

In the Original Manuscripts

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[0 : 0 0] So these last two weeks, we've been talking about how the scriptures, the words in our Bibles are inspired by God. And last Sunday, we talked about how they are God-breathed, word for word, every word being written under the influence of God's Holy Spirit.

And this has been because we came to this place in 2 Timothy. Next Sunday, we're going to continue on in 2 Timothy, but we're pausing for today for a bit of an unusual sermon.

For those of you who are here visiting or you're going to think this is weird, but this is not the usual sermon and I don't normally preach this long, sorry. But we do need to tackle issues like this once in a while.

We're going to talk about Bible translations today. So this is our BGC affirmation of faith. We believe that the Bible is the revealed word of God, fully and verbally inspired, written under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

We believe it is without error in the original manuscripts and is true and trustworthy in all that it asserts. It has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

[1 : 1 6] And we talked about the implications a little bit last week that God's word is inspired by him, that it comes from him word for word. It means that his word is without error.

It means that it's true in all that it asserts. It means that it has that place of authority over all that we believe and do. But there's one distinction that we must make here.

However, we believe that the Bible is word for word, inspired by God and without error in the original manuscripts. So we do not believe that every copy that has been made ever since is word for word accurate and without error.

Neither do we believe that the translations into other languages are word for word, inspired by God and without error. We believe that the original scroll that Moses wrote under the influence of God's spirit is 100% inspired by God, word for word and without error.

We believe that those original letters that the Apostle Paul wrote on the papyri were 100% inspired by God, word for word and without error.

[2 : 3 3] Now why is this distinction important, you may wonder. First of all, it's the truth. Second, a failure to make this distinction has resulted in all kinds of confusion.

And third, a failure to make this distinction has resulted in all kinds of conflict. So first we make this distinction because it's the truth. To declare that there is one particular line of biblical manuscripts that can be traced all the way back to the originals and that in that line there isn't a single error in any of them is simply false.

To declare that any of the translations made into other languages, whether ancient languages like Latin, Syriac, Coptic, or more modern languages like German, French, or English, to declare that any of the translations that have been made are 100% accurate and flawlessly capture what was originally penned in Greek and Hebrew is also false.

God has not preserved his word for us today by an unbroken chain of perfectly copied manuscripts or by supernaturally inspiring any particular translation in the same way that he inspired the scriptures when they were first written down.

Second, a failure to make this distinction has resulted in all kinds of confusion. Many Christians today have been confused about why there are different translations of the Bible in English.

[4 : 1 3] Why do they say different things? I thought we had God's word, word for word. So how can there be differences? Why are some insisting that I must only use a 400-year-old translation of the Bible into Middle English today?

Why can't I just read one of the more modern translations? What's wrong with them? A failure to make this distinction has resulted also in confusion for people who don't believe in Jesus, at least

not yet.

People are trying to share the good news of Jesus still today while quoting a book that sounds kind of like the writing of Shakespeare at times. And what do those words even mean?

Third, a failure to make this distinction has resulted in all kinds of conflicts. Countless arguments and fights have been had. Relationships between Christian brothers and sisters have been destroyed.

Whole churches have been split apart over this issue of Bible translation because of a failure to make the distinction between verbally inspired and inerrant originals and the modern translations that we hold in our hands today.

[5 : 27] So that's why this distinction is important, and that's why it's going to be our main consideration for today. I want to be clear. We are talking this morning about the damaging misconception that the King James Version of the Bible was divinely inspired by God 400 years ago, and that misconception that it is the only faithful, only accurate, only inerrant translation of the Bible in the English language.

We're talking about that misconception, that belief that it alone should be used for reading, teaching, Scripture memory, etc. And we call this belief KJV-onlyism.

Now before some of you who love the King James Version run out the door and never come back again, let me explain what I mean by KJV-onlyism. I'm not talking about people who prefer the King James Translation of the Bible because that's what they grew up with, or because that's what they're most familiar with.

Maybe the verses they learned as a child were in the King James Version of the Bible, or many songs that we still sing today, old songs, use the words that were in the King James Translation of the Bible.

