

SO WHAT IS THE BEST BIBLE TRANSLATION?

Whether you read the *KJV, NKJV, ESV*, or some other Bible, know that what you're reading is a *translation* of the Word of God. While no translation is absolutely perfect, they are all-sufficient to teach the Christian faith. So whatever translation you or your church uses, study, memorize, and implement it to the glory of God. **The best Bible translation is *the one you read.***



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Is the King James Version the Only Legitimate Bible Translation?





So many Bibles, so little time...

“The *King James Version* is God’s only preserved word for Christians today.”
“The *Authorized Version* of 1611 is the only Bible that hasn’t been changed and tampered with.” These kinds of statements by *King James Version* only advocates have prompted Christians to consider whether modern English translations of the Bible are legitimate.

Admittedly, we have an embarrassing number of Bible translations at our disposal today. King James Only advocates say that all of these translations are inferior and even corrupted. They claim that if you are to believe in the preservation of the Bible, you must necessarily believe in the exclusivity of the *KJV*. However, upon closer scrutiny, the rationale used by *KJV* only advocates is flawed and misguided.

A LONG TIME AGO IN A LAND FAR FAR AWAY...

KJV only advocates claim that the manuscripts which underlie its New Testament are superior, and that the manuscripts used for modern translations are defective and corrupt. However, this is completely untrue. For example, the *Textus Receptus*, the Greek New Testament which underlies the *KJV*, is based primarily on the work of Desiderius Erasmus (b. 1466), a Roman Catholic scholar and priest. Erasmus quickly compiled his Greek New Testament in order to beat a colleague to the press, although he did not possess a Greek manuscript of the Revelation 22:16-21. Desperate to publish, Erasmus reverse-translated a Latin Bible into Greek, and in so doing he produced a reading of Revelation 22:16-21 that no one had ever read before. Erasmus’ reading is present today in the *KJV*. By contrast, modern Bible translations such as the *English Standard Version* or the *New American Standard Bible* utilize the oldest and best ancient manuscripts for their New Testament so that their text reflects what the writers actually wrote.

Another example can be found at 1 John 5:7-8. The ESV renders this passage, “For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree.” The *KJV* reads “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. “The *KJV* includes the phrase “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost.” However, this is certainly not what John the apostle wrote. The phrase occurs first in the margin of a 14th-century Greek manuscript. That is extraordinarily late! No Christian before the 14th century had ever read that before! Clearly, therefore, the facts betray the claims of *KJV* only advocates.

DO MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS REMOVE THE DEITY OF CHRIST?

KJV only advocates often claim that the modern Bible translations eliminate the New Testament’s references to the deity of Christ. Many point to the modern version’s omission of “God” at 1 Timothy 3:16. The modern translations have opted for the earliest and best reading among the ancient manuscripts, namely “he who,” instead of “God.” The difference between “God” and “he who” in Greek is the difference between a single line, and it is possible that ancient scribes mistook “he who” (Grk., ΟΣ) for “God” (ΘΣ). What *KJV* only advocates don’t often admit is that the modern versions identify Jesus as God in ; three places where the *KJV* does not (e.g., John 1:18; 2 Peter 1:1; Titus 2:13).

In their zeal, *KJV* only advocates make claims the translators of the *KJV* never would. In their preface, *The Translators to the Reader*, the translators explicitly state that the reader ought to “have their judgments at liberty in differences of readings, than to be captivated to one, when it may be the other.” That is, the reader ought to determine, upon the basis of the good scholarship, the best and most accurate reading.

