

KJV 1611 – A Witness against the VPP Theory

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The original materials of the original writings (Autographs) of the Holy Bible have long been lost. However, in its place, we have today a few thousand ancient manuscripts both in the original Hebrew-Aramaic-Greek languages, as well as in other ancient languages into which God's Word was translated in the earliest of times. All of these extant materials together with the Bible quotations by the early Church Fathers are clear evidence of Almighty God's Providential Preservation of His Word throughout the ages down to this day.

In the light of the above, the new Perfect KJV-Onlyism view being promoted that one should use only the King James Bible Version (KJV) because all other versions would lead to neo-evangelicalism, liberalism and Ecumenicalism (joining together with all religions of the world to form a One-World Church) is both extravagant and extreme. I would like to share my personal testimony of how this view came to Singapore.

In 1992, Dr D. A. Waite, President of the US-based "Dean Burgon Society" visited Singapore on the invitation of Rev Timothy Tow, Principal of the Far Eastern Bible College ("FEBC"). During this visit, he introduced the Perfect KJV view, i.e. that the text underlying the KJV was a perfect replica of the Autographs. In time to come, proponents of this view such as Dr Thomas Strouse and Dr Jeffrey Khoo coined the name "Verbal Plenary Preservation" for this theory - "verbal" meaning the words, "plenary" being complete or full; "preservation" - i.e. every jot and tittle of the Autographs were preserved. And where were they preserved? Only and exquisitely in the peculiar original language texts underlying the KJV 1611 edition! The KJV is thus super-exalted to become equal to the Autographs written by the prophets and apostles under the supernatural control of the Holy Spirit, so as to be entirely infallible throughout. To presume that the KJV translators working in various groups and using various original language manuscript texts as well as earlier Latin and English translations had in the process of translating, also completely identified each and every jot and tittle of the Autographs (which is the sphere of textual criticism) is far-fetched and based on ideological conjecture, theory, repeated bending of truths, misrepresentations and exaggerations.

Having taken many night courses at the FEBC, I am able to witness that the VPP idea caught on with 4 of my former lecturers there, who later became bolder and bolder in championing the view, to the extent that they did not care how many untruths they cited, how many hearts they broke, and how much dissension and division they created in the various Bible Presbyterian churches here.

Recently I bought a reprint of the "1611 KJV" from the FEBC Book Room, to check for evidences of alternate readings that would contradict and self-refute VPP. Yes, I found them in some places, such as in the 2 Messianic passages of Isaiah 9:1-7 and 49:1-12.

For Isaiah 9:3, the alternate reading is "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and to him increased the joy" correcting the error "... and not increased the joy". Notice the word "not" is removed, for the context demands it. The proper reading is found in the Kethib, Syraic Peshitta, Aramiac Targum & 20 medieval Hebrew manuscripts. For Isaiah 49:5, the alternate reading is "...that Israel may be gathered to Him", correcting the faulty "Though Israel be not gathered", another negative, opposite rendering. The correct reading is found in the Septuagint and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The above information is provided by the textual footnotes of the NKJV & the HCSB & from the Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties. If you have a KJV Reference or Study Bible you should take note of alternate readings in the margins and footnotes. Very often these are actually corrections, but discreetly not mentioned as such.

It is a fact that the KJV translators relied on various texts and other language versions. When they were not sure in certain places they would place alternate readings on the margin, which shows that they did not believe they were in possession of perfect original language texts. At times, they found grounds to alter certain Hebrew Masoretic text readings, such as Psalm 22:16, from “Like a lion my hands and feet” (Hebrew) to “They pierced my hands and my feet”, and Psalm 23:6, from “I shall return in the house of the Lord forever” (Hebrew) to “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever”.

However, at other times, they altered the Hebrew readings without seemingly good reasons. According to Dr James Price, President of Temple Baptist Seminary, there were altogether some 146 such alterations without basis - such as in Proverb 18:8, “The words of the talebearer are like tasty morsels, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly”, changing the words “tasty morsels” to “wounds”.

My view is the traditional view, shared by most balanced, sane, honest, conservative students of the Bible and practically all conservative Bible scholars. I do not rely on any Confession of Faith, whose statements on the Bible may be ambiguous (which some take advantage of to justify their stand). Conservative textual critics have fully agreed on as much as 99.8% of the Greek New Testament texts; the balance 0.2% not being in significant areas. This was noted even by the KJV translators themselves in their preface to the Reader, where they wrote: -

“It hath pleased God in his Divine Providence here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation, (for in such it hath been vouched that the Scriptures are plain) but in matters of less moment, that fearfulness would better beseem us than confidence, and if we will resolve, to resolve upon modesty with St. Augustine: *“It is better to make doubt of those things which are secret, than to strive about those things that are uncertain.”*”

A number of copying errors can be corrected by studying the context and other internal evidences. That is why in the Bible we have a repetition of accounts to aid us – for example events concerning the kings and other persons in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament of various events and teachings of Jesus and His apostles. An error found in one account may not likely be found in another. There are discrepancies in the Bible which are only apparent, and can be resolved with some study. However some words are lost, e.g. 1 Samuel 13:1, in which the Hebrew reads “Saul was a son of ... years (which the grammar demands a numeral of twenty or more) when he became king, and he had ruled for two years in Israel, and Saul chose” – Gleason Archer’s Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties.

