

The New King James Leaven

Series 1-15

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### **Introduction to the Series: The New King James Leaven**

For a long time, I put off doing a focused study on the New King James Version. It was not because I thought the issue was unimportant. It was not because I believed the NKJV was harmless. It was not because I had any doubt about where I stood. I have plainly promoted the King James Bible as God's final authority in English, and I have spent far more time pointing people to the Book than chasing every modern version rabbit trail. My thinking for a long time was simple: the King James Bible speaks for itself. Let the Book preach. Let the Book cut. Let the Book correct. Let the Book show its own fruit. And in many cases, that is still true. A man who will honestly sit under the King James Bible long enough will discover he is not holding a dead religious antique. He is holding a quick and powerful sword. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). That Book does not need my help to be powerful. It needs men to stop correcting it and start believing it.

But over time, something became more and more obvious. The New King James Version is being promoted to Bible believers as if it is basically the same Book. It is being peddled as the safe middle ground, the close twin, the harmless update, the modernized cousin, the King James Bible with the old dust brushed off. People who would never touch an NIV, ESV, RSV, NASB, or some other obvious modern-version product will sometimes accept the NKJV because it still carries the name "King James." That is what makes it so dangerous. The devil is subtle. He does not always begin by handing people something obviously corrupt. He starts with something close. Something familiar. Something that looks respectable. Something that sounds like it still honors the old paths while quietly leading people away from them. The New King James Version does not have to scream corruption from every verse to be dangerous. It only has to introduce enough leaven to change the reader's relationship to the Bible.

That is why this series exists. The issue is not personal preference. It is not nostalgia. It is not literary taste. It is not a fight over whether someone likes older English. The issue is whether God has preserved His words and whether Bible believers should treat those words as settled, final, and authoritative. The Bible says, "The words of the LORD are pure words" (Psalm 12:6). It says, "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:7). It says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). It says

man shall live by “every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). If every word matters, then little changes matter. If God promised preservation, then the issue is not whether modern committees can make the Bible sound smoother. The issue is whether those committees are moving people away from the preserved words of God.

The New King James Version is dangerous because it is not presented as a replacement of the King James Bible, but as an improvement of it. That is the hook. It says it respects the KJV while revising it. It says it honors the old Book while altering its wording. It says it stands in the King James tradition while inserting modern textual notes, alternate readings, changed terminology, and softened expressions. That is leaven. Galatians 5:9 says, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” The danger of leaven is not its size. The danger of leaven is its nature. A little doubt spreads. A little compromise spreads. A little “better rendering” spreads. A little footnote whispering, “Other texts read,” spreads. A little shift from certainty to comparison spreads. Before long, the believer is no longer standing on the Book. He is standing over it, comparing it, judging it, and waiting for scholars to tell him what God really said.

If the devil can get a Bible believer away from the King James Bible, he has done more than change what is sitting on the coffee table. He has tampered with the weapon. Hebrews 4:12 says the word of God is “quick, and powerful.” Ephesians 6:17 calls it “the sword of the Spirit.” A soldier does not casually trade his sword for a duller blade because the handle looks newer. A preacher does not casually trade a proven Book for a committee product because the language sounds smoother. If Satan can move a man from the sharp certainty of the King James Bible into the fog of modern comparison, he has taken away the edge of the sword. The man may still have religious words. He may still have chapters and verses. He may still have a Bible-shaped object in his hand. But if his confidence has been transferred from the preserved Book to scholars, footnotes, original autographs nobody has, and ongoing revision, the devil has gained ground.

In this series, we are going to put the New King James Version under the microscope and examine the leaven. We are going to show that it is not merely “the KJV with updated language.” We are going to look at the counterfeit principle, the way it kept the King James name, the “just an update” lie, the footnotes that whisper, “Yea, hath God said?” We are going to deal with the original autographs trap, where men claim to believe in a perfect Bible that no one can actually hold. We are going to look at the removal of “thee,” “thou,” and “ye,” and why those words are not obsolete junk but grammatical tools that preserve singular and plural distinctions. We are going to deal with the softening of hell into terms like Hades and Sheol, the weakening of worship language, the attack on incarnation language in Hebrews 2:16, the gospel confusion in Matthew 7:14, the contradiction problem in Hebrews 3:16, the change from “corrupt” to “peddling” in 2 Corinthians 2:17, the vanishing command to “study” in 2 Timothy

2:15, the shift from servant language toward slavery language, and the places where the NKJV walks with the modern versions while still wearing the King James label.

This series will also answer the larger argument being made by men who say they respect the King James Bible while promoting the New King James Version as harmless. It is not harmless. Respectful language does not sanctify a dangerous conclusion. A man can praise the KJV's history while still weakening confidence in its authority. A man can admire the translators while still using their humility against the providence of God. A man can talk about the 1611 preface while drawing conclusions the preface does not prove. The King James translators' respect for prior English Bibles does not prove perpetual revision. Their use of marginal notes does not justify modern critical-text doubt. Their belief in vernacular Scripture does not prove every generation needs a new committee Bible. Their humanity does not cancel God's providence. The question is not whether the translators were perfect men. The question is whether God used imperfect men to preserve His perfect words.

And that is where the battle line is drawn. The New King James Version is not merely another Bible on the shelf. It is a bridge. It helps people who still have affection for the King James Bible become comfortable with the modern-version world. It does not have to drag them all the way into apostasy in one step. It only has to get them walking in that direction. First they accept the NKJV because it sounds close. Then they accept that the KJV needed correcting. Then they accept that no translation is perfect. Then they accept that the real authority is in the originals. Then they accept the footnotes. Then they accept the critical text. Then they accept the modern versions. Then they look back at the old path and call it narrow, ignorant, divisive, or extreme. That is how leaven works. It spreads quietly until the whole lump is changed.

So this series is not being written as a game. It is not being written to score points. It is not being written because the subject is easy or popular. It is being written because the words of God matter. If there is one subject Bible believers cannot afford to be lazy about, it is the Book itself. Every doctrine comes from the words. Salvation, prophecy, the deity of Christ, the blood atonement, eternal security, the body of Christ, the rapture, the judgment seat of Christ, heaven, hell, the gospel of grace, and the authority of God all stand or fall on the words. If the words are unsettled, everything downstream becomes negotiable. That is why the devil's first recorded attack was not against a church building, a denomination, a preacher, or a tradition. It was against what God said.

The old Book still stands. The King James Bible has borne fruit for over four hundred years. It has preached in revivals, crossed oceans with missionaries, comforted saints on deathbeds, thundered from pulpits, armed street preachers, converted sinners, exposed cults, corrected churches, and fed generations of believers. It does not need to be replaced by a counterfeit wearing its name. It does not need to be softened, revised, updated, footnoted into doubt, or

placed under the authority of modern scholars. It needs to be believed. It needs to be preached. It needs to be studied. It needs to be defended. And the leaven that tries to move Bible believers away from it needs to be exposed.

This is **The New King James Leaven**. The purpose is simple: expose the counterfeit, mark the leaven, answer the arguments, compare the passages, defend the preserved Book, and call Bible believers back to the old path. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." That is not a suggestion. That is a warning. And when the leaven touches the words of God, silence is not spirituality. Silence is surrender.

### **1 of 15: The New King James Leaven - The Counterfeit That Kept the King James Name**

The devil is not stupid. He may be wicked, crooked, proud, subtle, murderous, and damned, but he is not stupid. The first thing the Bible tells you about the serpent in Genesis 3:1 is not that he was ugly, loud, vulgar, ridiculous, or easy to spot. It says, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made" (Genesis 3:1). That word "subtil" is the key to the whole operation. The devil does not always come through the front door carrying a sign that says, "I am here to destroy your faith in the words of God." He comes with a question. He comes with a suggestion. He comes with a helpful improvement. He comes with a version that looks close enough, sounds close enough, and borrows enough familiar language to get a chair at the table. That is why the New King James Version is so dangerous. It did not come dressed like the NIV, RSV, NASB, or some other obvious modern-version production that many Bible believers would have rejected immediately. It came wearing the King James name.

This is the opening burden of this series: the New King James Version is not merely another modern translation. It is the bridge Bible. It is the "almost KJV" that gets accepted by people who still have enough sense to be suspicious of obvious modern versions, but not enough discernment to detect a counterfeit wearing a familiar label. It is sold as a harmless update, a readable improvement, a respectful continuation, a Bible that keeps the same basic flavor while clearing away the old words. That sales pitch is exactly why it has worked. Satan knows he cannot get every Bible believer to throw away the King James Bible overnight, so he offers them something that feels close enough to calm the conscience. A counterfeit does not work because it looks nothing like the real thing. A counterfeit works because it looks enough like the real thing to get passed from hand to hand before someone checks the watermark.

The issue is not nostalgia. The issue is not whether someone likes Elizabethan English. The issue is not whether people are comfortable with "thee," "thou," and "ye." The issue is authority. The issue is preservation. The issue is whether God gave English-speaking believers a perfect Book

or whether the church is still waiting on the next committee to tell us what God might have said. The Bible says, "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Psalm 12:6). It says, "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:7). It says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89). The New King James Version comes along and says, in effect, "Yes, yes, yes, we respect all that, but let us just adjust it, modernize it, footnote it, soften it, compare it, and improve it." That is not preservation. That is leaven. And "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9).

### **Chapter 1: The Counterfeit Principle in Scripture**

The Bible gives you the counterfeit principle from the beginning. Satan does not begin by denying God exists. He begins by questioning what God said. "Yea, hath God said?" (Genesis 3:1). That is the first recorded satanic attack on mankind, and it is an attack on the words of God. He does not start with a club. He starts with a question mark. He does not start by saying, "There is no God." He starts by suggesting that God's words need to be reconsidered, reinterpreted, softened, corrected, or placed under another voice. That is the genius of the devil's operation. He does not have to erase every word. He only has to loosen confidence in the words. Once Eve is willing to discuss the wording with the serpent, she is already standing in the wrong classroom.

Paul warns about this same principle in 2 Corinthians 11:3-4: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." Notice the word "subtilty." Notice also that the corruption begins in the mind. A counterfeit does not have to chain a man to a false altar on day one. It only has to move him from simplicity to complication, from certainty to comparison, from faith to suspicion, from "Thus saith the Lord" to "Scholars say." Then Paul says, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus... or another spirit... or another gospel." There are counterfeit Christs, counterfeit spirits, counterfeit gospels, and it should not surprise any Bible believer that there are counterfeit Bibles. The devil has counterfeited everything God has made. Why would he leave the Book alone?

Second Corinthians 11:14 says, "And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." That verse is the death of the naive view that all spiritual danger looks dark, ugly, and obvious. Satan can appear religious. Satan can appear scholarly. Satan can appear conservative. Satan can appear respectful toward the King James Bible while quietly moving people away from it. That is the whole trick. The New King James Version did not walk into Bible-believing churches shouting, "Let us destroy the KJV." It came in saying, "We love the King James. We respect the King James. We are only updating the King James. We are only making the King James clearer." That is how a counterfeit works. It carries enough truth to hide the hook.

## **Chapter 2: Why the Name Matters**

The name “New King James Version” is not accidental. That name is the key to the marketing. If it had been called the Thomas Nelson Modern Version, the Updated Evangelical Version, or the Twentieth Century Revision, many Bible believers would have kept it at arm’s length. But when it says “King James,” people relax. They assume continuity. They assume safety. They assume the old Book is still there, just dressed in modern clothes. That is why the name is so powerful and so dangerous. It borrows the trust earned by a Bible that has borne fruit for over four hundred years, then uses that borrowed trust to introduce a different spirit of revision.

A counterfeit hundred-dollar bill does not say “Monopoly” across the top. It imitates the real bill. It copies the color, the layout, the face, the shape, and the general feel. The closer it looks, the more dangerous it is. Nobody is deceived by a purple three-dollar bill with a clown on it. People are deceived by something close enough to pass a quick glance. That is exactly the danger of the NKJV. It is not dangerous because every verse is wildly different. It is dangerous because many verses sound familiar. It retains enough King James rhythm to get into the pulpit and enough modern-version philosophy to start moving the people away from the settled Book.

This is why “King James” in the title matters. The devil understands labels. The Bible says of false apostles that they are “deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:13). They do not come as apostles of Baal. They transform themselves into apostles of Christ. They borrow the right name. They use the right vocabulary. They claim the right heritage. They stand close enough to the truth to make the undiscerning comfortable. A Bible that borrows the King James name while training people to accept modern revision principles is not merely a translation option. It is a counterfeit strategy.

## **Chapter 3: The Lie That It Is Only an Update**

The most common defense of the NKJV is that it is “just the King James Bible with updated words.” That is the line. That is the soft sell. That is the little spoonful of sugar that helps the leaven go down. But the moment you start examining the thing, you find out that it is not merely a spelling update, not merely a punctuation adjustment, not merely a correction of printer errors, and not merely a replacement of words that have changed meaning. It is a new translation with its own philosophy, its own editorial machinery, its own footnote system, its own approach to modern scholarship, and its own way of handling passages that the King James Bible already settled in plain English.

A true update would not need to weaken wording, introduce textual alternatives, remove precision, soften doctrinal edges, or open the door to the modern version apparatus. If the issue were merely spelling, no one would need a new Bible. The 1769 standardization of the King James Bible already dealt with spelling, punctuation, printing regularization, and similar

matters. That is not the same as producing a new translation. The modern objector likes to throw out 1611, 1629, 1638, and 1769 as though he has discovered the Ark of the Covenant in his garage. But editions of the same Bible are not the same thing as rival versions with different translation choices, different footnotes, different assumptions, and different doctrinal effects. That objection has been run more times than a church van with bald tires.

The King James Bible was not broken. It did not need a modern committee to rescue it. It needed preachers who would preach it, teachers who would explain it, fathers who would read it to their children, mothers who would memorize it, and churches that would believe it. The modern version mindset assumes the problem is always the Bible and never the reader. If the reader struggles, change the Book. If the age is ignorant, lower the Book. If the culture loses vocabulary, trim the Book. But Nehemiah 8:8 gives the Bible pattern: "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." They did not rewrite the law every time someone needed help. They read the Book and gave the sense. That is preaching. That is teaching. That is Bible Christianity.

#### **Chapter 4: The Bridge Bible Strategy**

The NKJV functions as a bridge. That is one of the most important things to understand. It bridges people from the KJV to the modern-version world without forcing them to make the jump all at once. A man who would never buy an NIV may buy an NKJV because he sees "King James" on the cover. A church that would never replace the Authorized Version with the RSV may tolerate the NKJV as a compromise. A Bible college that wants to appear conservative while still sounding scholarly can use the NKJV as a halfway house. That is exactly how compromise works. It does not usually begin with a full denial. It begins with an "acceptable alternative."

The devil is a master of gradualism. He understands that most people will not walk from the old paths into the ditch in one stride. So he gives them a sidewalk beside the road. Then a side street. Then a detour. Then a new map. By the time they look up, the old path is out of sight. Jeremiah 6:16 says, "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." The NKJV says, in practice, "Yes, the old path is nice, but here is a smoother path right beside it." The problem is not that the first step looks like hell. The problem is that the first step is away from the Book God blessed.

A bridge Bible is often more dangerous than an obvious modern version because it disarms the people who should be guarding the gate. The NIV announces itself as a modern product. The RSV has its own stench. The ESV comes from the same scholarly swamp with a more respectable necktie. But the NKJV walks up with the family name. It looks like a cousin. It sounds like it belongs at Thanksgiving dinner. Then it starts whispering that maybe the old words need improving, maybe the margins need alternatives, maybe scholarship has advanced, maybe no

translation can be perfect, maybe a little modernization is not so bad. That is leaven. It does not kick the door down. It gets invited inside.

### **Chapter 5: The Leaven Principle**

Galatians 5:9 says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." That verse is the controlling warning for this series. Leaven works quietly. It spreads internally. It does not need to be large to be effective. The danger is not in the amount but in the nature of the thing. A tiny bit of corruption, once tolerated, begins to affect the whole. This is exactly how false doctrine works, exactly how compromise works, and exactly how modern Bible revision works. The question is not whether every change in the NKJV looks catastrophic at first glance. The question is what spirit, principle, and direction those changes introduce.

A little doubt about the words becomes a habit of comparison. A little footnote becomes a second authority. A little change in wording becomes a new doctrinal shade. A little respect for modern scholarship becomes dependence on scholars. A little discomfort with old words becomes a contempt for the Book. A little defense of readability becomes a rejection of study. That is how leaven moves. Nobody wakes up one morning and says, "Today I will abandon final authority." They begin by saying, "This one is easier to read." Then, "This one says it better." Then, "No translation is perfect anyway." Then, "Only the originals were inspired." Then, "The Bible contains the word of God." Then the game is over.