Many people still love the King James Translation because it's got rhythmic beauty to it. It was a historical, a momentous thing in history, the translation of the King James Bible, and people value it and appreciate it for those reasons.

[7 : 09] I'm not talking about that this morning. When I say KJV-onlyism, I'm talking about the belief held by some that the King James Translation of the Bible was supernaturally inspired, as in breathed out by God, word for word, just like the original scriptures were.

I'm talking about the belief held by some that the King James Translation is word for word, without error, and that therefore every other translation or revision is a corruption or perversion influenced by the devil.

When I say KJV-onlyism, I'm talking about the belief held by some that God supernaturally preserved an unbroken line of flawlessly copied manuscripts of both the Old and the New Testaments from the time that they were written all the way up until the translation of the KJV.

These are the beliefs of the KJV-only teachers, and these teachings and beliefs are untrue. They have caused all kinds of confusion and conflict.

The most radical advocates of KJV-onlyism are often very vocal and even militant, and at the same time, sadly, they have been quite influential and persuasive.

[8 : 30] Here's just one example that I came across the other day on Twitter. Amen. We believe the King James Bible is the word of God, every word of it. Amen.

I can take this book and correct the Greek. Amen. Amen. Amen. Say, why?

Because I'm a loser. Amen. And I've had Greek. Amen. And Hebrew. Last class of Hebrew.

We finished the last class of D. He says, what are you doing? I said, I'm going out here in the backyard, and I'm burning this Hebrew grammar book. What? I torched it. I said, ah. Had to learn Hebrew and Greek and all that mess.

Amen. You say, what did you learn out of that? The King James Bible is the word of God. Thank God for the English. Amen.

[9 : 31] Who cares what the Greek says? They make pretty good sandwiches. That's about it. Amen. Wow. I can take this book and correct the Greek.

Who cares what the Greek says? This is insanely ignorant. Many Christians, and I mean earnest, spirit-filled, born-again believers, brothers and sisters, have been influenced by this false teaching. And so we're going to look today at the story of how we got our Bibles. And with a huge topic like this, I'm going to be laser-focused on the subject of transmission and translation.

And I'm specifically going to be focusing only on the New Testament scriptures, because I've done a lot more study on these things in the New Testament than with the Old Testament.

So let's go back to the beginning and talk about how we got our Bibles. Back in the first century, men like the apostles John and Peter and Paul, they wrote the scriptures, and back then it was a different world.

[10:40] They wrote in Greek. That was the common language of the day. And they wrote on papyrus. And then they sent those letters by messenger to the churches that were being established.

They didn't have email. They didn't have Canada Post. When the church received that letter, they would then take it and read it out loud for everyone in the church to hear.

And then they would make copies of that original by hand. And they began circulating the copies in their regions. And then copies were made of those copies, and so on and so forth.

But everything was done by hand, because the printing press wouldn't be invented for another 1,300 years. So copies were made, and copies of those copies, some copyists or scribes were better than others.

Some were very accurate, and some were not as accurate. And so over the centuries, errors and sometimes even intentional changes crept into some of those copies.

[11:47] And then those errors were then copied and passed on to the next copy, and on and on down the line. Now let me be clear. I'm not saying that the manuscripts became so full of mistakes and errors that what we have today is not even close to what God originally breathed out through the apostles.

That's not the case. In fact, because the early church recognized the apostles as sent by Christ Jesus himself to speak on his behalf, they took extra care in copying the words that they received from them.

For a good while, those original letters and writings remained in existence and copies could be checked with them. But then eventually, as copying was done, we see in the ancient manuscripts that we still have today that mistakes were made.

And the kind of mistakes is worth mentioning here. Most of the mistakes are the kind that are easy to identify as unintentional copying errors.

Sometimes one person read the scriptures aloud while a bunch of people made copies. And so they went by what they heard. And so we see spelling errors. We see instances where two identical sounding words were mistaken.

