official **Catholic** Bibles (JB/NAB, etc.) and the **KJV**. It is how theologians misinterpret those words that cause denominational differences.

(to be continued)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Norman Geisler, William Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago, Moody, IL: 1971), p. 384.

<sup>2</sup> Frank Logsdon, "From the NASV to the KJV," *O Timothy*, Vol. 9, no. 1, 1992, 6; Vol. 11, no. 8, 1994, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> James White, *The King James Version Only Controversy* (Minn., MN: Bethany, March, 1995), pp. 103-107.

<sup>4</sup> White, p. 118.

<sup>5</sup> G. A. Riplinger, *New Age Bible Versions* (Munroe Falls, OH: A V Publishers, Second Edition, 1993), p. 498.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.