The Lord did not tell His people to negotiate with leaven. He told them to purge it out. First Corinthians 5:7 says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump." In Matthew 16:6, the Lord Jesus said, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees." Leaven is doctrine. Leaven is influence. Leaven is corruption working through the whole mass. The New King James Version does not need to be the worst modern version in order to be dangerous. It only needs to be the leaven that gets accepted by those who would reject the more obvious corruptions. That is why it must be marked.

### **Chapter 6: The Attack on Certainty**

The great damage of the modern Bible movement is not merely that it produces different wording. It produces a different attitude toward the Bible. The King James Bible gives the believer a Book. The modern version movement gives him a discussion. The King James Bible says, "Thus saith the LORD." The modern version mindset says, "Some manuscripts say." The King James Bible produces preaching. The modern version apparatus produces footnote checking. The King James Bible gives certainty. Modern revision culture gives perpetual comparison. That is not a small difference. That is the difference between a sword and a question mark.

The NKJV participates in that movement by keeping the reader aware of textual alternatives and modern scholarly judgments. Even when the main text often retains traditional readings, the notes keep whispering that other witnesses disagree. The result is a subtle weakening of confidence. A man reads a verse, then sees a note, then wonders whether the verse is settled. That becomes a habit. Eventually he no longer approaches the Bible as the final authority. He approaches it as a starting point for textual negotiation. That is exactly the opposite of faith. Romans 10:17 says, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Faith is not strengthened by constantly being told the words are uncertain.

The devil has always wanted man to live under uncertainty about God's words. In Genesis 3, he questioned them. In Matthew 4, the Lord Jesus answered temptation with them: "It is written" (Matthew 4:4). He did not say, "The better manuscripts suggest." He did not say, "The margin offers." He did not say, "The scholars are divided." He said, "It is written." That is the posture of a Bible believer. The NKJV, by its name and its method, moves people away from that posture. It may do it politely. It may do it with reverent language. But it still does it. A polite attack on certainty is still an attack on certainty.

### **Chapter 7: The Perfect Book and the Imperfect Counterfeit**

The Bible believer's position is not that translators were sinless men. It is not that printers never made typographical errors. It is not that every edition of the King James Bible had identical spelling from the first press run onward. That is the straw man modern version defenders keep burning because they cannot handle the real issue. The real issue is whether God preserved His words in a Book that believers can hold, read, preach, memorize, and trust. The Bible says He would. The Bible says, "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). It says, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:6). It says man lives by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). If every word matters, then every alteration matters.

The counterfeit Bible position always wants to reduce the issue to general meaning. "The message is basically the same." "The doctrine is mostly there." "No major doctrine is affected." That is the language of men who have already lowered the standard. God did not say His general concepts were pure. He said His words were pure. The Lord Jesus did not say man lives by every broad idea. He said "every word." Paul did not say all religious thoughts are given by inspiration. He said, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). Scripture is words on a page, not a fog bank of religious impressions.

The NKJV is dangerous because it encourages people to accept "almost" as good enough. Almost the same Bible. Almost the same wording. Almost the same textual tradition. Almost the same authority. But "almost" is the devil's favorite counterfeit. Cain almost worshipped. Nadab

and Abihu almost offered incense. Uzzah almost helped the ark. Saul almost obeyed. Judas almost looked like an apostle. The issue is not how close a thing gets to obedience. The issue is whether it is what God said. If the King James Bible is God's preserved words in English, then a version that borrows its name while altering its words is not a harmless helper. It is a counterfeit.

### **Conclusion: The First Bell Has Rung**

This first essay is not designed to answer every verse change, every footnote, every manuscript issue, every doctrinal weakening, and every historical claim. Those blows are coming. This opening essay is meant to establish the field of battle. The New King James Version is dangerous because it came carrying the King James name, speaking respectfully of the Authorized Version, and presenting itself as a safe modernization. That is precisely why it must be examined. A counterfeit that fools no one is not the dangerous kind. The dangerous counterfeit is the one that passes inspection because people want it to be real.

The Bible believer does not owe the NKJV the benefit of the doubt. The words of God are too precious for that. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Proverbs 23:23). You do not put the perfect Book on trial every time a publisher, professor, or polished apologist walks in with a new edition. You test the new thing by the old Book. You do not make the King James Bible answer to the New King James Version. You make the New King James Version stand in the light of the King James Bible and explain why it changed what did not need changing. That is how the old paths are defended.

The old Book has nothing to fear from examination. The King James Bible has stood through critics, popes, professors, modernists, cultists, apostates, publishers, scholars, and preachers too timid to trust it. It will stand through the New King James Version too. This series is not about defending a hobby. It is about defending the words of the living God in English against a counterfeit that borrowed the family name. The bell has rung. The gloves are on. The leaven is going under the microscope, and by the grace of God, the old path will be made plain.

### **2 of 15: The New King James Leaven - The "Just an Update" Lie**

The salesman always has a soft word for the thing he wants you to buy. He does not walk up to the Bible-believing Christian and say, "Here is a new version that will slowly train you to distrust the Book God has blessed for over four hundred years." He does not say, "Here is a Bible that carries the King James name while introducing modern-version reasoning, marginal doubt, altered wording, and a new relationship to authority." No, he says, "It is just an update." That is

the line. That is the hook. That is the polished little phrase that gets repeated in Christian bookstores, Bible colleges, pulpits, comment sections, and family conversations. “The New King James Version is just the King James Bible with updated words.” That sounds harmless. That sounds reasonable. That sounds like somebody only changed “thee” to “you” and knocked the dust off a few old spellings. But when you start looking at the thing with a fine-toothed comb, you find out very quickly that the phrase “just an update” is not an explanation. It is a smokescreen.

The old serpent has always known how to hide a revolution under the language of improvement. In Genesis 3, he did not tell Eve, “I am here to destroy your home, murder your children, corrupt your seed, bring death into the world, and send the human race into six thousand years of graves, blood, sweat, tears, thorns, wars, and judgment.” He said, “Yea, hath God said?” (Genesis 3:1). He dressed rebellion as reconsideration. He dressed disobedience as enlightenment. He dressed death as wisdom. That is how the devil works. He rarely labels poison as poison. He calls it medicine. He rarely labels compromise as compromise. He calls it balance. He rarely labels corruption as corruption. He calls it scholarship. And when he wants to move a Bible believer away from the King James Bible, he does not begin by handing him a rank modern version that smells like Alexandria, unbelief, and committee-room correction. He hands him something that says “King James” on the cover and whispers, “Relax. This is only an update.”

The problem with the New King James Version is not that it merely updates old spelling, regularizes punctuation, or explains a word in a footnote. If that were the issue, there would be no issue. Bible believers are not afraid of dictionaries, spelling, editions, or study. The problem is that the NKJV presents itself as a respectful continuation of the Authorized Version while departing from the spirit, authority, precision, and settled confidence of the King James Bible. It does not simply modernize words. It changes words. It changes doctrinal force. It replaces precision with vagueness. It inserts modern textual uncertainty through its notes. It removes grammatical distinctions that the King James Bible preserves. It softens certain expressions. It moves the reader from “Thus saith the Lord” to “let us compare the options.” That is not a harmless update. That is leaven. And the Bible says, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

## **Chapter 1: An Update Is Not the Same Thing as a New Translation**

The first thing that must be nailed down is the difference between an edition and a new translation. This is where many people get confused, and some of them get confused because they want to be confused. They drag out the 1611, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769 editions as if they have found some great contradiction in the King James Bible position. Then they ask, with that smug little internet grin, “Which King James Bible do you believe?” That question usually

comes from someone who has read just enough to be dangerous and not enough to be useful. The editions of the King James Bible involved spelling standardization, printing corrections, punctuation regularization, and similar matters. That is not the same thing as producing a new translation with altered wording, changed renderings, textual notes from rival Greek texts, and a different editorial philosophy.

If a man repaints the lines in a parking lot, he has not built a new shopping mall. If a printer corrects a typo in a hymnbook, he has not written a new hymn. If a Bible edition standardizes spelling from “sonne” to “son,” no doctrine has been changed, no textual authority has been shifted, and no new translation committee has set itself up over the Book. But when a committee sits down and produces a new translation under the claim that the old Book needs updating, then changes words, changes readings, inserts alternate textual witnesses, and markets the result as a new version, that is not the same category. The defender of the NKJV wants to hide a new translation behind the word “update.” That is like hiding a wolf behind a sheep’s name tag and calling it a wool improvement project.

The King James Bible was not replaced by its own later standardization. The King James Bible was carried forward in its own identity. The New King James Version is not that. It is not simply the King James Bible with standardized spelling. It is a separate version. It has its own copyright, its own preface, its own translation choices, its own footnote system, its own editorial claims, and its own philosophy of modernization. That means it must be judged as a version, not excused as an edition. The Bible believer is not obligated to treat the NKJV as a family member just because it stole the family name. A man can put “King James” on the cover, but if he changes the words, changes the force, changes the notes, and changes the reader’s confidence, then he has not preserved the old Book. He has introduced another one.

## **Chapter 2: “Just an Update” Is the Language of Salesmanship**

The phrase “just an update” is salesmanship, not doctrine. It is designed to lower resistance. When a man says, “The NKJV is just an update,” he wants you to stop examining. He wants you to assume the debate is over before it begins. He wants the average Christian to think, “Well, I love the KJV, and this has King James in the name, and I do not understand some of the old words anyway, so what is the harm?” That is exactly how compromise is sold. It is never introduced as a full-scale surrender. It is introduced as a convenience, a clarification, a practical help, a minor adjustment, a harmless improvement. That is how leaven gets into the lump. It does not come with a trumpet blast. It gets kneaded in quietly.

The devil has never had a problem using reasonable-sounding language to smuggle unreasonable rebellion. When Saul spared Agag and the best of the sheep and oxen, he had a religious explanation ready. He said the people spared them “to sacrifice unto the LORD thy

God” (1 Samuel 15:15). That sounds spiritual until Samuel shows up with the knife of the word of God and cuts the excuse open. Samuel said, “Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD?” (1 Samuel 15:22). Saul did not call it rebellion. He called it worship. The devil does the same thing with Bible revision. He does not call it tampering. He calls it readability. He does not call it doubt. He calls it textual notes. He does not call it departure. He calls it update.

That is why Bible believers must learn to test claims by the Book, not by the packaging. “Just an update” sounds like a small thing, but the question is simple: what was updated, who updated it, why was it updated, what standard governed the update, what readings were placed in the margin, what words were changed, what doctrines were affected, and what attitude toward final authority does the updated version produce? Once those questions are asked, the whole sales pitch starts wobbling. The NKJV does not merely help people understand the King James Bible. It asks people to replace it. It does not merely define hard words. It changes them. It does not merely explain. It revises. That is why the phrase “just an update” must be rejected. It is not honest enough for the words of God.

### **Chapter 3: The Bible Does Not Need to Chase a Fallen Culture**

One of the great assumptions behind the NKJV is that the Bible must be adjusted to the modern reader. That assumption sounds compassionate, but it is often rooted in unbelief. It assumes that if a generation becomes too lazy to study, the Book must be simplified. If a generation becomes too vocabulary-poor to understand biblical words, the Book must be trimmed. If a generation becomes too impatient to learn, the Book must be modernized. But the Bible was never given as clay for the culture to reshape. It was given as a sword, a hammer, a fire, a light, a mirror, seed, milk, meat, and incorruptible truth. The job of the Bible is not to bow before the reader’s ignorance. The job of the Bible is to correct the reader.

The Bible itself gives the pattern. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Scripture says, “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” Notice what they did not do. They did not say, “The people are struggling, so let us replace the Book.” They did not say, “The language is hard, so let us produce a fresh edition with easier religious vocabulary and marginal manuscript alternatives.” They read the Book distinctly. They gave the sense. They caused the people to understand. That is the work of preaching and teaching. If a Bible word is hard, teach it. If a doctrine is deep, explain it. If the congregation is ignorant, train them. The answer to ignorance is instruction, not revision.

The modern church has often become so thin in doctrine, vocabulary, reverence, and attention span that it mistakes its own weakness for a flaw in the Bible. That is backwards. If a man cannot understand a word, he can learn it. If a child does not understand “justification,” do not

replace it with something shallow. Teach the child justification. If a believer does not know “propitiation,” do not flatten the word into a puddle. Teach the believer what it means. If people do not understand “charity,” “quicken,” “remission,” “dispensation,” “concupiscence,” or “sanctification,” then open the Bible and teach them. The King James Bible has educated generations of English-speaking Christians. The modern versions often surrender to the generation instead of educating it. That is not progress. That is defeat wearing reading glasses.

#### **Chapter 4: Modern Words Can Hide Doctrinal Loss**

The strongest argument for the NKJV is readability. The weakest part of that argument is that readability is not the same thing as accuracy, authority, or doctrinal strength. A sentence can be smoother and weaker at the same time. A rendering can be easier and less precise. A word can be modern and still be doctrinally inferior. The Bible does not exist to sound like a newspaper, a devotional pamphlet, or a committee-approved religious brochure. It exists to reveal God’s words. If an older word carries a sharper doctrinal edge, then removing that word is not improvement. It is dulling the sword.

Take the matter of “hell,” for example. The King James Bible gives the English reader the plain word “hell.” The NKJV often replaces or complicates that with terms like “Hades” or “Sheol.” The defender says, “That is more precise.” But for the average English reader, it is not more piercing. It is more academic. It pushes the matter into a vocabulary lesson. The King James Bible says “hell,” and the conscience knows what is being preached. The NKJV can turn a burning word into a study note. That may satisfy a man who likes to juggle Greek terms, but it does not necessarily help the sinner who needs the fear of God. A softer-sounding word can be sold as precision while the doctrinal force is weakened.

Or consider places where “worship” becomes posture, or where strong words become gentler words, or where an old doctrinal term is replaced with something less exact. The problem is not always that the NKJV denies the doctrine outright. That is not how subtle corruption usually works. The problem is that it shaves, shifts, softens, and blurs. It changes the flavor. It takes the edge off. It moves the reader an inch at a time. The devil does not need to blow up the bridge if he can loosen the bolts. The “just an update” argument ignores this. It assumes modern wording is automatically better because the modern reader finds it easier. But easier is not always better. A spoonful of sugar may go down easier than strong medicine, but that does not make it medicine.

#### **Chapter 5: The Footnotes Prove It Is Not Just an Update**

If the NKJV were only a language update of the KJV, there would be no need to litter the margins with rival textual readings. This is one of the clearest ways the “just an update” claim collapses. Updating old words is one thing. Introducing alternate readings from other textual

systems is another thing entirely. The NKJV's notes do not merely say, "This word means such and such." They frequently alert the reader to readings associated with other textual traditions. That means the NKJV is not merely helping the reader understand the KJV. It is training the reader to compare the KJV's underlying text against other witnesses.

That is a massive shift. Once the margin becomes a competing voice, the Bible in the hand is no longer treated as the settled authority. It becomes one option in a conversation. The reader reads the verse, then the footnote whispers, "Other texts say something else." The verse may remain in the body, but doubt has been planted in the mind. That is how Satan worked in the garden. "Yea, hath God said?" was not a denial at first. It was a footnote from hell. It did not remove the tree. It questioned the wording. It introduced an alternative reading into Eve's mind. The NKJV footnote system may look scholarly, but the effect is often the same: it moves the reader from confidence to curiosity, from certainty to suspicion.

A Bible believer is not afraid of notes that define words, explain measurements, clarify geography, or point to cross references. But textual notes that give rival readings from corrupt streams are another matter. That is not a dictionary. That is a competing witness. If the King James Bible is the preserved word of God in English, then a version that keeps asking the reader to consider alternatives is not merely updating the language. It is changing the authority structure. The Book is no longer the final voice. The scholar, the margin, the manuscript chart, and the committee become advisers standing around the throne. That is not the old path. That is the modern Bible jungle with a King James sign over the entrance.

## **Chapter 6: The NKJV Changes the Reader's Relationship to Authority**

The most dangerous changes are not always the easiest to list in a verse comparison chart. Sometimes the greatest change is the reader's relationship to the Bible itself. The King James Bible produces a certain kind of Christian when believed as the final authority. It produces a man who says, "The Book says it, and that settles it." It produces preaching with backbone. It produces memorization with certainty. It produces doctrinal statements with finality. It produces a people who can gather in church and read one Book together. It produces a standard outside the scholar's office and above the preacher's opinion. That is why the devil hates it.

The NKJV changes that relationship by presenting itself as a better, clearer, more updated form of the old Book. Once a person accepts that premise, he has already accepted that the KJV needed correction. Then the question becomes, who decides where correction is needed? The committee. The scholar. The publisher. The market. The reader's preference. The cultural moment. That is a different authority structure. Instead of the believer being corrected by the Bible, the Bible is corrected for the believer. Instead of the preacher explaining the Book, the

committee improves the Book. Instead of the church submitting to the words, the words are adjusted to the church's supposed needs.

