

Is the doctrine of “KJV only” the Word of God or the word of man?

This question is:

1. **Crucial (but not often asked)**
2. **Easy to answer.**

(“KJV Only” doctrine is the teaching that the King James Version is the one preserved, inspired, infallible Word of God for English speaking people.)

1. This question is crucial. Jesus said that if you teach the commandments of men as doctrine, your worship of God is vain, useless. **“But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”** (Matthew 15:9). **“Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men”** (Mark 7:7).

2. This question is easy to answer. God certainly did not say it in the Bible. **“Add thou**

not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:6). Jesus did say, **“Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled”** (Matthew 5:18). He did not make that promise for the English language or for any other language. **“For ever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven”** (Psalms 119:89). The promise is that God’s Word is settled in heaven, not in any particular version.

Of course, there are many reasons given for believing “KJV only,” *but that is all they are, reasonings, not the Word of God.*

A verse often used to teach the doctrine of preservation (especially of the KJV) is Psalm 12:6,7. Let’s look at the context, verses 5 – 7.

5 For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD: I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him.

6 The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

7 Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou

shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

When it says “Thou shalt preserve them” in verse 7, many people assume it is talking about preserving “the words of the LORD” in verse 6. But according to my Cambridge KJV Bible marginal note on “Thou shalt preserve them,” the Hebrew is “Thou shalt preserve him: that is every one of them.” So if the Hebrew says “him: that is every one of them”, then it has to be talking about *people*, not *things*. So “them” has to refer to the poor and needy in verse 5, not “words” in verse 6.

As a matter of fact, we do have thousands of copies of early Greek manuscript portions. They are in substantial agreement. The huge majority of differences are very minor, such as spelling or word order differences. No major doctrines are put in doubt by the differences. Besides, we know what the alternatives are, where there is a question on the correct reading.

God did *not* tell us that He would preserve His Word in any particular language or version. He *did* give us some principles to guide us. He has not left us in the dark.

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him” (Proverbs 18:13). It is foolish and shameful to proclaim a verdict before you have heard both sides. So it is unscriptural to *begin* with the assumption that the KJV is the preserved, inspired, infallible Word of God before hearing both sides fairly.

1. **“He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him”** (Proverbs 18:17). Many people are quite confident and argumentative about their beliefs, because they have heard only one side, and it sounded so good.
2. **“In the multitude of counselors there is safety”** (Proverbs 11:14). What do the majority of Christian scholars believe? I am not interested in what the ungodly scholars teach. **“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly”** (Psalm 1:1). Nor am I too interested in the opinions of those who have not really studied the facts and issues. God said, **“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?”** (Job 38:2).
3. **“Wise men lay up knowledge”** (Proverbs 10:4). Get the facts on both sides. Check the evidence.

4. **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God”** (Matthew 4:4). God inspired the actual words, not just the ideas.
5. **“Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it”** (Deuteronomy 4:2). Translators do not have the liberty to add to or to subtract from God’s Word. Translators should be wary of manuscripts that take away or add. Versions are often criticized because they leave out words or phrases. The fault may lie with the other version or manuscript which may add to God’s Word.
6. **“Write the vision, and make it plain”** (Habakkuk 2:2). Plain English of the 1600’s is not always plain now, especially to those with a secular background, to blacks, and to Hispanics. **“So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye shall speak into the air”** (1 Corinthians 14:9).
7. Recognize false prophets and teachers:
 - **“...But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities”** (2 Peter 2:10). Someone may be

widely acclaimed as the leading defender of the Word of God (meaning KJV) when he is in fact an adulterer and a reviler. **“Be not deceived: neither... adulterers... nor revilers... shall inherit the kingdom of God”** (1 Corinthians 6:9,10).

- **“These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit”** (Jude 19). They separate themselves over issues God has not commanded us to separate over. They pride themselves on their separation. They vilify sincere Christians and drop the support of effective missionaries who do not subscribe to their manmade doctrines. There are many modern Pharisees. *Pharisee* means *separated one*.¹
- **“Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel”** (Matthew 23:24). The pastor of a large church where I preached lectured me once on “KJV only.” The next I heard of him was that he had left the church with another man’s wife. He is not an isolated case in my experience.

¹ I use the KJV, but that does not give me a free pass to be a Pharisee.

8. **“With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged”** (Matthew 7:2). If you point out the doctrinal errors and of Westcott and Hort, notice also that Erasmus, who compiled the Textus Receptus, remained a Roman Catholic. King James was the one who drove the Baptists and Pilgrims out of England because they refused to join the Anglican Church of which he was head. Those who condemn versions because they are copyrighted don't mention that the KJV was also copyrighted (by Barker and Sons).
9. **“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations”** (Romans 14:1). We should receive one another in brotherly love without divisive argument in those areas to which God has not explicitly spoken.

God did not say that the King James Version is His preserved, inspired, infallible Word. Men do. Jesus said our worship of God is useless if we teach the commandments of men as doctrine.

Here are a few **logical questions** for those who believe the KJV is the one preserved, inspired, infallible Word of God for English speaking people:

1. Was there a preserved, inspired, infallible English Bible before 1611? There were several versions that the Protestant reformers, Baptists, Pilgrims, and martyrs used. These versions all differed in minor points in thousands of places from the KJV.
2. If, before 1611, there *was* one preserved, inspired, infallible English Bible, why did King James change it?
3. If there was *not* one, how can you say God preserved His inspired, infallible Word on earth in English for those 15 centuries.
4. If, for those 15 centuries, He only preserved it in Heaven, how do you know He is not *still* just preserving it in its perfect form in Heaven?
5. Which edition of the KJV is the right one? There have been several major editions of the KJV differing from each other in thousands of places. These differences are minor, but many of them are more than just jots and tittles.
6. Is there a preserved, inspired, infallible Greek New Testament?
7. Which one? Of all the Greek New Testament manuscripts, no two agree in every detail.
8. If there is a complete, preserved, infallible Greek New Testament, why did the Roman Catholic humanist, Erasmus, have to compile one, the

Textus Receptus (from which the KJV was basically translated)?

9. Why doesn't the KJV agree with the Textus Receptus in every detail?
10. Is there a preserved, inspired, infallible Hebrew Old Testament?
11. Why doesn't the KJV follow in every detail the Hebrew text it was basically translated from? For example, in hundreds of cases where the Hebrew would be translated *Jehovah* or *Yahweh*, the KJV instead uses *LORD*.
12. Is there a preserved, inspired, infallible Bible in French? Spanish? Chinese? Any other language? None of them agree with the KJV in every detail.
13. What about the hundreds of languages that do not have so much as one verse of the Bible? Did God really promise to preserve His Word in English or in any of these languages?
14. When a missionary begins to translate the Bible into a new language, is his translation really a wicked perversion, and not even the Bible, until he gets all the bugs out, until it agrees in every detail with the Word settled in heaven, or with one of the editions of the KJV?

So if you think the KJV is the best version, or if you think it is the preserved, inspired, infallible Bible, be honest: say you think it is.² Don't pretend God said it is. Obey what it says. Teach others to obey it. That's better than harping on something God has not even said.

² If you believe the KJV is the one preserved, inspired, infallible Word of God for the English speaking people, would you please tell me how you answer the 14 questions listed above. My address is on the next page.

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