Still the question remains – Why didn’t God preserve a perfect text since He gave us one in the beginning? My answer is: Perishable parchments require copies upon copies to be made by an endless stream of scribes. It will be a miracle after a miracle to ensure that these men copy the Scriptures perfectly. God knew He did not have to do that, for He knew that they will do a comparatively excellent job preserving perfectly the essential, and that many minor errors/difficulties can be sorted out. One other reason why He allowed shortcomings is that we fallible creatures may cast our eyes upon the Infallible, Perfect Word of God, even the Lord Jesus, and depend on Him for wisdom, that with it we can make sense out of the

impossible, e.g. 2 Samuel 15:7, where the 40 years lapse in time before Absalom again saw his father King David is clearly unreasonable in view of Absalom's short life (2 Sam 18:29 – 33) and David's own total reign of only 40 years (2 Sam 5:5). The Greek Septuagint, the Syriac and Josephus, the Jewish historian puts this, more reasonably or correctly as 4 years.

Does God say He will inspire all the scribes so as to preserve every manuscript 100% errorless, or a particular set of manuscript underlying a particular version of the Bible such as the 1611 KJV? Obviously "No"! There are verses that say His precepts, commandments, counsel and testimonies will stand or endure forever (Psalms 33:11, 100:5, 111:7-8, 119:152, 160, 1Peter 1:23, 25), but no verse promises any perfect apograph ("copy"). Some texts promoted by VPP proponents as "proof texts" have been misunderstood, such as: -

Psalm 12:5-8: This does not speak of text preservation but people preservation. If it supports perfect Bible preservation in 1611, then for 2600 years, between the time David wrote the psalm (BC 1000) and 1611 (KJV) the promise of preservation was not fulfilled. Even the KJV translators say it refers to people preservation. See marginal notes of this verse in the KJV 1611 edition. Verses 6-8 refer to the people's affirmation of God's promise of protection of His own in verse 5. There is a parallel verse in Psalm 18:30.

Psalm 19:7: The law of the Lord is perfect – refers to the testimonies, statutes, and commandments that are perfectly trustworthy in converting the soul, in making him wise.

Isaiah 40:8: The word of the Lord will stand forever. The context refers to the sure promise of the coming of John the Baptist and the Messiah, the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 24:35: "My words shall not pass away" refers to the absolute certainty of His prophecies, predictions in the preceding 34 verses.

Matthew 5:18: The law, not a jot or tittle will pass away. The law according to the context refers to the 10 Commandments or the moral laws. A figure of speech is used, to mean that the complete (not one jot or tittle will pass away) moral law will never be done away with (till heaven & earth pass away), but will have to be fulfilled.

John 10:34-35: "And the scripture cannot be broken", refers to Psalm 82:6 which Jesus brought to the attention of the Jews who wanted to stone Him for calling Himself the Son of God. He said this verse that supported Him cannot be broken (annulled) because it is written in their law, their Scriptures. It refers to a particular verse and thank God we still have it now in our Bible,

Luke 4:4: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God". This is written in Deut 8:3. Every word here refers to the commandments of God. If we feed on His words and His truth, and obey them then there will be both material and spiritual blessings. Read the whole of Deut 8.

Scribal shortcomings here and there in our Bible have not affected what we ought to know about Him. We can thank God that because of His Providential Preservation of His Word for us, there is enough Scripture in our various Bible translations for "doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2Tim 3:16-17).

Please do not allow extreme views to unsettle us. If you are holding a Chinese CUV or a Modern Chinese version (for both, the New Testament is based on a slightly different text from the KJV) and if you have a modern conservative English or another language Bible, do

not allow anyone to discourage you. Indeed you are more blessed than anyone who has only a KJV. Personally I have 10 Bible versions to compare with. My favourite versions are the NKJV, ESV, TNIV, for their accuracy, readability & beautiful cadence. It is also good to possess a parallel Bible, say a KJV/Chinese or a KJV/NKJV, available at the Tabernacle or FEBC book rooms. All of these help you to understand the Bible better.

References

1. Gleason Archer – Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties.
2. John W. Haley – Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible.
3. The Holy Bible – The KJV 1611 edition
4. James Price – King James Onlyism: A New Sect
5. www.truth.sg

Postscript:

At FEBC, where the new VPP doctrine was first propagated in Singapore, they have at this moment 2 different statements on the KJV. The Statement of Faith for the College - Statement 1 says that the text underlying the KJV is 100% perfect. The other – Position Statement, Statement 4, says the apograph text underlying the KJV is closest (therefore not perfect) to the original autographs.

Folks, don't you think they need to set their own house in order before indoctrinating others? (You may access the above information from the Far Eastern Bible College website by clicking the Doctrine icon).