This is why the NKJV cannot be treated as a harmless aid. It represents a mindset. It says the Bible needs modernizing to remain useful. It says the old words are a barrier. It says the reader's ease is a governing concern. It says textual alternatives deserve space in the margin. It says the old Book may be honored, but not left alone. That is not the spirit of preservation. That is the spirit of revision. The Bible says, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28). The NKJV says, in effect, "We are not removing the landmark; we are just updating its location for modern travelers." That is how landmarks disappear.

### **Chapter 7: The Devil Likes "Close Enough"**

The phrase "close enough" is one of the devil's favorite religious phrases, even when people do not say it out loud. Cain brought an offering. Close enough. Nadab and Abihu offered incense. Close enough. Saul spared animals for sacrifice. Close enough. Uzzah tried to steady the ark. Close enough. Judas kissed Jesus and called Him Master. Close enough. But God is not impressed by religious approximations when His command has been altered. "Close enough" is not obedience. "Almost right" is still wrong when the issue is the words of God.

The NKJV thrives on "close enough." It is close enough to sound like the KJV in many passages. It is close enough to be tolerated in conservative circles. It is close enough for a preacher to quote without alarming everyone immediately. It is close enough for a publisher to market it as continuity. But close enough is exactly what makes it dangerous. A counterfeit bill has to be close enough. A false apostle has to be close enough. A false gospel has to use enough Bible vocabulary to get accepted. The devil is not trying to produce a version that every Bible believer will instantly reject. He is trying to produce one that seems reasonable enough to be allowed.

But the Bible believer does not measure truth by closeness to the truth. He measures it by the truth. When Paul dealt with gospel corruption in Galatians, he did not say, "Well, they still believe in Jesus, they still use Abraham, they still talk about God, they still quote Scripture, and they are only adding circumcision." No, he said, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9). That is the standard. Little changes matter when they introduce the wrong principle. Little changes matter when they move authority. Little changes matter when they train men to accept the next change. The NKJV is not harmless because it is close to the KJV. It is dangerous because it is close enough to deceive.

### **Conclusion: The Lie Must Be Named**

The "just an update" claim must be named for what it is. It is not a careful description of the New King James Version. It is a sales pitch that hides the deeper issue. The NKJV is not merely a spelling update. It is not merely a punctuation adjustment. It is not merely the King James Bible

with old dust brushed off. It is a new translation that carries a modern revision philosophy, inserts textual doubt, changes wording, removes distinctions, softens certain expressions, and shifts the reader's relationship to final authority. That is why it must be examined and exposed. Bible believers do not owe smooth language more loyalty than preserved truth.

The King James Bible does not need a committee rescue mission. It needs believers who will trust it, preach it, memorize it, teach it, and stop apologizing for it. The Bible says, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). It does not say, "Thy word is mostly preserved in a general sense, though modern committees may improve it as needed." The Lord Jesus said, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He did not speak like a man waiting for a publisher to clear up the wording. He spoke with absolute confidence in written Scripture. That is the posture every Bible believer should have.

The New King James Version is not dangerous because it is the most obvious corruption on the shelf. It is dangerous because it is subtle. It is dangerous because it borrows the King James name. It is dangerous because it presents itself as helpful while introducing leaven. It is dangerous because it teaches people that the old Book can be honored and corrected at the same time. But the old path does not need that kind of help. "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16). The old path is not improved by a detour. The old Book is not strengthened by a counterfeit. The "just an update" lie has had a long run, but it is time to drag it into the light and let the King James Bible answer it.

### **3 of 15: The New King James Leaven - The Footnotes That Whisper, "Yea, Hath God Said?"**

The first recorded attack on mankind was not an attack on the existence of God. It was not an atheist lecture. It was not a university classroom full of smug professors sneering at creation. It was not a pagan temple with drums beating and incense smoking before an idol. It was a question about the words of God. Genesis 3:1 says, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" There it is. There is the first satanic footnote. There is the first marginal reading. There is the first alternate suggestion placed beside the words God had already spoken. The devil did not need Eve to become an atheist in one conversation. He only needed her to begin treating the words of God as something open to reconsideration. That is the old serpent's method. He does not always begin by denying the word. He begins by questioning it.

That is why the New King James Version footnote system is not a harmless study aid. It is a training system. The main text may often look close enough to the King James Bible to pacify the

reader, but then the margin starts talking. The text says one thing, the note says the NU-Text reads another way. The text says one thing, the note says the M-Text has another form. The average reader may not understand all the machinery behind those abbreviations, but he understands the effect. He reads the Bible, and then the Bible's own margin tells him, "There are other readings." That may sound scholarly to a man who worships the classroom, but it is poison to final authority. A Bible that constantly directs the reader's attention to rival manuscript traditions is not building confidence in the words on the page. It is making the reader suspicious of them. It is training him to stand over the text instead of under it.

The King James Bible speaks with authority. It does not need to constantly clear its throat and ask permission from Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, Nestle-Aland, the United Bible Societies, the Majority Text editors, or the modern critical apparatus. It gives the English-speaking believer a Book. It says what it says. It preaches. It cuts. It judges. It corrects. It comforts. It condemns. It does not put the reader in the jury box and the text in the defendant's chair. The NKJV margin does something different. It teaches a habit of comparison. It tells the reader that the traditional reading is in the body, but there are other witnesses to consider. That is where the leaven enters. It does not always remove the verse. Sometimes it leaves the verse standing and puts a question mark beside it. But a question mark beside God's words is often the devil's first knife stroke. "Yea, hath God said?" is still the language of the serpent.

### **Chapter 1: The First Footnote Came From the Serpent**

The garden of Eden was not destroyed by a frontal denial of God's existence. It was destroyed by a conversation over the wording. Eve had the command. Adam had been given the command. God had spoken plainly. The serpent's first move was not to say, "God is not real." It was to introduce uncertainty about what God said and what God meant. "Yea, hath God said?" is the pattern. It is not merely a question. It is a method. It places the listener in the position of reexamining God's words under the pressure of an outside voice. Once that happens, the authority has already been moved. God's words are no longer simply received. They are being reviewed.

The devil's question also had a tone to it. It implied that God's words might be restrictive, unclear, unreasonable, or open to interpretation. That is exactly how modern textual doubt works. It rarely walks in saying, "Throw the Bible away." It says, "Let us look at the evidence." It says, "Some manuscripts read differently." It says, "The earliest and best witnesses omit this." It says, "Scholars are divided." It says, "No doctrine is affected." It says, "You can still believe the Bible, just do not be so certain about the exact words." That is the serpent's work dressed in academic clothing. Doubt does not have to deny everything to damage faith. It only has to make certainty look naive.

The Lord Jesus did not fight the devil that way. In Matthew 4, every answer He gave was, “It is written.” Not “it may be written.” Not “the better manuscripts suggest.” Not “the margin allows another reading.” Not “the original autographs probably said.” He said, “It is written.” That is the spirit of Bible authority. The Lord used written Scripture as final authority against the devil. The modern version apparatus reverses that spirit by constantly inviting the reader to ask whether what is written is really secure. That is why the NKJV footnote problem is not secondary. It goes straight to the garden. The devil’s first weapon was textual doubt, and the NKJV brings that same whisper into the margin of a Bible carrying the King James name.

## **Chapter 2: The Body Looks Traditional While the Margin Undermines It**

The cleverness of the NKJV is that it often keeps the traditional reading in the main text. That is what makes it acceptable to many conservative Christians. They open the Bible, glance at a familiar passage, and think, “This is not so bad.” But the problem is not only what sits in the body. The problem is also what whispers in the margin. A man can stand in a pulpit and say the right words while a man beside him keeps telling the congregation, “There are other possibilities.” Eventually the congregation stops hearing certainty and starts hearing options. That is the NKJV problem. The main text may look conservative, but the note system trains the mind to think like a modern textual critic.

This is why the NKJV is more subtle than many modern versions. The NIV, RSV, ESV, NASB, and similar versions often place corrupt readings right in the body. That is more obvious. The NKJV often retains the traditional reading in the body and then imports the doubt through the notes. That is a different strategy. It is the difference between knocking down a wall and quietly loosening the foundation. The average reader may not realize what is happening at first. He sees the verse, but then he sees the note. He sees the reading, but then he sees the alternative. He sees the Bible, but then he sees the scholar’s apparatus. Over time, his confidence is no longer resting in the Book. It is resting in his ability to navigate textual options.

A Bible believer should understand the danger of a competing voice. In Numbers 13, the spies all saw the same land, but ten of them brought an evil report that turned the hearts of the people. Joshua and Caleb stood on God’s promise, but the evil report spread through the congregation and produced unbelief. The NKJV margin functions like an evil report against the settled text. The body may preserve the right reading in many places, but the margin keeps reporting that other witnesses say something else. That may look neutral to the scholar, but it is not neutral in the heart of the reader. A constant alternate report weakens confidence. It teaches the saint to live with uncertainty. It turns the Bible from a trumpet into an uncertain sound.

## **Chapter 3: NU and M Are Not Innocent Abbreviations**

The abbreviations in the NKJV notes may look harmless: NU, M, Majority Text, Critical Text, alternate reading. To the ordinary Christian, these can look like the kind of scholarly details that belong in a serious Bible. But those little letters carry a world of theological and textual assumptions. The NU-Text points the reader toward the modern critical text stream associated with Nestle-Aland and the United Bible Societies. The M-Text points toward the Majority Text tradition as edited by men who still differ from the Received Text in many places. So the NKJV reader is not merely being given neutral facts. He is being placed in a three-way conversation between the Received Text, the Critical Text, and the Majority Text. That is not the King James Bible. That is a textual debate platform.

The ordinary believer does not need a Bible that turns him into a referee between manuscript traditions every time the margin starts blinking. He needs the words of God. The Bible says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). If every word matters, then the issue is not academic trivia. If the Lord expects man to live by every word, then those words must be available, not floating among competing abbreviations and editorial systems. A Bible that says one thing in the text and then keeps reminding the reader that another textual system omits, adds, or changes something is not feeding the sheep with certainty. It is putting the sheep in a manuscript seminar before breakfast.

The defender of the NKJV may say, "But the notes do not make judgments. They simply present the facts." That sounds noble until you remember that placing rival readings beside the text is itself an act of influence. The note does not have to say, "The KJV is wrong." It only has to say, "Other texts differ." That is enough to plant doubt. A wife does not need to accuse her husband of adultery every day to poison a marriage. She only needs to keep saying, "I wonder where he really was." Suspicion can destroy trust without a verdict. Likewise, the NKJV margin does not have to declare the Received Text false in order to undermine confidence. It only has to keep presenting alternatives until the reader no longer treats the words on the page as final.

#### **Chapter 4: Textual Notes Move Authority From the Book to the Reader**

The King James Bible places the reader under the text. The modern note system tempts the reader to place himself over the text. That is a massive change. When the Bible says something plainly, the proper response is belief, submission, obedience, and study. But when the Bible's own note system keeps offering alternatives, the reader is subtly invited to judge between them. Which reading does he prefer? Which manuscript tradition sounds better? Which scholar does he trust? Which committee seems more reliable? Suddenly the common believer has been moved from disciple to critic. He may not know Greek, Hebrew, manuscript history, or textual criticism, but he has been handed a judge's robe and asked to sit over the words.

That is not humility. That is modern arrogance disguised as study. Real Bible study begins with a settled text. It searches Scripture with Scripture. It compares spiritual things with spiritual. It believes that God said what He meant and meant what He said. It does not begin by assuming the words are uncertain and then asking the academy to reconstruct them. The Bible says, "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). It does not say the entrance of textual variants giveth light. It does not say the entrance of critical apparatus giveth light. It says the entrance of "thy words" gives light. If the words are constantly under review, the light is constantly filtered through doubt.

The devil loves to make man the judge. That was the temptation in Eden: "ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5). Man wanted the seat of judgment. He wanted to evaluate good and evil for himself rather than submit to God's command. The textual criticism mindset can become the same kind of temptation. Man sits above the text, weighs the witnesses, evaluates the readings, and decides what God probably said. That is not the posture of faith. That is the posture of the critic. The NKJV footnotes help normalize that posture among people who might have never accepted it if it came directly from a liberal seminary. That is the danger. It brings the critic's desk into the church pew.

#### **Chapter 5: The Margin Can Deny What the Body Pretends to Preserve**

A defender of the NKJV may say, "But the verse is still in the text." That answer is not enough. A verse can be in the body and still be undermined by the margin. A doctrine can be stated in one place and weakened by a note in another. A reading can be retained while suspicion is attached to it. That is the nature of subtlety. If a man says, "I believe what you said, but several witnesses dispute it," he has not strengthened confidence in your words. He has weakened it. The NKJV often keeps the traditional wording close enough to maintain conservative credibility, while the notes keep a back door open for critical-text thinking.

This matters because the Bible is not merely a historical document to be studied at arm's length. It is the living words of God. Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." A sword with a note attached saying, "Some say this edge may not belong here," is not going to be wielded with the same confidence. The power of preaching depends on certainty. The authority of doctrine depends on certainty. The comfort of the saints depends on certainty. If the reader is trained to think every important passage may have a marginal cloud hanging over it, he will not handle the Book like a sword. He will handle it like a stack of evidence in a courtroom.

The King James Bible does not need a margin full of rival witnesses to prove it is honest. The modern mind has been trained to think that uncertainty is humility and certainty is arrogance. That is one of the devil's most successful tricks. It is not arrogant to believe God preserved His

words. It is not arrogant to trust the Book. It is not arrogant to stand on “It is written.” What is arrogant is a generation of men who think the words of God must remain perpetually open to their revision, footnotes, apparatus, and evaluation. The NKJV margin presents itself as balanced information, but the fruit is not balance. The fruit is hesitation. The reader learns to pause where he should believe.

### **Chapter 6: An Uncertain Sound Does Not Prepare Men for Battle**

First Corinthians 14:8 says, “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” That verse is devastating for the modern Bible movement. The trumpet must be clear. Soldiers do not charge into battle when the signal is confused. They do not prepare properly when the sound wavers. A Bible that constantly keeps readers conscious of alternate readings gives an uncertain sound. The verse says one thing, the note says another tradition differs, the preacher says one scholar prefers this, the commentary says another scholar prefers that, and the poor saint is left wondering where the final authority is. That is not a trumpet. That is static.

The King James Bible has sounded a clear trumpet in the English-speaking world for centuries. Its words have been memorized, preached, printed, carried, quoted, sung, and died with. It has produced soldiers. It has produced witnesses. It has armed missionaries. It has thundered in pulpits and whispered comfort beside deathbeds. The NKJV’s note system does not strengthen that trumpet. It adds competing echoes. The body says one thing, the margin says another manuscript tradition reads differently, and the reader is trained to accept uncertainty as normal. But uncertainty does not prepare men for battle. It prepares them for retreat, compromise, and dependence on scholars.

This is one reason so much modern Christianity sounds weak. It has no settled Bible. A preacher with five versions on the pulpit often speaks like a man giving a book report instead of a herald delivering a message from the King. “This version says.” “That version says.” “A better rendering might be.” “The Greek really means.” After a while the people are not hearing the word of God. They are hearing a man explain why the Bible in front of them is insufficient without his help. That is not New Testament preaching. Paul said, “Preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2). He did not say preach the variant readings. The NKJV margin helps create the atmosphere where the trumpet loses its clear sound.

### **Chapter 7: The King James Bible Needs No Rival Whispering Beside It**

The Authorized Version stands on its own. It does not need a modern version standing beside it whispering, “Other texts read differently.” It does not need the NU-Text correcting it from the margin. It does not need the Majority Text offering rival wording in the side column. It does not need a committee of twentieth-century editors telling the reader that the traditional reading is

one option among several. If the King James Bible is God's preserved word in English, then rival textual whispers are not helpful. They are intrusions. They are like a man interrupting a judge's sentence to say, "Other courts have ruled differently." That may be interesting in law school, but it is contempt in the courtroom.

The Lord Jesus never treated Scripture as though it needed a rival witness beside it. He said, "Have ye not read?" He said, "It is written." He said, "the scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). He answered the Sadducees by holding them accountable to the tense of a verb in Exodus. He built doctrine on exact wording. That is the Lord's view of Scripture. Exact words matter. Written Scripture is binding. God expects men to submit to it. The NKJV note system does not encourage that kind of settled submission. It encourages constant awareness of textual alternatives, and that awareness slowly changes how a person reads. The reader is no longer simply hearing God speak. He is hearing God speak with a scholar whispering over His shoulder.

That whisper must be rejected. Bible believers do not need the serpent's question in the margin. They do not need a Bible that carries the King James name while importing the modern critic's doubt. They do not need a version that keeps enough traditional wording to look safe and enough textual apparatus to poison confidence. The old Book is enough. The King James Bible has stood because God preserved His words, not because committees kept improving them. The Bible says, "Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it" (Psalm 119:140). A pure word does not need a rival reading attached to it. It needs to be believed.