[13:05] Sometimes, if you've ever made a copy of something, you just missed the word, honestly, unintentionally. This is not a hand copy. This is from the 1631 King James Version of the Bible, dubbed the wicked Bible, the adulterous Bible, because they accidentally forgot to put the word not in the commandment, thou shalt not commit adultery.

And so it read, thou shalt commit adultery. So these kinds of errors happen. These mistakes happen. Another kind of error, if you've ever copied out something by hand and there's the same word in there at two different places, sometimes you accidentally look back up to the first word, even though you'd already done everything in between, and you start copying it, only to realize, hey, I think I've already written this down before.

Sometimes we catch ourselves making mistakes like these, and sometimes we don't. We see those kinds of errors in the New Testament manuscripts as well. Or in some cases, the copy that someone had of a portion of scripture may have been worn out and faded, difficult to read.

It's obvious in those places that a mistake was made. Some copyists even had multiple copies of the scripture side by side, and as they're making their copy, they say, oh, how come these aren't the same at this spot?

And which reading is the right one? And so they would just pick the one that they thought was probably the right one. Sometimes they would write it in red, like you see on the screen, and then put a note in the margin about what the other reading was, just so that in case that was the right one, we'd have both together still.

[14:49] So these kinds of copious errors and mistakes are sprinkled through every significant manuscript portion that we have today of the New Testament scriptures.

And the good news is that these kind of mistakes are often easy to identify when we simply compare all the manuscripts that we have with each other.

There are also a few places in the New Testament where an intentional change was made. But these changes were almost never to blatantly alter the words of scripture.

They were almost always changes that were made in an effort to preserve what the copious thought should be the correct reading. In other words, sometimes the copious suspected that the copy he had had a mistake in it from the guy who made it.

And so he would correct the grammar or the spelling or change the tense of the verb to what he thought it was supposed to be all along. Almost all of the variations that we see between the Greek New Testament manuscripts that we have today are of this variety.

[15 : 56] They are things that are easy to detect and obvious. And for centuries, even back to the original translation of the King James Bible, translators have been putting notes in the margins when they have been uncertain about which variant is the original.

Most of the variations we see are easily explained, but there are a handful of places where it is debated and where it's less certain which of the manuscript readings is the original.

We're pretty confident that one of them is, but which one is? And so those are places that all translators must make a decision. How do we handle this?

Even the original KJV translators wrestled with this. Listen to what they wrote in the foreword to the original King James translation of the Bible made in 1611.

They said this, Some would have no variety of senses to be set in the margin, lest the authority of the scriptures for deciding of controversies by that show of uncertainty should somewhat be shaken.

[17 : 05] But we hold their judgment not to be so sound in this point. 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.

It's better to make doubt of the things which are secret than to strive about those things that are uncertain. There be many words in the scriptures which be never found there but once.

There be many rare names of certain birds, beasts, and precious stones concerning which the Hebrews themselves are so divided among themselves for judgment. Now in such a case, doth not a margin do well to admonish the reader to seek further and not to conclude or dogmatize upon this or that peremptorily.

So the KJV translators back in 1611 knew their translation was not inerrant because there were places that they were uncertain as to how to translate things.

Back to the history. Copies were made of the originals and then copies of those copies and copies and copies and copies down through the centuries but then how the Mediterranean world changed over those centuries also had a big impact on the transmission of the scriptures.

[18 : 44] There came a time when the church divided over regional lines. 1054 AD was the official separation of the western and the eastern church but long before that these two regions began to grow apart.

In fact, it wasn't too long after the first century for those in the west that Greek kind of faded into the background and Latin became the standard.

And so in the fourth century the Greek New Testament was translated into Latin and that became the standard Bible of the west. Greek, however, continued to be the language of the eastern church.

there were even some Christians down here in Egypt and they were making copies and so there ended up being what's called families of manuscripts based on these regional divides as the copies kept being made.

Then there was the fall of Rome and the dark ages which followed. They were days of conquest and upheaval and really it was truly a sovereign work of God that the oldest manuscripts we have today were preserved through that time.

[20 : 03] Those were days in which libraries were burnt to the ground as cities were captured and conquered and God used monks in scriptoriums at the monasteries to preserve his word.