### **Conclusion: The Whisper Is the Warning**

The NKJV footnotes are not a minor issue. They are one of the clearest signs of the leaven. They reveal the deeper spirit of the version. If the NKJV were simply an update of the King James Bible, the notes would not need to keep pointing the reader to alternate textual traditions. If the goal were simply clarity, the margin would not need to keep familiarizing the reader with the machinery of textual doubt. The body can look conservative while the margin works like the serpent, whispering, "Yea, hath God said?" That is why this issue must be exposed early in the series. The danger is not only in changed verses. It is in changed confidence.

The Bible believer must reject the idea that doubt is a mark of maturity. Modern scholarship has trained people to think that uncertainty is humility and confidence is ignorance. That is backwards. Faith believes what God said. Faith stands on the words. Faith does not require the common Christian to become a textual critic before he can trust his Bible. The Lord did not tell His people to live by every variant that proceedeth out of the apparatus of scholars. He said man shall live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). That means the words must be available. That means they must be preserved. That means believers can have certainty.

The New King James Version's footnotes are the whisper that gives the game away. They show that the NKJV is not merely modernized English. It is modernized doubt in a King James costume. It lets the old reading stand in many places, but it posts a rival witness beside it. It allows the reader to think he is staying close to the KJV while teaching him to think like the modern-version crowd. That is leaven. It may be small. It may be printed in the margin. It may wear scholarly clothing. But it is leaven all the same. And a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. The King James Bible gives a clear trumpet. The NKJV margin gives an uncertain sound. A Bible believer should know which one prepares men for battle.

#### **4 of 15: The New King James Leaven - The Original Autographs Trap**

The modern Bible scholar has a neat little hiding place he runs to whenever the issue of a perfect Bible comes up. He will say, with a straight face and a stack of degrees leaning over his shoulder, "I believe the Bible is inspired and inerrant in the original autographs." That sounds very reverent to people who have been trained to mistake technical language for faith. It sounds careful. It sounds scholarly. It sounds like a man is defending the Bible. But when you press the matter, you find out that his perfect Bible is not in his hand, not in his pulpit, not in his church, not in his house, not in his memory, not in his congregation, and not in any book you can actually open. His perfect Bible existed somewhere back there in the vanished originals, on parchments no living man possesses, written by prophets and apostles, and then apparently disappeared into the fog of history, leaving the modern church to spend the rest of the age trying to reconstruct what God might have said. That is not Bible faith. That is a religious shell game with Greek letters on the cups.

The original autographs trap is one of the slickest tricks in the modern Bible movement because it lets a man sound orthodox while denying the practical possession of a perfect Bible. He can say, "I believe in verbal inspiration," but when you ask him where those verbally inspired words are today, he starts coughing manuscript dust. He can say, "I believe in inerrancy," but when you ask him if the Bible in his hand is inerrant, he retreats to the originals. He can say, "I believe God preserved His word," but when you ask him where it is preserved, he points to "the total manuscript evidence," the critical apparatus, textual criticism, competing readings, footnotes, committees, and ongoing scholarly reconstruction. In other words, he believes in a perfect Bible that nobody has, a preserved Bible that nobody can point to, and an inerrant text that must still be pieced together by men who often do not believe the Book even when they read it.

That is why this issue belongs in a series on the New King James Leaven. The NKJV does not merely update language. It participates in a modern mindset that moves authority away from a

settled Bible in the hand and toward a scholarly reconstruction of the text. Its own framework speaks the language of original-language evidence, textual variants, NU-Text readings, Majority Text readings, and inerrancy tied to the original autographs. That does not leave the ordinary believer standing on a rock. It leaves him standing in a classroom waiting for the professor to finish sorting the rocks. But the Bible never teaches that God would inspire His words, lose them, and then leave the church dependent on a committee to restore them in installments. The Bible says, "The words of the LORD are pure words" (Psalm 12:6). It says, "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever" (Psalm 12:7). It says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). God did not promise inspiration followed by disappearance. He promised preservation.

### **Chapter 1: A Perfect Bible Nobody Has Is a Convenient Fiction**

A perfect Bible nobody has is a very convenient doctrine for men who do not want to submit to a perfect Bible they can hold. If the only perfect Bible is locked away in the original autographs, and the original autographs are gone, then no living preacher has to answer to a final written authority in his own language. He can always appeal behind the Book. He can say, "The Greek says," "the Hebrew says," "the best manuscripts say," "the older witnesses say," "the critical text says," or "a better rendering would be." He is no longer under the Bible. He becomes the interpreter, corrector, and final court of appeal over the Bible. That is why this doctrine is so beloved in the modern academy. It preserves the language of orthodoxy while handing the control of the text to scholars.

The Bible's doctrine is not that slippery. God gave words. God preserved words. God expects men to live by words. Matthew 4:4 says, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." That statement is impossible to take seriously if the words are not available. If man lives by every word, then every word must be somewhere. If every word is necessary, then a Bible that only existed perfectly in vanished originals is no help to the man alive today. You do not feed a hungry child by telling him there was bread in the bakery two thousand years ago. You do not arm a soldier by telling him there was a sword in the armory before it disappeared. You do not sanctify the church with a theoretical text nobody can possess.

The original autographs doctrine, as commonly used, becomes a dodge. It lets men avoid saying plainly whether the Bible in their hands is the pure word of God. Ask them if the King James Bible is perfect, and they say, "No translation is perfect." Ask them if the modern critical text is perfect, and they say textual criticism is still developing. Ask them if any printed Greek text is perfect, and they say no printed edition is final. Ask them where the perfect words are, and they retreat to manuscripts, variants, and probability. That is not faith. That is a fog machine. The

Bible believer does not need a fog machine. He needs a Book. God did not call preachers to preach probability. He called them to preach the word.

## **Chapter 2: Inspiration Without Preservation Leaves the Church Robbed**

Inspiration without preservation is like a birth certificate for a child who was kidnapped and never found. It proves something happened back there, but it does not give you possession now. Modern scholars love to affirm inspiration in the originals because it costs them nothing. The originals are gone. They cannot correct the professor, rebuke the committee, or expose the translator. A man can claim absolute reverence for an absent authority while refusing submission to a present one. That is an old religious trick. The Pharisees honored dead prophets while rejecting the living Christ standing in front of them. Modern scholars honor vanished autographs while correcting the Bible in the pew.

The Scripture does not separate inspiration and preservation the way modern men do. Psalm 12:6 says, “The words of the LORD are pure words.” Then the next verse says, “Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.” Purity and preservation stand together. The words are pure, and the Lord keeps them. That is not a promise that His words would be pure for a few decades and then dissolve into manuscript confusion. That is not a promise that His words would survive only as scattered fragments in monastery trash cans, Vatican shelves, Egyptian wastebaskets, and critical footnotes. That is a promise that the same God who gave the words would keep the words.

The devil knows that a church without a present perfect Bible is a church that can be managed. If the people do not have a final authority, someone must become the authority for them. That someone will be the scholar, the priest, the professor, the committee, the publisher, or the pastor who corrects the Book every Sunday. This is why preservation matters. Without preservation, inspiration becomes a museum doctrine. Everyone bows before the glass case and admires what God once did, but no one has the weapon in his hand. The Bible believer rejects that robbery. God did not inspire His words so Christians could spend the rest of history looking for them. He preserved them so they could read them, preach them, believe them, and die with them in their hands.

## **Chapter 3: The Bible Says Words, Not Just Messages**

The modern scholar often tries to soften the issue by talking about the “message” of Scripture. He says the message has been preserved, the doctrines are basically intact, and no major doctrine is affected. That is the lullaby of the modern version nursery. But the Bible does not merely speak about a preserved message. It speaks about preserved words. Proverbs 30:5 says, “Every word of God is pure.” Matthew 4:4 says man shall live by “every word.” Matthew 24:35 says, “my words shall not pass away.” Psalm 119:140 says, “Thy word is very pure: therefore thy

servant loveth it.” The issue is not a vague religious message floating above the text. The issue is words.

Words matter because doctrine is carried by words. Change the words, and you can change the doctrine, weaken the doctrine, blur the doctrine, or move the emphasis. A single word can matter. The Lord Jesus made doctrine from the exact wording of Scripture. In Matthew 22:32, He answered the Sadducees on the resurrection from the tense of God’s statement, “I am the God of Abraham.” Paul makes a doctrinal point from the singular “seed” in Galatians 3:16, saying, “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” If exact words, number, and grammar matter to Christ and Paul, then do not tell me the general message is enough. That is not Bible doctrine. That is modern damage control.

The original autographs trap tries to protect the idea of perfect words by placing those perfect words permanently out of reach. It says, “Yes, every word was pure when first written.” Fine. Where are those words now? If the answer is that they are scattered among thousands of manuscripts and must be reconstructed by scholars, then you do not have a preserved Bible. You have a textual scavenger hunt. The Bible believer stands on a better promise than that. The same God who cared about “seed” versus “seeds” cared enough to keep His words. The same God who inspired exact wording did not leave exact wording to perish. If God promised every word, then the believer has a right to ask where every word is.

#### **Chapter 4: The Scholar’s Office Becomes the New Priesthood**

When the Bible is removed from the believer’s hand and relocated into the realm of vanished autographs and expert reconstruction, a new priesthood is created. Rome told the people they needed the church to tell them what Scripture meant and where authority resided. Modern textual scholarship tells the people they need scholars to tell them what Scripture says and which words belong. The clothes are different, but the power move is the same. The common man is pushed away from certainty and made dependent on a class of experts. The Reformation put the Bible into the hands of the people. The modern critical movement puts the Bible back behind the counter and says, “Please wait while the experts examine the evidence.”

This is why the issue is not merely academic. It is spiritual authority. If the perfect words are not in a Book the believer can read, then the believer must trust somebody else to mediate the text to him. That mediator may not wear a Roman collar, but he functions like a priest. He tells you when a verse belongs. He tells you when a word should be omitted. He tells you when the King James is too strong. He tells you when a reading is late, doubtful, secondary, unsupported, or probably original. He may say he is simply presenting evidence, but the effect is the same: the ordinary Christian no longer has a final Bible. He has an advisory panel.

The King James Bible broke that chain for English-speaking believers. It gave them a Book they could hold, read, preach, memorize, and judge all teachers by. That is why it has always been hated by popes, modernists, cults, and scholars who resent final authority outside their control. The original autographs trap reverses that victory by saying the perfect authority is no longer present in any one Book. It is somewhere behind the manuscripts, behind the apparatus, behind the committee, behind the footnotes. That is not liberty. That is bondage with a seminary vocabulary. The Bible says, "Where the word of a king is, there is power" (Ecclesiastes 8:4). The modern scholar says the word of the King is still being reconstructed.

### **Chapter 5: The NKJV Carries This Trap in Conservative Clothing**

The NKJV is dangerous because it packages this modern uncertainty in conservative clothing. It does not come across like a wild liberal paraphrase. It speaks of reverence. It praises the Authorized Version. It claims continuity with the King James tradition. It often keeps traditional readings in the body. But then it surrounds the reader with notes, variant readings, modern textual categories, and the language of original-language scholarship. It gives the impression that the Bible in the hand is useful, but the real authority still lies somewhere behind it, in Hebrew, Greek, manuscripts, textual traditions, and editorial decisions.

That is the leaven. It does not have to deny everything outright. It only has to change the reader's posture. Instead of opening the Bible and saying, "God said it," the reader learns to ask, "What do the notes say?" Instead of standing on the words, he learns to compare the witnesses. Instead of treating the English Bible as final authority, he treats it as a window into an ongoing scholarly discussion. That is not a small change. That is a different religion of the Book. The old Bible-believing religion says God preserved His words and the believer can have them. The modern version religion says God inspired the originals, but the rest must be managed by experts.

The NKJV carries this spirit especially well because it uses the King James name to calm suspicion. It tells conservative Christians that they are not really leaving the old path. They are just walking a cleaner, smoother version of it. But the old path did not need a detour through critical notes and autographs-only inerrancy. Jeremiah 6:16 says, "Ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." It does not say ask for a revised path that honors the old path while correcting it. The NKJV's conservative appearance makes the trap more effective. It speaks respectfully while moving authority. It praises the King James Bible while making room for a system that says no translation can be finally perfect. That is exactly how leaven works.

### **Chapter 6: Preservation Must Be Historical, Visible, and Usable**

A doctrine of preservation that never produces a preserved Book is not Bible doctrine. It is vapor. If God preserved His words, then those words must be historically available. They must

be visible. They must be usable. They must be capable of being read, preached, copied, translated, memorized, and obeyed. A preserved Bible that exists only as an abstract ideal in the mind of God or as a puzzle scattered across manuscript evidence is not what the Bible promises. The Bible speaks of words in the mouth, words read publicly, words written, words taught to children, words hidden in the heart, words preached by prophets and apostles.

Isaiah 59:21 is one of the strongest verses on this point: "My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth." That is possession. That is usability. That is public confession. That is not a promise that the words would exist somewhere in a museum of textual possibilities. God says His words will be in the mouth of His people. The Lord Jesus said, "Search the scriptures" (John 5:39). He did not tell them to search for the scriptures. He told them to search the scriptures. Paul told Timothy, "from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures" (2 Timothy 3:15). Timothy did not have the original autographs of Moses and the prophets. Yet Paul called what he had "holy scriptures."

That ruins the modern dodge. If copies can be called Scripture, then the perfection of Scripture is not locked in the autographs only. If Timothy had holy Scriptures without the originals, then God's words survived in copies. If Christ held men accountable to Scripture available in His day, then preservation was real before any modern scholar was born. The King James Bible-believing position stands in that line. It says God gave words and kept words. It says the believer is not left with a reconstruction project. It says the English-speaking world received the preserved words of God in the Book God blessed above all others. The original autographs trap says that is too simple. The Bible says that is faith.

### **Chapter 7: The Trap Produces Doubt, Not Faith**

The fruit of the original autographs trap is not stronger faith. It is managed uncertainty. The average Christian who accepts this system ends up saying things like, "No translation is perfect," "the originals were inspired," "the Greek really says," "some manuscripts differ," and "we cannot be dogmatic about every word." That does not produce bold preaching. It produces careful hedging. It does not produce soldiers. It produces reviewers. It does not produce a pulpit that thunders, "Thus saith the Lord." It produces a pulpit that says, "The better rendering might be." That is an uncertain sound.

First Corinthians 14:8 says, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" A Bible that only exists perfectly in lost autographs gives an uncertain sound to the present generation. A preacher cannot stand up and say, "This is the perfect word of God," because his theology will not allow him to. He has been trained to qualify everything. He has been trained to retreat to the originals. He has been trained to distrust finality. That is

not a harmless academic nuance. It changes the spirit of preaching, the confidence of believers, the authority of doctrine, and the ability of the church to stand.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith does not come by hearing that the word of God was perfect in the originals but now must be reconstructed from manuscript evidence by men who disagree with each other. Faith does not come by endless footnotes that keep reminding you the text is disputed. Faith does not come by being told no Bible in your language can be perfect. That produces dependence, not faith. It produces doubt with a religious vocabulary. The King James Bible produces certainty because it is the Book God has used, honored, preserved, and blessed. The original autographs trap produces fog. The devil loves fog because men in fog need guides, and the guides usually charge tuition.

### **Conclusion: God Did Not Inspire Words to Lose Them**

The original autographs trap must be rejected because it makes God's promise of preservation practically meaningless. It allows men to affirm inspiration while denying possession. It lets scholars say the Bible was perfect when God gave it, while refusing to identify a perfect Bible believers can use now. That is not the Bible doctrine. That is the academic escape route. The Bible says the words of the Lord are pure, and the Lord will preserve them. The Bible says Christ's words will not pass away. The Bible says man lives by every word. Those verses do not leave room for a faith that points backward to vanished parchments and forward to the next committee, while leaving the present believer empty-handed.

The King James Bible believer is not embarrassed to say God kept His promise. He is not ashamed to say God used fallible men in a providential process to produce a perfect English

### **5 of 15: The New King James Leaven - Why "Thee," "Thou," and "Ye" Are Not Obsolete Junk**

One of the cheapest shots taken at the King James Bible is the mockery of its pronouns. "Nobody talks like that anymore." "Why do we need thee and thou?" "The NKJV just updates the old language." "The KJV sounds archaic." That is the kind of shallow talk that passes for scholarship in a generation that can learn every slang phrase on social media but acts like it needs a rescue mission to understand "thou." The issue is not whether modern Americans commonly use those words in everyday conversation. The issue is whether those words serve a grammatical purpose in the English Bible. The answer is yes. They are not dead decorations. They are not literary cobwebs. They are not museum pieces sitting on the page to make the Bible sound old. They preserve distinctions that modern English has largely lost, and when the

New King James Version flattens those distinctions into the generic word “you,” it is not always making the Bible clearer. In many places it is making the Bible less precise.

The King James Bible uses “thee,” “thou,” “thy,” and “thine” to mark singular address, while “ye,” “you,” and “your” preserve plural address. That matters. It matters in doctrine. It matters in context. It matters in application. It matters in preaching. A reader with a King James Bible can often tell whether the Lord is speaking to one person or to a group simply by the pronoun. A reader with a modern version often cannot. He has to guess from context, or he has to be told by someone who knows the underlying languages, or he has to trust the same crowd that told him the old pronouns were useless. That is not an improvement. That is a loss of information. The modern version crowd calls the KJV harder because it gives you more precision. That is like calling a ruler complicated because it has measurements on it.

This is one of the easiest examples of how the New King James Leaven works. The NKJV says, in effect, “We are only removing obsolete pronouns.” But what it actually does is remove a useful grammatical tool from the English text. Then the same people who cheer that change will stand in a church service and sing “How Great Thou Art” with tears in their eyes. They do not demand “How Great You Are.” They do not demand “Come You Fount of Every Blessing.” They do not demand that all old hymns be revised because modern people might stumble over “thou.” They preserve old language in songs, poems, wedding vows, Christmas carols, and patriotic documents, but when it comes to the words of God, suddenly they discover a burden to “fix” the Bible. That tells you something. A generation that is more reverent toward hymn tradition than toward the preserved words of God has its priorities upside down.

### **Chapter 1: The Pronouns Are Not Random Decoration**

The King James Bible’s pronouns are not scattered across the page like antique confetti. They follow a pattern. “Thou” is singular when used as the subject. “Thee” is singular when used as the object. “Thy” and “thine” are singular possessives. “Ye” is plural when used as the subject. “You” is often plural when used as the object. “Your” is plural possessive. There are details and historical features in English that can be discussed, but the practical point is simple enough for a child: words beginning with “t” usually point to one person, and words beginning with “y” point to more than one. That is not confusion. That is precision. Once a person learns the distinction, the King James Bible becomes clearer, not harder.

Modern English collapsed much of that distinction into the word “you.” One word now does the work of both singular and plural in ordinary speech. That is why people in different parts of the country invent substitutes like “y’all,” “you all,” “you guys,” or “yous” to recover the plural distinction. The language itself knows something was lost. People still need a way to distinguish one person from a group. The King James Bible already had a built-in system that did that with

dignity, accuracy, and consistency. The modern reviser looked at that precision and said, "Let us simplify it." But simplification is not always clarification. Sometimes simplification is amputation.

When the NKJV replaces all of those distinctions with "you," it makes the text sound more contemporary, but it often gives the reader less information. That is the kind of trade the modern Bible movement loves to make. It trades precision for familiarity, authority for comfort, doctrine for readability, and settled words for smoother speech. The Bible believer should not be impressed. The question is not whether the wording sounds like modern conversation. The question is whether it preserves what God said. The old pronouns are not obstacles to truth. They are tools for truth. A hammer may look old, but if it drives the nail straight, only a fool throws it away because the handle does not look trendy.

## **Chapter 2: Singular and Plural Matter in Scripture**

Singular and plural distinctions matter because God chose words with exactness. The Bible does not treat grammar as accidental. The Lord Jesus used the tense of a verb to answer the Sadducees in Matthew 22:32 when He said, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Paul made a doctrinal point from singular versus plural in Galatians 3:16: "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." If the Lord Jesus and Paul built doctrine on exact wording and grammatical detail, then no Bible believer should mock a translation for preserving grammatical detail in English. Exact words matter. Number matters. Pronouns matter. Grammar matters. The modern reviser may shrug, but the Holy Ghost does not.

The King James Bible's older pronouns often let the English reader see whether a command, warning, promise, or rebuke is addressed to one person or many. That can change how the passage is understood. It can affect whether a statement is personal, corporate, national, pastoral, prophetic, or doctrinal. When Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:7), the KJV shows a beautiful distinction. "Thee" is singular. Christ is speaking to Nicodemus personally. But "Ye" is plural. The need to be born again goes beyond Nicodemus to the nation and beyond that to all who need life from above. The modern "you must be born again" loses that visible distinction. It may still be true, but the English reader has lost something the King James Bible preserved.

That is not a small matter. A preacher can preach that verse from the KJV and point out the distinction without correcting the Bible. The distinction is already there. The Book teaches him. With the NKJV or other modern versions, the distinction is buried. The reader must go behind the English text to find it. That means the modern version has not made the passage clearer in that respect. It has made it less clear. The old pronouns are not dead weight. They are doctrinal

windows. They let the reader see where the Spirit of God marked one man and where He marked a group. Removing them is not an improvement. It is turning a window into a wall.

### **Chapter 3: John 3:7 Shows the Value Immediately**

John 3:7 may be the clearest example because it is so simple and so doctrinally important. The KJV reads, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” There is no confusion there once the pronouns are understood. “Thee” tells you Christ is speaking directly to Nicodemus as an individual. “Ye” tells you the statement applies beyond Nicodemus. He was a ruler of the Jews. He represented the religious leadership of Israel. He came by night. He had religion, education, standing, and morality, but he still needed the new birth. Christ did not say merely that Nicodemus personally needed an experience. He said, “Ye must be born again.” The plural reaches wider than the man in front of Him.

That one verse exposes the nonsense of the “obsolete junk” argument. The old pronouns help the reader see the movement of the passage. The Lord begins personally and then applies the doctrine broadly. That is not archaic confusion. That is clarity with teeth. Modern English collapses the distinction into “you,” and then the reader has to figure out whether “you” is singular or plural. The modern version crowd calls that clearer because it sounds familiar, but familiar is not the same thing as precise. A foggy mirror may be easier on the eyes, but it is still foggy. The KJV gives you the sharp mirror.

This is exactly the kind of thing the devil likes to hide under the word “update.” He wants people to think the NKJV merely removed old-sounding pronouns. But when those pronouns carry information, removing them removes information from the English reader. The issue is not whether a person can still arrive at the truth by study. The issue is why the truth was made less visible in the first place. If God gave a grammatical distinction in the underlying text and the King James Bible preserved it in English, then why call that preservation a problem? Why mock the very thing that helps the reader? The answer is simple: the modern revision mindset is trained to value contemporary smoothness more than preserved precision.

### **Chapter 4: Luke 22:31-32 Shows Personal and Group Address**

Luke 22:31-32 gives another powerful example. The King James Bible reads, “And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Look at the pronouns. “You” is plural. Satan desired to have all of them, the disciples as a group, to sift them as wheat. But “thee” and “thy” are singular. Christ prayed particularly for Peter. That distinction matters. It shows the devil’s broader design against the apostolic band and the Lord’s specific intercession for Peter in view of his coming fall and restoration.

A modern reader with only the flattened “you” system may miss that entirely. He reads “you” and “you” and “your,” and unless someone explains the underlying distinction, he may think everything in the passage is addressed only to Peter individually. But the KJV makes the distinction visible in English. It allows the reader to see that Satan wanted the group, but Christ prayed for the man. That is rich pastoral doctrine. It shows the devil’s desire to scatter and sift the whole flock, while Christ deals personally with the failing servant who will later strengthen his brethren. The grammar carries doctrine.

The NKJV’s removal of this distinction is not harmless. It may seem small to someone skimming the page, but those who study the Bible know better. Small grammatical distinctions can open large doctrinal doors. The devil does not have to erase the entire passage to make the reader poorer. He only has to blur the distinctions. When a version flattens singular and plural into one form, it forces the English reader to rely more heavily on context, notes, teachers, or original-language tools. The King James Bible gives the distinction directly. That is not obsolete junk. That is God-honoring accuracy.

### **Chapter 5: The KJV Educates the Reader Instead of Surrendering to Ignorance**

One of the greatest virtues of the King James Bible is that it educates the reader. It does not flatter ignorance. It does not assume the modern reader is the standard. It lifts the reader upward. It teaches vocabulary, doctrine, grammar, reverence, and precision. A child who grows up reading the King James Bible learns words he would never learn from shallow religious paraphrases. He learns to think carefully. He learns that Scripture has texture. He learns that words matter. He learns that God’s Book is not a disposable paperback written to match the slang of his age. It is holy Scripture.

The modern revision philosophy often works in the opposite direction. It assumes the reader’s present limitations should govern the form of the Bible. If people do not know “thou,” remove it. If they do not know “propitiation,” replace it or explain it away. If they struggle with “charity,” substitute a more common word. If they do not understand “quicken,” make it smoother. But this approach slowly trains Christians to think the Bible should come down to them rather than they should be taught up to the Bible. That is backwards. Nehemiah 8:8 says they “gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” The answer was teaching. The answer was not continual revision.

There is also hypocrisy in the complaint. People learn technical language for every hobby they care about. They learn sports terminology, legal terms, business terms, medical terms, technology terms, video game terms, musical terms, and political terms. They learn brand names, celebrity names, app names, slang phrases, and useless trivia. But when the King James Bible asks them to learn the difference between “thee” and “ye,” suddenly the task is

unbearable. That is not an intellectual problem. That is a spiritual problem. A man will learn what he loves. “Thy word is very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it” (Psalm 119:140). If the word is loved, its words will not be despised.

### **Chapter 6: The Hymnbook Hypocrisy**

The same people who complain about “thee” and “thou” in the King James Bible often sing hymns containing the same language without a second thought. “How Great Thou Art” remains beloved. “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” remains beloved. “Be Thou My Vision” remains beloved. Churches do not generally demand that these songs be rewritten into “How Great You Are,” “Come You Fount,” and “Be You My Vision.” Why not? Because people instinctively know that the older wording carries dignity, beauty, reverence, and familiarity. They tolerate it in music because it feels sacred. Yet when the same kind of language appears in the Bible, modern version defenders act like it is a public emergency.

That reveals a deeper issue. Men are often more careful with human tradition than with the words of God. They will preserve old hymn language for sentimental reasons but revise Bible language for marketing reasons. They will protect the flow of a song but not the precision of Scripture. They will say it feels wrong to change “How Great Thou Art,” but they have no fear about changing the Book from which the God of that hymn is known. That is a crooked scale. Proverbs 11:1 says, “A false balance is abomination to the LORD.” If older language can be preserved in hymns because it is meaningful, then older language can be preserved in the Bible when it is accurate.

The issue is not that hymns have authority over Scripture. The issue is that the hymnbook exposes the excuse. If “thou” is truly impossible for modern people, why do they sing it? If older wording is always a barrier, why do they keep it where they want to keep it? The answer is that the objection is selective. It is not really about comprehension alone. It is about whether men believe the Bible should be left alone. The old pronouns in the KJV are not harder than countless words people learn every day. The difference is that the devil wants Christians to suspect the Bible and trust the revision committee. He does not care if they keep old words in songs. He cares if they keep exact words in Scripture.

### **Chapter 7: The Old Pronouns Help Preserve Final Authority**

Final authority is not merely a slogan. It involves the actual words on the page. If the words can be flattened, revised, modernized, footnoted, and replaced whenever a committee decides, then authority has shifted from the Book to the revisers. The pronoun issue may look small, but it demonstrates the larger pattern. The KJV preserves distinctions. The NKJV removes them. The KJV gives the English reader grammatical information. The NKJV often requires the reader to

look elsewhere to recover it. The KJV says, in effect, "Here are the words." The NKJV says, "Here is a smoother version of the words." That smoothing comes at a cost.

A Bible believer should not be ashamed of a Book that makes distinctions modern English does not commonly make. That is a strength. It means the Bible is not held hostage by the decline of everyday speech. If the culture loses precision, the church should not rejoice when the Bible is made to match the loss. The church should preserve precision and teach it. The world does not get to set the standard for God's words. The Bible says, "Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set" (Proverbs 22:28). The old pronouns are not the foundation of preservation, but they are part of the precision of the preserved English text. They are landmarks in the sentence that tell the reader where one person ends and the group begins.

That is why "thee," "thou," and "ye" are not obsolete junk. They are part of the King James Bible's exactness. They show that older does not always mean inferior, and modern does not always mean clearer. They expose the false claim that the NKJV simply improved readability without loss. They give the Bible believer an easy, practical example of the leaven principle. A little change may look harmless, but it spreads. First the pronouns go because they sound old. Then doctrinal terms go because they sound hard. Then strong words go because they sound harsh. Then verses get questioned because manuscripts differ. Then final authority is gone. That is why the line must be drawn early.

### **Conclusion: Do Not Let the Revisers Mock Precision**

The King James Bible's pronouns should not be mocked. They should be taught. A Bible believer should not cringe when some modern version defender snickers at "thee" and "thou." He should explain the difference and watch the objection lose its teeth. The old pronouns preserve singular and plural distinctions that modern English often hides. They help the reader understand passages like John 3:7 and Luke 22:31-32. They give the English Bible a precision that the NKJV removes in the name of clarity. That is not an improvement. That is a downgrade with a modern smile.

The real question is not whether the words are common in daily speech. The real question is whether they serve the text. They do. The Bible is allowed to have words that people must learn. Doctors have words people must learn. Lawyers have words people must learn. Mechanics, soldiers, pilots, musicians, farmers, programmers, and builders all use words that require learning. But when God's Book uses words that require learning, suddenly the modern church acts like learning is oppression. That attitude did not come from the Holy Ghost. The Bible says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God" (2 Timothy 2:15). Study is not a curse. It is a command.

The New King James Leaven works by convincing people that loss is gain. It removes precision and calls it clarity. It flattens distinctions and calls it updating. It alters the reader's relationship to the text and calls it help. But the old Book still stands with its pronouns, its precision, its authority, its power, and its fruit. The people who would never dare change "How Great Thou Art" should stop pretending the Bible is improved by changing the words God preserved. "Thee," "thou," and "ye" are not obsolete junk. They are grammatical tools in the sharpest English Bible ever printed, and the saints would do better to learn them than to let a modern committee take them away.

prophets who had weaknesses, apostles who had failures, kings who had sins, scribes who had human limitations, and even a donkey to rebuke a mad prophet. The issue is not whether the instrument was perfect. The issue is whether God is faithful. If God can inspire His words, He can preserve His words. If He can preserve His words, He can put them in the hands of His people. If He can put them in the hands of His people, He can do it in English.

The New King James Leaven is dangerous because it helps normalize the idea that the Bible in your hand is not final. It uses conservative language while pointing authority back to originals nobody has, manuscript evidence most Christians cannot examine, and scholarly systems that never settle anything. That is not the old path. The old path says, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89), and then receives the preserved Book God put in our hands. The original autographs trap says the word was settled in heaven, written perfectly once on earth, and now waits for scholars to keep sorting it out. That trap must be broken. God did not inspire His words to lose them. He preserved them, and a Bible believer should have enough sense to trust the Book instead of the men who keep correcting it.

### **6 of 15: The New King James Leaven - Hell, Hades, and the Softening of Eternal Judgment**

Hell is not a word that needs perfume sprayed on it. Hell is not a word that needs a scholar standing beside it with a pair of white gloves and a Greek dictionary trying to make it sound less severe to modern ears. Hell is not a word that needs to be wrapped in academic gauze so the sinner can walk past it without smelling the smoke. Hell is a Bible word. Hell is a preaching word. Hell is a warning word. Hell is a word that has burned its way into the conscience of English-speaking people for centuries because the King James Bible put it where it belonged and left it there with no apology. A sinner may not know Greek. He may not know Hebrew. He may not know the difference between Gehenna, Hades, Sheol, Tartarus, or the lake of fire. But he knows enough English to tremble when a preacher opens a King James Bible and says, "The

wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17). That word does not need help. It needs to be believed.

The New King James Version does what modern versions often do. It does not always deny doctrine with a sledgehammer. It changes the sound, shifts the feel, cools the edge, and moves the reader from a preaching word to a classroom word. When the King James Bible says “hell,” the NKJV often gives “Hades” or “Sheol.” The defender of the NKJV will immediately stand up with his little stack of notes and say, “But those are the underlying words.” That may impress a classroom full of men who think a Bible is improved when it sounds less like preaching and more like an academic lecture, but it misses the issue. The issue is not whether there are distinctions in the underlying words. The issue is whether the English Bible should give the English reader a clear, forceful, doctrinally useful word or leave him with transliterated terms that sound technical, distant, mythological, and easier to sidestep. The King James Bible preaches the fire. The NKJV often labels the furnace.

That is the leaven. It does not have to remove eternal judgment to soften it. It can simply change the tone. It can make hell sound like a place in Greek mythology. It can make the doctrine sound like a lexical category instead of a real place where lost men lift up their eyes in torment. The devil does not mind a hell that sounds like a vocabulary lesson. He does not mind a preacher spending half the sermon explaining why the Bible says “Hades” here and “Gehenna” there and “Sheol” somewhere else, as long as nobody in the pew feels the heat. But he hates a King James Bible that says plainly, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments” (Luke 16:23). That sentence does not need a committee to help it. It needs a sinner to fear God.