Now there's a whole lot of church history from that point all the way up to the Reformation in the early 1500s and it factors into the story but for this morning it's enough to know that up until the time that the printing press was invented in the 1400s the Latin Vulgate the Latin Bible was the main Bible of the church in the West.

And after the fall of Rome Latin literacy actually fell so badly that it was very few who were even able to read it. It was mainly just educated priests and bishops who could read it and so the people became for centuries very dependent upon the church leadership to know anything of what was in the Bible of what God had revealed and sadly through that time even before 1054 the Roman Catholic Church became so corrupt that you weren't even guaranteed to have a bishop or priest who was a Christian.

People went after leadership positions in the church for power and for prestige and sadly many of the corrupt church leaders were all too happy to keep the people in the dark so they could continue to take advantage of them with things like the sales of indulgences.

But the invention of the movable type printing press in the 1400s changed everything. Within about 60 years of it being invented a man named Desiderius Erasmus published the first ever printed Greek New Testament.

[21 : 53] Up until this point there had been some attempts to translate the Bible into various languages but they were attempts to translate the Latin Bible into German and French and even English but the Catholic Church would have none of it and they fiercely opposed anyone who tried to make a translation of the only authorized version of the Bible which at the time was the Latin Vulgate.

You may have heard about John Wycliffe. In the 1300s he'd been working to translate the Bible from Latin into English but not only was he met with fierce opposition but his translation was just not very good because it was a translation of a translation.

In order to accurately translate the scriptures we must go back and we must translate directly from the original languages that it was written in.

But up until this point the Greek New Testament only existed in copied manuscripts-scattered all over the place and not every manuscript even had the whole New Testament.

Some were just the Gospels some were the Epistles. In fact one codex containing the entire New Testament was 450 pages on papyri.

[23 : 11] So this was quite the thing to have a whole copy of the New Testament back then. Before we can have a good push out of the Bible on the printing press we need to have a good translation and before we have a good translation we can have that we need to have a good complete copy of the Greek New Testament.

And so this is where the work of Erasmus in 1516 was needed. He published his Greek New Testament and translation work went ahead.

A man named William Tyndall used Erasmus' New Testament to create the first ever published translation of the Bible into English.

In fact there were several translations of the Bible into English which came to be within about a hundred years of Erasmus first publishing his Greek New Testament in the year 1516.

And I will mention here I have relied significantly on Daniel Wallace for a lot of this information. He is one of the best Greek scholars alive today.

[24 : 18] He is a senior research professor at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is the executive director of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts. And he has traveled all over the world with his team to photograph and catalog ancient manuscripts of the New Testament.

He has been published countless times in all kinds of journals magazines you name it and he served as consultant for four major Bible translations including the NIV the ESV and the New King James Version.

In Daniel Wallace's words William Tyndall's translation of the Bible was superb. Back in those days they spoke what we call Middle English and William Tyndall was a highly educated man.

He studied Greek he studied Hebrew he had a bachelor's degree and a master's degree from Oxford he studied at Cambridge he became fluent in six or seven languages and he had a fantastic grasp of the English language of his day.

Within 30 years of his translation another Bible came to be printed in English the Geneva Bible it was translated of course in Geneva and it was the first English Bible to be translated by a whole committee rather than just one man and it too was translated from Erasmus' Greek New Testament and from the Hebrew Scriptures rather than the Latin Vulgate.

[25 : 47] Finally we come to the 1600s King James is on the throne of England and while the Geneva Bible is the popular translation that everybody's got in their homes the Bishop's Bible is what was being used in the churches.