### **Chapter 1: Hell Is a Preaching Word, Not a Scholarly Decoration**

The King James Bible gives English-speaking people the word “hell” with a force that cannot be mistaken. The word is short, hard, plain, and terrible. It does not drift like a cloud. It strikes like a hammer. When the Bible says, “The sorrows of hell compassed me about” (Psalm 18:5), the reader does not need to wonder whether the writer is speaking about a pleasant intermediate state, a neutral realm of the dead, a mythological underworld, or a vague unseen place. He hears danger. He hears judgment. He hears terror. He hears the word that has warned sinners for centuries. That is not a defect in the King James Bible. That is one of its glories. It speaks English like a sword.

Modern revisers often act as if a word becomes better when it sounds more technical. But technical is not always clearer. “Hades” may be a transliteration, but to the average English reader it does not hit the conscience like “hell.” It sounds like a place in a mythology textbook. It sounds like something a professor explains on a board. It sounds like a term that can be debated without sweat. “Sheol” likewise sounds foreign, distant, and less immediate. A preacher can say

“hell,” and the word lands. A preacher says “Hades,” and half the congregation starts wondering if he is teaching Greek mythology, ancient cosmology, or a seminary lecture on intermediate states. The change may look scholarly, but it can weaken the preaching force.

The Bible does not merely inform sinners. It warns them. It does not merely classify judgment. It alarms the conscience. “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Hell is not an academic concept to be filed under ancient religious vocabulary. It is the terror awaiting the Christ-rejecting sinner. When a Bible replaces the plain English word with a technical transliteration, it may preserve a linguistic label, but it can lose the English force. The King James Bible knew how to speak to plowboys, prisoners, preachers, children, drunkards, kings, and dying men. The modern reviser knows how to impress a committee. There is a difference.

## **Chapter 2: Matthew 16:18 and the Gates of Hell**

Matthew 16:18 in the King James Bible reads, “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” That is a tremendous verse. It is strong, clear, militant, and prophetic. The Lord Jesus Christ speaks of building His church, and the gates of hell themselves cannot prevail against it. The word “hell” gives the verse its English force. The church is not merely standing against a vague unseen realm. It is standing against the whole power of death, darkness, damnation, and satanic opposition. The gates of hell will not win. That verse has encouraged saints, strengthened preachers, and armed the church with confidence.

The NKJV gives “Hades” in that passage. The defender says, “That is more technically exact.” But ask the practical question: does “the gates of Hades” hit the English ear with the same force as “the gates of hell”? It does not. It sounds like something from a mythology unit. It turns a battlefield phrase into a classroom phrase. The King James Bible gives you a war cry. The NKJV gives you a transliteration. The old Bible sounds like a preacher standing in front of the devil with a drawn sword. The new rendering sounds like a footnote escaped into the verse. That is not an improvement for the English-speaking church.

The issue here is not whether a theologian can explain the word behind it. The issue is whether the English Bible should carry the spiritual weight of the passage into the conscience of the reader. The Lord is not merely giving a lexical lesson in Matthew 16:18. He is declaring the invincibility of His church against the powers of darkness. The King James wording has thunder. “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” That is the kind of English that built pulpits and sent missionaries into dark places. “The gates of Hades” may be defended in a classroom, but it does not preach with the same fire. When a change weakens the sound of the trumpet, a Bible believer has a right to mark it.

### **Chapter 3: Luke 16:23 and the Rich Man in Torments**

Luke 16:23 is one of the most terrifying verses in the Bible. The King James Bible says, "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments." That is plain enough to scare a drunk, humble a Pharisee, and make a lost man think twice before he laughs at the preacher. There is no fog in that verse. There is no distant academic tone. The man died, and in hell he lifted up his eyes. He was not asleep. He was not annihilated. He was not in purgatory. He was not in a neutral holding area where everything was vague and harmless. He was in torments. The verse is a burning window into the fate of a lost man.

The NKJV says "Hades" there. Again, the defender rushes in to say, "That is the Greek word." Fine. But the King James Bible translated it into the English word that communicated the doctrinal reality with force. "Hades" does not improve the verse for English readers. It gives them a term that must be explained before it can be felt. "Hell" arrives already loaded with warning. "Hades" arrives needing a lecture. The rich man was not in a Greek myth. He was in a real place of conscious torment. He wanted water. He cried out. He remembered his brothers. He begged for Lazarus to be sent. That is not mythology. That is divine warning.

The devil loves to put distance between the sinner and judgment. One way to do that is to make judgment sound technical. If the verse says "hell," the sinner hears the fire. If it says "Hades," he may hear a term to be studied, qualified, debated, and filed away. A preacher can certainly explain "Hades" and get to the truth, but why force him to recover the punch that the King James Bible already delivered? The Bible believer is not interested in helping the sinner remain comfortable. He is interested in warning him. Luke 16:23 in the King James Bible does not whisper. It burns.

### **Chapter 4: Revelation 1:18 and the Keys of Hell and of Death**

Revelation 1:18 in the King James Bible says, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." That is the risen Christ speaking. He is alive for evermore. He holds the keys. Death does not hold Him. Hell does not hold Him. The devil does not hold Him. The grave could not keep Him. The Lord Jesus Christ stands in resurrection glory with absolute authority over death and hell. That is a mighty verse. It is royal. It is victorious. It is final.

The NKJV says "Hades" there, and again the force is changed. "The keys of Hades and of Death" sounds colder and more technical than "the keys of hell and of death." A man may argue about the underlying term, but the English impact has shifted. The KJV speaks like a king on a battlefield. The NKJV sounds like a scholar labeling a map. This is not a small matter when dealing with Revelation. The book is full of judgment, fire, wrath, beasts, thrones, angels,

trumpets, seals, vials, and the final doom of the wicked. Its language should not be made sterile.

Christ having “the keys of hell and of death” is not a phrase that needs softening. It is a phrase that needs to be preached until sinners understand that all authority belongs to the risen Son of God. He has the keys. He opens and no man shuts. He shuts and no man opens. He conquered death. He holds authority over the unseen world. He will cast death and hell into the lake of fire. The King James Bible keeps the phrase in a form that carries that dread and triumph. The NKJV’s transliteration may be defended by men who love precision as they define it, but the old English word “hell” preserved the preaching force.

### **Chapter 5: Acts 2:27 and the Prophecy of Christ**

Acts 2:27 quotes Psalm 16 and says in the King James Bible, “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.” That is Peter preaching at Pentecost, and he is preaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Scriptures. The Lord’s soul would not be left in hell, and His body would not see corruption. The verse is deep, doctrinal, prophetic, and tied directly to the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It is not a verse for shallow handling.

The NKJV again uses “Hades.” The defender will say this avoids misunderstanding because Christ did not suffer in the place of final torment after death. But the King James Bible did not create confusion. It used the English word “hell” in the broader biblical sense of the unseen world, with context determining the doctrine. Bible words often have ranges of use. That is why Bible study matters. The answer is not to replace the strong English word with a foreign term and then pretend the problem is solved. The answer is to teach the verse. The Lord’s soul was not left in hell. His flesh did not see corruption. He rose again according to the Scriptures.

The King James Bible gives the preacher the tools to teach doctrine while preserving English force. Acts 2 is not a timid chapter. It is Peter standing up and preaching to Israel that they had crucified the Lord and Christ. The words are sharp. The sermon cuts them to the heart. The resurrection is proclaimed with authority. The modern impulse is to smooth the verse and reduce possible discomfort. But Bible preaching is supposed to make men deal with the text, not protect them from it. “Hell” in Acts 2:27 forces the student to study. “Hades” invites him to think the scholar solved the problem by leaving the word untranslated. That is not necessarily clarity. Sometimes it is surrender.

### **Chapter 6: Sheol and the Old Testament Fog Machine**

The NKJV also uses “Sheol” in many Old Testament passages where the King James Bible gives plain English renderings such as “hell,” “grave,” or “pit,” depending on context. Again, the defender says, “Sheol is the Hebrew word.” But that answer proves too much and too little. If

simply reproducing the Hebrew word is the solution, why translate anything? The job of an English Bible is to translate, not to leave the reader collecting Hebrew and Greek terms like souvenirs. A transliteration may be useful in some contexts, but when it replaces a clear English word with a foreign one that must be explained, the claim of greater clarity becomes questionable.

Psalm 9:17 in the King James Bible says, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.” That verse preaches. It warns nations. It warns sinners. It warns rulers, families, churches, and civilizations. The word “hell” belongs there with all its English thunder. Turn that into “Sheol” and the ordinary reader is pushed away from the direct force of the warning. Suddenly the verse feels less like judgment and more like a technical category. That is not how the King James Bible speaks. It puts a sword in the hand, not a glossary in the pocket.

The modern reviser may say he is being more faithful by retaining the Hebrew term, but that kind of argument can become an excuse for not translating with force. The King James translators knew the Hebrew word. They were not ignorant men stumbling around without lexicons. They chose English words according to context, doctrine, and usage. Modern men often act as if leaving the Hebrew or Greek term in place is automatically superior. It is not. Sometimes it is lazy translation. Sometimes it is evasive translation. Sometimes it is academic translation that forgets the Bible is not merely for the classroom. It is for the pulpit, the street corner, the jail cell, the deathbed, and the sinner under conviction.

### **Chapter 7: The Devil Hates Plain Warnings**

The devil hates plain warnings because plain warnings save men from deception. He does not mind religious language when it has been drained of terror. He does not mind men discussing judgment as a theological category. He does not mind footnotes, debates, charts, and terms, as long as the sinner never feels the weight of the wrath to come. But when a preacher opens a King James Bible and says, “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:15), the devil hates that. When he says, “The wicked shall be turned into hell” (Psalm 9:17), the devil hates that. When he says, “in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments” (Luke 16:23), the devil hates that.

That is why softening the vocabulary of judgment matters. A man does not have to deny hell to weaken hell. He can complicate it. He can technicalize it. He can move it into academic vocabulary. He can make it sound less immediate. He can train people to think the English word is too crude, too broad, too old-fashioned, or too imprecise. Then the preacher spends his time apologizing for the word instead of preaching the warning. That is a victory for the wrong side. The Bible believer should not be ashamed of a word God used in the English Bible to warn generations.

The King James Bible is plain where it needs to be plain. It does not hide eternal judgment behind scholarly curtains. It does not make the sinner climb through Hades, Sheol, Gehenna, and Tartarus before he understands that rejecting God ends in fire. Yes, those terms can be studied. Yes, distinctions can be taught. But the English Bible must still preach. The NKJV may offer technical terms, but technical terms can soften the blow. The old Book says “hell,” and the conscience knows it is in trouble. That is not a defect. That is mercy. A warning that burns may save a man from burning.

### **Conclusion: Do Not Cool the Fire**

The New King James Version’s handling of hell-related words shows the deeper problem with modern revision. It often takes a word with English force and replaces it with a term that sounds more technical, distant, and scholarly. “Hell” becomes “Hades.” “Hell” becomes “Sheol.” The defender says this is more precise, but the practical result is often less preaching force. The King James Bible gives the English reader a word that warns. The NKJV often gives him a word that must be unpacked before it burns. That is not always clarity. Sometimes it is a cooling system installed next to the flames.

A Bible believer is not denying that there are underlying words and distinctions worth studying. That is a straw man. Study all you want. Teach the distinctions. Explain the passages. Compare Scripture with Scripture. But do not pretend that replacing the plain English word “hell” with “Hades” or “Sheol” always makes the Bible clearer for ordinary people. It often does the opposite. It makes the warning sound less immediate. It turns the pulpit into a classroom at the very place where a sinner needs the alarm bell. The King James Bible does not need to apologize for saying “hell.” The modern reviser needs to explain why he keeps cooling the word down.

Hell is real. Eternal judgment is real. The lake of fire is real. The rich man in Luke 16 was not in a metaphorical inconvenience. He was in torments. The wicked do not need smoother vocabulary. They need warning. The saints do not need a Bible that explains around the fire until the edge is dulled. They need a Bible that says what God said with force. The old Book still does that. The King James Bible preaches hell so plainly that the devil has spent centuries trying to bury the word under scholarship, sentimentality, and revision. Let the scholars have their fog if they want it. The Bible believer will keep the Book that says “hell” and lets the warning burn.

There are some changes in a Bible that a careless reader will pass over because he is reading too fast, trusting too much, or assuming too quickly that the men who made the change knew what they were doing. That is why this series is necessary. The leaven in the New King James Version is not always painted red and marked with a warning sign. Sometimes it is a word here, a phrase there, a softened edge, a weakened testimony, a doctrinal note moved from the pulpit to the classroom, and a change that looks small until you ask what direction it is moving. Matthew 20:20 is one of those places. The King James Bible says, "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him." The New King James Version changes that to "kneeling down." Now a man with no spiritual discernment will shrug and say, "What is the difference? If she kneeled, she was showing respect." But that is exactly the kind of shrug that gets people into trouble when the words of God are being handled. Worship is not merely posture. Worship is a doctrinal act.

The Bible does not treat worship as a light matter. Worship belongs to God. Exodus 34:14 says, "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." Matthew 4:10 says, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." When angels are wrongly approached with worship, they refuse it. Revelation 19:10 says, "See thou do it not." Revelation 22:9 says, "See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant." When men tried to treat the apostles as divine, they rejected it. Acts 14:15 says, "Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you." But when men and women worshipped Jesus Christ in the Gospels, He received it. That is not a side detail. That is a witness to His deity. The Lord Jesus Christ is not merely a teacher, prophet, rabbi, healer, reformer, or Jewish miracle worker. He is God manifest in the flesh. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). So when a Bible changes "worshipping him" to "kneeling down," it is not merely modernizing a posture. It is weakening a testimony.

The New King James defender will try to make this a word-study argument. He will say the underlying word can involve bowing, prostrating oneself, or paying homage. He will try to drag the issue into a safe classroom where nobody has to sweat under the doctrine. But the King James Bible already handled the issue in English. It said "worshipping him." It placed the act where it belongs in the English conscience. And in the context of the Gospels, where Christ repeatedly receives worship, that word is a doctrinal trumpet. The NKJV trades the trumpet for a posture description. A man can kneel before a king without worshipping him as God. A man can kneel before a governor, a conqueror, a father, a judge, a soldier, or even an idol. Kneeling describes the body. Worship describes the heart and the object. The KJV gives the doctrine. The NKJV gives the posture. That is not making the verse stronger. It is making it safer for unbelief.

## **Chapter 1: Worship Is Not Just Body Language**

The first thing that has to be settled is that worship is more than physical position. A man can kneel and still not worship. A man can stand and worship. A man can bow outwardly while his heart is far from God. The prophets rebuked people who had religious posture but no spiritual truth. Isaiah 29:13 says, “this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.” The Lord Jesus quoted that very thing against religious hypocrites. So when the Bible uses the word “worship,” it is not merely describing knees hitting dirt. It is identifying an act of reverence directed toward the object of worship. That distinction matters, especially when the object is Jesus Christ.

A Bible that says someone came “worshipping him” is telling you more than the angle of the person’s body. It tells you the nature of the act. It tells you that Christ is being approached with reverence that belongs to deity. It joins the testimony of other Gospel passages where Jesus is worshipped and does not refuse it. That is doctrinally rich. The NKJV’s “kneeling down” reduces the act to visible movement. It may describe something that happened physically, but it does not carry the same theological weight. If a man says, “He kneeled before the king,” you know his posture. If a man says, “He worshipped the King,” you know something about the worth and identity of the King.

This is how leaven works. The change does not have to deny the deity of Christ openly. It simply has to lower one witness from worship to posture. It does not have to say Jesus is not God. It can just make the verse less direct. It can leave other passages intact and still weaken this one. That is why people who say, “No doctrine is affected,” often do not know what they are talking about. Doctrine is not only affected when a whole paragraph is deleted. Doctrine can be affected when a witness is softened, a word is weakened, or a verse that once spoke plainly is made less sharp. “Worshipping him” is a doctrinal witness. “Kneeling down” is a physical description. A Bible believer should be able to tell the difference.

## **Chapter 2: Christ Received What Angels Refused**

One of the strongest arguments for the deity of Christ in the New Testament is that Jesus receives worship, while holy angels and true servants of God refuse it. That is not accidental. In Revelation 19:10, John falls at the angel’s feet to worship him, and the angel immediately says, “See thou do it not.” In Revelation 22:8-9, John falls again before the angel, and again the angel says, “See thou do it not.” Then he says, “worship God.” That is the Bible line. A holy creature refuses worship. God receives worship. If Jesus Christ receives worship, then the Bible is declaring something about who He is. He is not merely a creature, not merely a messenger, not merely a prophet, and not merely a servant. He is the Lord.

The Gospels repeatedly show Jesus receiving worship. Matthew 2:11 says the wise men “fell down, and worshipped him.” Matthew 8:2 says, “there came a leper and worshipped him.”

Matthew 9:18 says a ruler “worshipped him.” Matthew 14:33 says those in the ship “came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.” Matthew 15:25 says the woman of Canaan “came she and worshipped him.” Matthew 28:9 says the disciples “held him by the feet, and worshipped him.” Matthew 28:17 says, “And when they saw him, they worshipped him.” Luke 24:52 says, “And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.” John 9:38 says, “Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.” That is not a weak testimony. That is a line of witnesses.

Now look at Matthew 20:20. The King James Bible keeps the same doctrinal category: “worshipping him.” The NKJV changes this one to “kneeling down.” Somebody may say, “But it is only one place.” That is the voice of a man who does not understand how testimony works. If there are ten witnesses in a courtroom and one of them is silenced, the defense attorney says, “It is only one witness.” The prosecutor says, “Why are you trying to silence any of them?” The KJV keeps the witness speaking. The NKJV tones it down. And when the issue is the deity of Christ, Bible believers should not be eager to excuse any weakening of the testimony.

### **Chapter 3: Matthew 20:20 Is Not a Throwaway Verse**

Matthew 20:20 is not a throwaway verse. It comes in a passage where the mother of Zebedee’s children comes with her sons, desiring a certain thing of Christ. The request itself is misguided. She asks for her sons to sit on Christ’s right hand and left hand in His kingdom. The Lord corrects the ambition and teaches about suffering, service, and the Father’s authority. But before the request is made, the King James Bible says she came “worshipping him.” That matters. Even in a scene where human ambition and misunderstanding are present, Christ is still approached as the rightful King. The woman may not understand the cup. She may not understand the cost. Her sons may not understand what they are asking. But the One before them is worthy of worship.

The NKJV’s “kneeling down” leaves the reader with an outward gesture. The KJV gives the spiritual act. The difference matters because the entire scene is about approaching the Messiah with a request involving His kingdom. This is not someone asking directions on the road. This is a mother bringing a kingdom petition before the King. In the King James Bible, she worships Him. The language is fitting. It places Christ where He belongs. He is the King whose kingdom is coming, the Son of man who will give His life a ransom for many, the Lord who has authority to speak of glory, suffering, service, and the cup. To reduce the opening act to posture is to flatten the scene.

This is not the kind of change a Bible believer should shrug off. If the KJV had said “kneeling down” and the NKJV had changed it to “worshipping him,” the modern version crowd would probably call that an interpretive expansion. But when the KJV says “worshipping him” and the

NKJV changes it to “kneeling down,” suddenly they call it accuracy. That tells you the direction of their instincts. They are more comfortable reducing worship to posture than preserving the stronger testimony. That is the kind of thing that needs to be marked. It may look subtle, but subtle does not mean safe. The serpent was subtle too.

#### **Chapter 4: Kneeling Can Be Given to Men, Worship Belongs to God**

The Bible contains many scenes of men bowing, kneeling, or showing reverence before other men. There are cultural gestures of respect, submission, fear, petition, and honor. A man might bow before a king. A servant might fall before a master. A conquered man might kneel before a ruler. A petitioner might bow before someone in authority. Those outward acts do not necessarily mean worship in the divine sense. That is why replacing “worshipping him” with “kneeling down” matters. “Kneeling down” is a category that can be applied to many settings. “Worshipping him,” in the context of Christ receiving the act, carries doctrinal glory.

When Satan tempted the Lord Jesus Christ, the issue was worship. Matthew 4:9 records Satan saying, “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” The Lord answered in Matthew 4:10, “Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Worship belongs to God. That is the line. Satan wants it. God alone deserves it. Holy angels refuse it. True apostles reject it. Jesus Christ receives it. That is not a minor point in the New Testament. That is one of the clearest demonstrations that Christ is God.

So when the King James Bible says in Matthew 20:20 that this woman came “worshipping him,” the English reader sees a divine witness. When the NKJV says “kneeling down,” the witness is weakened into an action that could be offered in many situations. The defender may argue that the underlying term can include bowing or prostration. But translation is not merely dumping a range of meanings into English and choosing the safest-sounding physical one. Context matters. Theology matters. The Bible’s own pattern matters. In the Gospels, when men and women worship Christ, that word should not be lowered without a fight. The King James Bible gives Him the honor. The NKJV gives Him the gesture.

#### **Chapter 5: The Direction of the Change Is the Problem**

Sometimes the issue is not one isolated change, but the direction of the change. Bible corruption has a direction. It tends to weaken, soften, blur, question, or relocate authority. It may not do all of that in every verse, but the stream has a flow. When a change moves from “worshipping him” to “kneeling down,” the direction is away from explicit theological witness and toward neutral physical description. That is the problem. A Bible believer does not need to pretend that every NKJV verse is equally corrupt or that every change is equally dramatic. The

question is whether the changes tend in a suspicious direction, especially on passages touching Christ, salvation, hell, corruption, and authority.

The devil does not always remove doctrine in one swing. He sandpapers it. He softens the corners. He changes one word. He inserts a note. He lowers a term. He makes a passage less offensive to unbelief. He moves a witness from the main road to the back alley. Over time, the reader receives a Bible that still says many true things, but with less edge, less certainty, less doctrinal force, and more dependence on scholars. That is the New King James Leaven. It is not always a bomb. Sometimes it is yeast. It works quietly through the lump.

This is why the “no major doctrine is affected” line is so dishonest. Doctrine is not only affected when a heretic can build an entire false system from one changed verse. Doctrine is affected when a true witness is weakened. Doctrine is affected when a strong word is exchanged for a weaker one. Doctrine is affected when a verse that once burned now merely glows. If a man removed one brick from the wall of a house, he might say, “The house is still standing.” Yes, but why are you removing bricks? If a man dulls one edge of a sword, he might say, “The sword can still cut.” Yes, but why are you dulling it? If a version changes “worshipping him” to “kneeling down,” the question is not whether all Christology disappears. The question is why the witness was weakened at all.

### **Chapter 6: The Deity of Christ Does Not Need Soft Lighting**

The deity of Jesus Christ is not a doctrine that needs to be handled timidly. The Bible thunders it. John 1:1 says, “the Word was God.” John 1:14 says, “the Word was made flesh.” John 20:28 records Thomas saying to Christ, “My Lord and my God.” Colossians 2:9 says, “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Titus 2:13 speaks of “the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” First Timothy 3:16 says, “God was manifest in the flesh.” Hebrews 1:8 says unto the Son, “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” The Bible does not blush when it identifies Jesus Christ as God. It does not whisper. It does not ask permission from Unitarians, Arians, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Muslims, modernists, or scholars.

That is why every witness to Christ’s deity should be treasured, not trimmed. When Jesus is worshipped, that matters. When He receives what belongs to God alone, that matters. When He is approached in a way holy angels refuse, that matters. A Bible believer does not need to be embarrassed by worship language attached to Christ. He should glory in it. The Lord Jesus is not merely worthy of respect. He is worthy of worship. Revelation 5:12 says, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain.” The Lamb receives honor, glory, blessing, and worship in heaven. Why should an English Bible soften worship on earth?

The NKJV’s change in Matthew 20:20 may not be the most famous example of modern Bible corruption, but it perfectly displays the subtlety of the issue. It gives you a change that many

will dismiss because they do not feel the doctrinal weight of worship. It provides just enough plausible explanation to satisfy the cautious. It leaves enough Christology elsewhere that defenders can say, "See, the doctrine is still there." But again, the question remains: why change worship to kneeling? Why reduce the testimony? Why take a word that exalts Christ and replace it with a word that merely describes posture? The deity of Christ does not need soft lighting. It needs the full blaze of every witness God gave.

### **Chapter 7: The King James Bible Gives Christ the Stronger Witness**

The King James Bible consistently gives Jesus Christ the stronger witness. It is not afraid of worship. It is not afraid of God manifest in the flesh. It is not afraid of hell, blood, judgment, wrath, righteousness, corruption, or the sharp edges of doctrine. That is one reason the old Book has such power. It does not sound like it was produced by a committee trying not to offend unbelief. It sounds like a Book that knows who its Author is. When it says "worshipping him," it says it plainly. When it says "God was manifest in the flesh," it says it plainly. When it says "the only begotten Son," it says it plainly. When it says "the blood of God," in Acts 20:28, it gives you the doctrine without apology.

The NKJV often keeps enough of that force to look safe, but then weakens it in places like this. That is what makes it dangerous. If every verse were obviously corrupt, Bible believers would reject it immediately. But the NKJV often stands close to the KJV until a key word changes, a note appears, a doctrine is softened, or a distinction is removed. That is why a fine-toothed comb is necessary. The leaven is not always lying in the middle of the table. Sometimes it is baked into the loaf. The only way to expose it is to cut into the text and see what has been changed.

Matthew 20:20 is one of those cuts. The KJV says the woman came "worshipping him." The NKJV says "kneeling down." That is a downgrade. It moves from the theological to the physical, from worship to posture, from deity-witness to respectful gesture. The King James Bible gives Christ the stronger witness. The NKJV gives Him the safer wording. A Bible believer should not be impressed by safer wording when the subject is the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not just a king to kneel before. He is God to be worshipped.

### **Conclusion: Do Not Trade Worship for Posture**

The change from "worshipping him" to "kneeling down" is not a harmless modernization. It is a doctrinal weakening. Worship is not merely a posture. Worship belongs to God. The Bible shows angels refusing it, apostles rejecting it, Satan desiring it, and Jesus Christ receiving it. That makes every worship passage in the Gospels important. A version that reduces one of those passages to kneeling has not helped the reader. It has lowered the witness. The careless reader may not notice. The Bible believer should.

This is what the New King James Leaven does. It often moves in small steps. It does not always announce the damage. It does not always remove the doctrine entirely. It changes the feel, the force, the direction, and the edge. In Matthew 20:20, it takes a word that testifies to Christ's worthiness and replaces it with a word that describes bodily motion. That is not stronger. That is weaker. That is not clearer. That is less doctrinal. That is not reverence for the King James Bible. That is revision of a witness God had already preserved in plain English.

The Lord Jesus Christ is worthy of worship. He received worship because He is God manifest in the flesh. He is the eternal Word, the only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. No Bible believer should be willing to trade a clear worship witness for a posture description and then be told to calm down because no doctrine is affected. The doctrine is right there in the word. The King James Bible says "worshipping him." The NKJV says "kneeling down." That is the difference between a trumpet and a lowered volume. Keep the trumpet. Keep the old Book. Keep the witness that gives Jesus Christ the honor He is due.

### **8 of 15: The New King James Leaven - Hebrews 2:16 and the Attack on the Incarnation**

Hebrews 2:16 is one of those verses where the New King James Version shows its hand. The King James Bible says, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." That is not vague. That is not weak. That is not a verse that needs a committee to come along with a wet rag and wipe the doctrine off the window. The verse is talking about the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is talking about the Son of God taking on real human nature. It is talking about the eternal Word entering into the seed line of Abraham. It is talking about Christ identifying Himself, not with angels, but with the seed of Abraham, so that He might suffer, bleed, die, rise again, and become a merciful and faithful high priest for His people. Then along comes the New King James Version and changes the thought into "He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham." That is not just a style update. That is not merely removing "verily." That is not just making old English easier. That is changing the doctrinal emphasis of the verse.

The defender of the NKJV will rush in with a Greek note in one hand and a smirk in the other and say, "Well, the word can mean to take hold of, to help, to aid." Fine. Let him talk. The issue is not whether men can argue over a lexical range. The issue is what the verse is doing in Hebrews 2 and what the King James Bible preserves in English. The context is not a general statement about Jesus helping people. Of course He helps people. The whole Bible teaches that. The context is that Christ was made "a little lower than the angels" (Hebrews 2:9), that He took part of "flesh and blood" (Hebrews 2:14), that through death He destroyed "him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14), and that He was made like unto His brethren so He could be “a merciful and faithful high priest” (Hebrews 2:17). The chapter is not merely about assistance. It is about incarnation, kinship, blood, death, priesthood, and redemption. The KJV wording fits that context like a sword in a sheath. The NKJV wording pulls the verse away from the incarnation emphasis and makes it sound like a general helping ministry.

The devil hates the incarnation. Never forget that. He hates “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16). He hates “the Word was made flesh” (John 1:14). He hates “made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Romans 1:3). He hates “made of a woman, made under the law” (Galatians 4:4). He hates the miracle that the eternal Son of God stepped down into human flesh without ceasing to be God, took upon Him a real body, real blood, real humanity, real suffering, and went to Calvary as the last Adam and the promised seed. The devil has attacked that doctrine from the beginning through Gnostics, Arians, modernists, cults, philosophers, and Bible correctors. So when a version weakens a verse that speaks directly to Christ taking on the seed of Abraham, Bible believers should not yawn. They should mark it. They should expose it. They should call it what it is: leaven.

### **Chapter 1: Hebrews 2 Is About Christ Entering Flesh and Blood**

Hebrews 2 is not floating in the air as a generic chapter about divine kindness. It is one of the great incarnation chapters in the New Testament. The writer of Hebrews is showing that the Lord Jesus Christ, though above angels in His person and glory, was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death. Hebrews 2:9 says, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.” That statement sets the context. The Son of God did not become an angel. He did not assume angelic nature. He did not enter the ranks of cherubim or seraphim. He came down into flesh and blood. Why? “For the suffering of death.” Angels do not die as men die. Angels do not shed blood for sinners. Angels are not kinsmen redeemers of Adam’s race. Christ came as man to die for men.

Then Hebrews 2:14 says, “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.” There is the doctrine again. Flesh and blood. Not a phantom. Not an appearance. Not a temporary costume. Not divine influence resting on a mere man. Not an angelic spirit pretending to be human. He “took part of the same.” The Lord Jesus Christ entered real humanity. He had a real body. He hungered. He thirsted. He slept. He wept. He suffered. He bled. He died. That is the incarnation tied directly to redemption. The next words are, “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” The incarnation was not an isolated miracle for theological decoration. It was the necessary path to Calvary.

That is why Hebrews 2:16 in the KJV belongs exactly where it stands: “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” The verse continues the thought of taking part in flesh and blood. It identifies what Christ did not take and what He did take. He did not take the nature of angels. He took the seed of Abraham. That is incarnation language. That is lineal, covenantal, human, Messianic language. The NKJV’s “give aid” wording does not carry the same weight in that context. It may be true that Christ gives aid, but that is not the same as saying He took on Him the seed of Abraham. A helper can stand outside the pit and pull you up. The Lord Jesus did more than help from a distance. He came down into the pit of human flesh and blood to redeem.

## **Chapter 2: The KJV Protects the Contrast Between Angels and Abraham’s Seed**

The contrast in Hebrews 2:16 is sharp in the King James Bible. Christ did not take on Him the nature of angels. He took on Him the seed of Abraham. That contrast matters because Hebrews opens by showing the Son’s superiority to angels. Hebrews 1:4 says He was “made so much better than the angels.” Hebrews 1:6 says, “let all the angels of God worship him.” Hebrews 1:8 calls the Son God: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.” Then Hebrews 2 shows that this same glorious Son was made lower than the angels for the suffering of death. The contrast is intentional. Angels worship Him, but He does not become one of them. He is above them, yet He comes below them in the incarnation to redeem men.

The KJV wording preserves that contrast beautifully. “He took not on him the nature of angels.” That is direct. It tells you what kind of nature He did not assume. Then it says, “but he took on him the seed of Abraham.” That tells you the human line into which He came. It connects the incarnation to the Abrahamic promises. It connects Christ to Genesis, covenant, Israel, Messiah, the promises, and the seed line. It is not just that Christ is generally helpful to Abraham’s descendants. It is that He entered that line. He came as the promised seed. “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made... And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Galatians 3:16). Hebrews 2:16 in the KJV harmonizes with that perfectly.

The NKJV wording changes the contrast from assumed nature to giving aid. “He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.” That may establish a distinction in who receives help, but it does not establish the same doctrinal contrast in assumed nature. It moves from incarnation to assistance. It moves from what Christ took upon Himself to what Christ does for others. The reader is no longer staring at the miracle of the Son taking human seed. He is looking at the kindness of Christ toward Abraham’s seed. Again, that is true in a general sense, but it is weaker in this text. The KJV gives the incarnation. The NKJV gives assistance. The difference is not minor.

## **Chapter 3: The Seed of Abraham Is Not a Throwaway Phrase**

The phrase “the seed of Abraham” is loaded with Bible doctrine. It reaches back into Genesis and forward into the gospel. God promised Abraham a seed. Genesis 22:18 says, “And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Paul identifies that seed as Christ in Galatians 3:16. The Lord Jesus Christ comes through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, David, and Mary. He is not a random human appearing in history. He is the promised seed in the promised line fulfilling the promises of God. Matthew 1:1 opens the New Testament by saying, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” The Holy Ghost did not put Abraham there for decoration.

When Hebrews 2:16 says in the KJV, “he took on him the seed of Abraham,” it ties the incarnation directly to that promised line. It shows Christ identifying Himself with the covenant people through whom salvation comes. It anchors His humanity in prophetic history. It connects Him to the promises, to Israel, to the priesthood argument of Hebrews, and to the redemption of those who are sanctified. The wording is rich. It is precise. It does more than say Jesus helps Abraham’s seed. It says He took that seed upon Him. That is a deeper statement.