You know how it goes one of the past monarchs had decided that the Bishop's Bible should be the standard translation in England but the people just didn't like it it never caught on they liked the Geneva Bible better but King James didn't like the Geneva Bible and it seems more than anything it wasn't so much the translation he didn't like it was the notes in the margins just like our modern day study Bibles today the Geneva Bible came with all kinds of notes and commentary in the margins and King James didn't like some of the commentary in particular especially the stuff having to do with rising up against authority in certain situations so King James summoned all the religious leaders of England to do some religious business and a resolution was made at that conference that a translation be made of the whole Bible as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek and this to be set out and printed without any marginal notes and only to be used in all churches of England in time of divine service King James himself actually took a leading role in crafting the rules for who the translators should be and how they should organize and what principles to follow he assigned six panels of scholars to do the work three panels of scholars for the Old Testament two for the New Testament and one for the Apocrypha altogether there were 47 men who worked on this one new translation they looked at all the English translations done to date they looked at the Latin Vulgate and in the New Testament for the New Testament they used the Greek New Testament that was largely based off of Erasmus' Greek New Testament it had two more revisions or something since then interestingly enough the translators of the King James Bible ended up going with the wording of the Geneva Bible a fair bit because it was just that good of a translation even more surprising is how closely the King James when it was done resembled William Tyndall's translation from 80 years earlier apparently when it came to the New Testament the wording was actually 90% the same as what Tyndall had in the first English translation ever made a huge testimony to have 47 men put their stamp of approval on his work in so many places when all was said and done the English speaking churches had a new translation of the Bible and not only a new one but an excellent translation of God's word for their day their aim was to translate the scriptures in a way that was understandable beautiful and accurate for the common English speaker of their day and by the grace of God they succeeded it was a fantastic translation the people came to love it it brought unity in the church and it still shines today as a beautiful translation for its day but there was one significant weakness not just of the King James translation but of all English translations made around this time they relied exclusively on the published editions of the Greek New Testament that they had available in their day all were based off of Erasmus' Greek New Testament which was published back in 1516 here's the problem when Erasmus published his New Testament in 1516 first of all it had been a rushed job it was a race to see who could get the first printed Greek New Testament out and Erasmus even admitted that himself which was why his first edition was full of errors and typos but the bigger issue is that Erasmus' Greek New Testament was put together from a grand total of only eight Greek New Testament manuscripts there's only seven on there but the eighth the best manuscript he had was a copy of the

[30 : 26] New Testament that was made in the 11th century still a thousand years from the time that the New Testament was first written and he didn't even realize apparently that it was his best copy and he used it the least that's why it's not even on instead he drew more from the more recent manuscripts these manuscripts were copied one to two hundred years before he made his New Testament so they were not very old in general the closer to the time of the original that a manuscript copy was made the more accurate that copy is likely to be and so these 12th to 15th century manuscripts that he used to publish his Greek New Testament had all the copyist and scribal heirs that had accumulated in them over the past thousand to fourteen hundred years depending on which one you're talking about in addition to that all but one of his manuscripts were from the same regional family and that that that is all he had access to in his day out of his eight manuscripts only one of them had the book of

Revelation in it and unfortunately his one manuscript copy with Revelation was not a very good copy it had some significant issues due to an earlier archbishop named Andreas in addition to that his one manuscript of Revelation was missing the last page which was actually a common thing for ancient manuscripts to be missing the first or the last page they would get brittle and fall apart and so he didn't have the last six verses of the book of Revelation and Erasmus cheated instead of delaying his publishing as he should have and finding a Greek manuscript with those verses in it he made a big boo boo he opened up the Latin Vulgate and he of those last six verses to complete his

New Testament but then uh-oh some eventually some manuscripts of Revelation started turning up and he was looking at them and it didn't match what he had done and already people have been translating and publishing off my first edition this is why there were multiple revisions of Erasmus work later on I wish we had time to look at my favorite example but resulted in some major noticeable differences in wording between all the translations that were based off of his work and later translations that were made and so this is one of the big weaknesses of the King James version of the Bible it was based off Erasmus New Testament and Erasmus had only eight Greek manuscripts all but one of them were from a single family of manuscripts only one copy of Revelation that was incomplete and none of his manuscripts were older than the 11th century today in 2024 we have over 5,000 plus

Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in libraries museums and collections around the world we have several online catalogs of these manuscripts where you can go and for free you can view a high resolution photograph of the actual manuscripts that were copied long ago it's amazing not only do we have a huge number but we also have manuscripts from all of the different families of manuscripts and the families by comparing them with each other gives us insight as to when and where copying errors crept in then beyond that we have 10,000 manuscripts of the earliest New Testament translations that were made into Latin Coptic Syriac Armenian and more and then on top of that we also have the copies of the writings of the church fathers who frequently quoted from their copies of Paul's letters and

Peter's letters and the gospels so all of these sources we now use today to identify more easily where those copyist errors and mistakes crept in but most importantly with all these many manuscripts we now have today we have many today which date back way closer to the time that the New Testament was actually written than Erasmus' did an earlier date of copy generally means less errors we have a dozen manuscript fragments dating all the way back to the second century within decades of the originals being written who knows possibly some even copied from the originals then in the third century we have 64 manuscripts from the fourth century we have 48 manuscripts which is a total of about 125 manuscripts from within the first 300 years of the original writings of the apostles and collectively within that 125 manuscripts the whole

[35 : 49] New Testament is found represented multiple times over not only that but with technology today we are able to analyze these manuscripts in ways never possible before we have different types of imaging today that can help us to better read old and faded parchment we have computers that are able to catalog every manuscript we have and we can program them to sift through and pick out the manuscripts that we want to see on a particular passage where we see a variation so that we can analyze them and the computers can help us figure out where did this scribal variance first appear we can pull up images of manuscripts from various collections around the world put them side by side on the computer screen and study them without even buying a plane ticket what this means is that unlike Erasmus and his successor Stephanus because of the vast number of manuscripts and the many early manuscripts that we have today we can narrow things down even better we can be even more confident that the

Greek New Testament we have today contains accurately the words that the apostles wrote that means that the best of our modern translations are actually more accurate than the earliest English translations ever could be I don't know about you but I find that reassuring I find that encouraging surprisingly God has preserved his word through the centuries but it's not through this unbroken line of inerrant manuscripts it's through the thousands of manuscript copies that were made from various families and using them that were able to compare them together and narrow it down and weed out the errors that crept in such that we can be quite confident of what the original wording is and so if a verse or phrase seems to be missing in the best modern translations compared to the King James it's not because somebody's trying to erase important words from the Bible those words or phrases or verses or even a couple passages had been added into the Bible over the centuries as manuscripts were collected and copied but scholars and committees can easily see today that the earliest and best copies we have of those books of the Bible did not have those words or phrases or verses or passages and there's explanations given on every single place where there's a variation in the New Testament books are written about these things and so we can be even more confident that our Bible is the one that was originally given it's as close as it gets as close as a translation can get and so we must ignore the loud voices of KJV only preachers and teachers at least when it comes to their insistence that the King James translation is inspired by

God word for word and that no other translation can or should be used it's simply not true not even the translators of the

King James Bible themselves believe that about their work listen to what they said in the foreword they said we do not deny nay we affirm and avow that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English set forth by men of our profession contain the word of God nay is the word of God as the King's speech which he uttered in Parliament being translated into French Dutch Italian and Latin is still the King's speech though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace nor so fitly for phrase nor so expressly for sense everywhere the original King's King's translation saw their work as improving on the already good work that had been done they said we are so far off from condemning any of their labors that travailed before us in this kind that we acknowledge them to have been raised up of God for the building and furnishing of his church and that they deserve to be had of us and of posterity in everlasting remembrance yet for all that as nothing is begun and perfided at the same time finished at the same time and the latter thoughts are thought to be the wiser so if we building upon their foundation that went before us and being helping by their labors do endeavor to make that better which they left so good no man we are sure hath cause to mislike us they we persuade ourselves if they were alive would thank us so the original

KJV translators saw themselves as carrying forward the work that was begun by men like Tyndall they saw themselves as improving upon something already very good to make it even better they saw that the substance of the word of God was there in one or another of the English translations of their day but they believed there was nothing wrong with going over it again and that that which was sound in a particular translation could be polished and made to shine even brighter and then if there were things that in hindsight were not as true to the original they might be corrected if this was how they conceived of the work of Bible translation in their day they would have no problem with men today in 2024 going over polishing what was sound for their day so that it shines even brighter in ours and correcting what in hindsight was not as true to the original as they supposed it to be back then their mission and their passion was to bring the word of

[41 : 57] God into the common language of the day translating it from the original Greek and Hebrew praise God men in our own day have picked up where they have to use only the King James translation of the Bible today there are many excellent faithful modern English translations that translate it for us today if the King James version translators the ones who did the original in 1611 were alive today and they heard and saw what KJV only advocates are saying and doing with their translation they would be appalled if they saw that little video clip that we watched earlier they would be utterly shocked they understood no translation of the Bible is perfect every one of them has strengths and weaknesses they understood that the work of translating must continue as better sources become available and as the language of the day changes don't get me wrong we should thank

God for the King James version it was a good translation and with it the church was strengthened and the gospel was preached in the centuries that follow but we should also thank God that he has raised up men in our own day to continue and to pick up the work that they started and build on that foundation for us in our day perhaps the saddest consequence of those who insist in KJV only today is that alongside faith in the gospel new believers are being told that they old Bible translation in order to follow Jesus new believers are being told that they must indeed learn middle English so that they can understand the word of God in the best case a new believer will rise to the challenge and Google has made it easier to look up old words and phrases in the worst cases new believers just skip over those words and don't bother to look them up just guess at their meaning or even worse as some have told me they just sort of scratch their head say what on earth is this I just don't understand it they close the book and they don't bother to read it here's just a quick sampling of the language from the King James listed out by Dr.

Edwin Palmer who served on the translation committee for the NIV in the 70s what is the meaning of chambering champagne charger sealed circumspect clouded upon their feet cockatrice collops confection it has nothing to do with sugar coats covert hoised wimples stomacher wot and a whole list more sack butt habergen sneezing tabret again this is just a sampling you may prefer the King James version because it's the translation you grew up with or memorized you may love it because you're most familiar with it but nobody speaks these words today and they haven't for decades and so if this is your translation I wonder are you doing the extra work needed to understand your translation of the

Bible in these many places where the wording is difficult like this or do you just kind of get to it and assume that you know what it means and keep on reading is it possible that you're missing out on the plain sense of the word of God daily because you're committed to a 400 year old English translation of the Bible because someone who bought into the misconception of KJV onlyism told you that you should be here's where it matters the most we have the good news of Jesus to proclaim to a lost and hurting world God himself has bridged the gap he has spoken to us in our own language and as we go into all the world and preach the good news to others we need to bridge the gap and we need to speak to them in their own language in the words of the apostle Paul who is speaking about the spiritual gift of tongues I know in this passage but I think his logic applies here he says brothers and sisters if I come to you and speak in tongues what good will [46 : 29] I be to you even in the case of lifeless things that make sound such as the pipe or harp how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there's a distinction in the notes again if the trumpet does not sound a clear call who will get ready for battle so it is with you unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue how will anyone know what you are saying you will just be speaking into the air undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world yet none of them is without meaning if then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying I am a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker is a foreigner to me our gospel witness depends in part on us sharing the good news of Jesus in intelligible words on us sounding a clear call to respond we know how difficult it can be to converse with foreigners let's not be needlessly foreign to people around us who need

Jesus let's know the word of God in their language and let us share it with them in their language I'm going to end here and if you have any questions or are looking for help in figuring out what the best translation options are for yourself feel free to come and chat with me anytime I'd be happy to talk with you and help you sift through the choices available whether it's for children or for your own personal reading and devotions make no mistake God has preserved his word for us today just maybe not in the way that some have been saying let's pray father in heaven we thank you that you have done this amazing thing for us that the words that you spoke into our world in human history thousands of years ago we can be confident that we have them today translated well for us in our Bibles we know that they are true because your spirit lives within us and he testifies to their truth I pray that you would lead us forward that you would increase our witness in this community and that we would truly connect with the hearts and minds of people here in Davidson and the surrounding areas with your gospel in Jesus name Amen