The NKJV’s “give aid” wording weakens that connection. It turns the seed of Abraham into the object of assistance rather than the nature or line Christ took upon Himself. That is not the same emphasis. A man can give aid to someone without becoming his kinsman. A doctor can give aid to a patient without taking his nature. A king can give aid to subjects without joining their family. A rich man can give aid to the poor without becoming poor. But Christ did not merely aid from outside. Second Corinthians 8:9 says, “though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.” John 1:14 says, “the Word was made flesh.” Galatians 4:4 says He was “made of a woman, made under the law.” Hebrews 2:16 in the KJV stands in that glorious line. The NKJV wording steps away from it.

#### **Chapter 4: The Incarnation Is the Foundation of His Priesthood**

Hebrews 2 does not stop with Christ taking flesh and blood. It moves directly to His priesthood. Hebrews 2:17 says, “Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest.” That “wherefore” matters. It connects what came before to what follows. Because Christ took part in flesh and blood, because He did not take the nature of angels but took the seed of Abraham, because He was made like His brethren, He can function as the perfect high priest. His priesthood is not detached from His incarnation. It depends upon it. He represents men because He became man. He suffered as man. He was tempted as man. He died as man. He rose as the man Christ Jesus.

The KJV wording in verse 16 prepares perfectly for verse 17. He took the seed of Abraham, and therefore He was made like unto His brethren. That is the flow. The NKJV’s “give aid” wording disrupts that flow. It says He gives aid to the seed of Abraham, then verse 17 says He had to be

made like His brethren. The doctrine can still be found in the chapter, but verse 16 no longer carries the same incarnation weight in the argument. It has been softened and redirected. That is exactly how leaven works. It does not erase the whole loaf. It changes the texture.

Christ's priesthood requires real humanity. Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." That is not true of an angel. That is not true of a phantom. That is not true of a mere divine appearance. It is true of the incarnate Son of God. First Timothy 2:5 says, "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." The mediator is man, not because He ceased to be God, but because He took human nature into union with His divine person. Hebrews 2:16 in the KJV directly supports that line of doctrine. The NKJV weakens the verse at the very place where the doctrine should shine.

### **Chapter 5: Christ Had to Be Man to Die for Men**

The incarnation is not optional theology. If Christ did not truly become man, He could not truly die for men. Blood atonement requires blood. Hebrews 9:22 says, "without shedding of blood is no remission." God as God does not bleed. Angels do not provide human blood atonement. A spirit does not hang on a cross with nails through hands and feet. The eternal Son took flesh and blood so that He could die. That is why Hebrews 2:14 says He took part of flesh and blood, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." The incarnation is aimed at the cross. The cradle points to Calvary.

The KJV's "he took on him the seed of Abraham" reinforces that Christ came into real human lineage to die as the promised Redeemer. He did not take on angelic nature because angels were not the race being redeemed through a kinsman redeemer. He took human nature. He took Abraham's seed. He came through the line of promise. He was circumcised. He fulfilled the law. He offered Himself. He tasted death for every man. Hebrews 2:9 says He tasted death. Hebrews 2:14 says He destroyed the devil through death. Hebrews 2:17 says He made reconciliation for the sins of the people. Every part of that depends on real incarnation.

The NKJV's "give aid" wording does not deny that Christ died, but it weakens the verse that directly states the assumption of human seed. That matters. A Bible does not have to deny Calvary to weaken the path to Calvary. It can simply blur the incarnation language leading there. The devil hates the blood, but he also hates the body that shed the blood. He hates the virgin birth. He hates the seed of the woman. He hates the seed of Abraham. He hates the Son of David. He hates God manifest in the flesh. He hates every verse that places the eternal Son inside real human nature. Any version that weakens one of those witnesses deserves to be examined under a bright light.

### **Chapter 6: This Is Not Merely a Lexicon Argument**

A Bible corrector loves to hide behind lexicons when a doctrinal change gets exposed. He acts as if quoting a lexical possibility ends the discussion. It does not. Translation is not merely a mechanical act of grabbing one possible meaning from a list and dropping it into English. Context governs meaning. Doctrine governs understanding. Scripture interprets Scripture. The question is not, "Can someone defend 'give aid' from a lexical angle?" The question is, "Does 'give aid' preserve the doctrine and flow of Hebrews 2 as strongly as the King James wording?" The answer is no.

The KJV translators were not ignorant of the word. They were not theological hillbillies wandering around without dictionaries. They knew the languages, and more importantly, they had reverence for the Book. They translated the verse in a way that fits the chapter's emphasis on Christ taking flesh and blood and being made like His brethren. Modern men love to treat the KJV as if it was produced by men who needed twentieth-century committees to rescue their work. That is laughable. The King James Bible has more spiritual instinct in one verse than many modern committees have in a whole conference room.

The obsession with possible meanings can become a way to avoid the received meaning in the passage. If a word has a range, the translator must choose. The choice matters. In Hebrews 2:16, the KJV chooses a rendering that directly supports incarnation. The NKJV chooses one that emphasizes aid. That is a shift. A man can say the shift is defensible. A Bible believer can say the shift is doctrinally weaker. Both cannot be treated as equally harmless when the issue is the person and work of Christ. The KJV gives the stronger reading in English. The NKJV gives the safer committee reading. The choice reveals a philosophy.

## **Chapter 7: The Devil Attacks Christ by Blurring His Person**

Most major heresies attack the person of Christ. Some deny His deity. Some deny His humanity. Some divide His person. Some confuse His natures. Some make Him a created being. Some make Him a mere man. Some make Him a spirit-being who only appeared human. Some make Him one god among many. Some make Him a prophet but not God. The devil knows that if he can corrupt the doctrine of Christ's person, the gospel collapses. A false Christ cannot save. A Christ who is not God cannot redeem. A Christ who is not man cannot represent men. A Christ who is not both God and man in one person cannot be the mediator.

That is why incarnation passages must be guarded. John said, "every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:3). Second John 7 warns of deceivers who "confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." The incarnation is a test of truth and error. It is not a side issue. It is a battlefield. Hebrews 2:16 in the KJV stands on that battlefield with a drawn sword: Christ did not take the nature of angels. He took the seed of

Abraham. That is clear testimony. The NKJV puts that sword down and hands the reader a general statement about giving aid.

A Bible believer should never be casual when a verse touching Christ's person is weakened. The modern version crowd says, "You can still prove the incarnation elsewhere." That is not the point. If a burglar steals one gun from your house, you do not say, "I still have others." You ask why he was in your house. If a man removes one witness from the stand, you do not say, "There are more witnesses." You ask why that witness was silenced. If a version weakens one incarnation testimony, you do not say, "We can still prove the doctrine." You ask why the testimony was weakened. The New King James Leaven works by making Christians accept that kind of loss as insignificant. It is not insignificant.

### **Conclusion: Keep the Incarnation Where the KJV Puts It**

Hebrews 2:16 in the King James Bible is a strong incarnation verse. "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." That wording fits the whole chapter. It fits Christ being made lower than the angels. It fits His taking part of flesh and blood. It fits His suffering of death. It fits His priesthood. It fits His kinship with His brethren. It fits the seed promises made to Abraham. It fits the doctrine that the eternal Son of God entered real human nature to redeem sinners. That is not a verse to be softened into generic assistance language.

The NKJV's "give aid" rendering moves the reader away from the strongest doctrinal emphasis of the passage. It may sound smoother to modern ears, and it may satisfy men who like to argue lexical range, but it does not preach the incarnation like the King James Bible. It changes the thought from what Christ took upon Himself to what Christ does for others. Christ certainly helps. Christ certainly succours. Christ certainly aids His people. But Hebrews 2 is showing that He helps by becoming one of us in flesh and blood, apart from sin, so that He can die, rise, and serve as high priest. The KJV preserves that doctrine in the verse itself.

This is why the New King James Leaven must be exposed. The issue is not one isolated word in one isolated verse. The issue is a pattern of changes that weaken force, blur doctrine, soften edges, and train people to accept "close enough" as good enough. But close enough is not good enough when dealing with the person of Jesus Christ. The old Book says He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Keep that. Preach that. Believe that. Defend that. The devil hates God manifest in the flesh, and Bible believers ought to hate every change that makes that doctrine less plain.

## **9 of 15: The New King James Leaven - Matthew 7:14 and the Gospel Made "Difficult"**

Matthew 7:14 is one of those verses where a small change in wording can create a large problem in doctrine. The King James Bible says, "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." That is clean, sharp, and doctrinally safe. The gate is strait. The way is narrow. There are not many ways to God. There are not many saving gospels. There are not many doors into life. There is one Saviour, one Mediator, one cross, one blood atonement, one gospel of the grace of God, one door, one way, one truth, and one life. The verse is not teaching that salvation is a difficult religious climb accomplished by human effort. It is teaching that the way to life is narrow because it is exclusive. Jesus Christ is the way. He did not say, "I am one of the ways." He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). The narrowness is not a ladder of works. It is the exclusiveness of Christ.

The New King James Version changes Matthew 7:14 into language that says, "narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life." That word "difficult" is not a harmless little synonym. It can bend the verse in a dangerous direction, especially in the hands of people already confused about salvation, discipleship, works, endurance, sacraments, surrender, commandments, and religious performance. Salvation is not difficult in the sense that the sinner must perform a hard religious achievement to obtain it. Salvation is impossible to the flesh, but freely given by grace through faith. That distinction is not minor. A man cannot climb to God, but he can receive the gift of God. A dead sinner cannot reform himself into life, but he can believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. The gospel is narrow because it excludes every false way, not because Christ made the door hard to open. Christ opened the door by His own blood.

This is why the New King James Leaven must be exposed. The leaven does not always deny grace with a trumpet blast. Sometimes it changes a word in a passage that already gets abused by religious people and makes it easier for them to preach a performance-based salvation. The Lordship salvation crowd can use "difficult" to blur justification and discipleship. The sacramental crowd can use it to keep sinners climbing Rome's staircase. The holiness works crowd can use it to make eternal life sound like a hard road a man must successfully finish before he knows he has it. But the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). It says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). It says, "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9). The gate is strait because Christ alone is the gate. It is not difficult because Christ did the work.

### **Chapter 1: The King James Bible Keeps the Issue Narrow, Not Works-Based**

The King James Bible says, "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." The word "strait" has nothing to do with a body of water in this verse. It means confined, restricted, tight, narrow, not broad. The gate is not wide enough for a man to bring his idols, his sacraments, his self-righteousness, his church membership, his water baptism, his good works, his religious heritage, his commandment-keeping, his confession booth, his rosary, his altar call performance, his Calvinistic perseverance system, or his pride. The gate is strait because it only admits a sinner on God's terms. Those terms are not religious difficulty. They are faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The sinner comes empty-handed or he does not come at all.

That is the great offense of the gospel. Men do not hate grace because it is difficult. They hate grace because it strips them naked. They hate grace because it tells them they cannot contribute anything. They hate grace because it says their righteousnesses are "as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). They hate grace because it says the publican crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), goes down justified while the religious Pharisee goes home lost. The gate is narrow because it will not let pride through. It will not let self-righteousness through. It will not let religion through. It will not let another mediator through. It will not let another gospel through. It is Christ or nothing.

When the KJV says "strait" and "narrow," it preserves that doctrinal edge. It shows the exclusiveness of the true way without suggesting that the sinner earns entrance by successfully navigating a difficult path. That is crucial. The broad way is broad because it includes all false religion, all self-made spirituality, all human merit, all unbelieving scholarship, all moralism, all ritualism, all churchianity, and all rejection of Christ's finished work. The narrow way leads to life because it is Christ. It is not narrow because it is a complicated obstacle course of religious performance. It is narrow because there is one door, and the door is a person. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved" (John 10:9). That is not difficult. That is definite.

## **Chapter 2: "Difficult" Can Feed a False Gospel**

The NKJV's use of "difficult" in Matthew 7:14 can feed a false gospel because it shifts the flavor of the verse from exclusiveness to hardship. A reader sees "difficult is the way which leads to life," and he may easily think the way to life is difficult because salvation requires a strenuous religious life, personal endurance, moral achievement, or costly performance. That may sound spiritual to people who do not rightly divide. It may sound serious, disciplined, and holy. But when attached to obtaining life, it becomes dangerous. Eternal life is not a wage for finishing a hard course. It is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 6:23 says, "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." A gift is not difficult to earn because it is not earned at all. Romans 4:5 says, "But to him that worketh not,

but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly.” That verse ought to explode half the religious systems on earth. It does not say God justifies the disciplined, surrendered, sacramentally improved, commandment-keeping, religiously proven man. It says God justifies “the ungodly” who believes. The man does not work. He believes. The object of faith is not his effort, but the God who justifies. That is the simplicity of salvation.

The devil loves to put the word “difficult” near the entrance of life because lost religious men are already inclined to think salvation must be hard. They want a hard salvation because a hard salvation gives them something to boast in. They want a process, a ladder, a system, a probation, a checklist, a lifelong uncertainty, a performance plan, a priest, a church, a sacrament, a law, a ritual, or a test. Grace offends them because it removes all boasting. Ephesians 2:9 says, “Not of works, lest any man should boast.” The KJV protects the narrowness of the gospel without making the entrance sound like a human achievement. The NKJV’s “difficult” gives religious flesh a word it can abuse.

### **Chapter 3: Salvation Is Impossible to the Flesh but Simple by Faith**

There is a distinction that must be kept clear: salvation is impossible to the flesh, but it is not difficult as a work man performs. That distinction solves much confusion. The natural man cannot save himself. He is dead in trespasses and sins. He is without strength. He is guilty. He is condemned. He is spiritually blind. He cannot climb to God by morality, religion, sincerity, tradition, sacraments, or effort. In that sense, salvation is impossible with men. The Lord Jesus said, “With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). That is not the same thing as saying God made salvation difficult for the sinner to obtain through effort. It means salvation must be of the Lord.

Once Christ has done the work, the sinner receives by faith. That is why the Bible uses simple words for salvation. “Come unto me” (Matthew 11:28). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). “To him that worketh not, but believeth” (Romans 4:5). “By grace are ye saved through faith” (Ephesians 2:8). These are not words of religious difficulty. They are words of gracious invitation. Christ did the hard work. He bore the sin. He shed the blood. He satisfied God’s righteousness. He died, was buried, and rose again. The sinner believes.

The gospel is simple enough for a child and deep enough to drown a theologian. That does not mean it is shallow. It means God made the entrance plain. A child can trust Christ. A dying thief can call on Him. A publican can cry for mercy. A Philippian jailer can believe in one night. A sinner does not need to pass a seminary exam to be saved. He needs to believe the gospel. When a version says the way to life is “difficult,” it risks confusing the simplicity of receiving life

with the hardships of following Christ after life is received. That distinction matters. Get it wrong, and you will turn discipleship passages into salvation traps.

#### **Chapter 4: Justification and Discipleship Must Not Be Confused**

Matthew 7 is part of the Sermon on the Mount, and the passage must be handled with care. There are kingdom principles, warnings, contrasts, fruit tests, false prophets, and the difference between true and false profession. But one must not take the hardships of discipleship, the cost of obedience, or the demands of righteousness and turn them into a works-based plan of justification. A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Romans 3:28 says, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." That conclusion is not open for committee revision. It is the Holy Ghost's conclusion.

Discipleship can be hard. Christian service can be hard. Bearing a cross can be hard. Suffering for Christ can be hard. Enduring persecution can be hard. Mortifying the flesh can be hard. Standing against the world, the flesh, and the devil can be hard. But salvation as a gift is not earned by doing hard things. A man must be saved before he can live the Christian life. He must have life before he can walk. He must be born before he can grow. He must be in Christ before he can bear fruit. Confusing the way of life with the works of the saved life is one of the great errors of modern preaching.

The NKJV's "difficult" wording can blur that line. It may be defended by context or by Greek usage, but the English effect remains dangerous. A Bible should not make it easier for men to preach that eternal life is obtained by difficult religious effort. The KJV says the gate is strait and the way narrow. That safely teaches exclusivity. Christ is the only way. The NKJV's "difficult" can suggest effort. That is the problem. It shifts the emphasis from the narrowness of the only way to the difficulty of the way. In a world full of false gospels, that shift is not harmless.

#### **Chapter 5: The Broad Way Is Religious Too**

Many people think the broad way is only the way of drunkards, atheists, criminals, blasphemers, harlots, and obvious rebels. It includes them, but it includes far more. The broad way is crowded with religion. It has pews, cathedrals, temples, mosques, synagogues, confessionals, altars, baptismal fonts, catechisms, seminaries, committees, popes, gurus, prophets, and nice clean moral people who never trusted the blood of Jesus Christ alone. The broad way is broad enough for every man-made plan of salvation. It is broad enough for works. It is broad enough for sacraments. It is broad enough for self-righteousness. It is broad enough for "faith plus." It is broad enough for religious difficulty.

The strait gate excludes all of that. That is why few find it. Men would rather do almost anything than come as helpless sinners to a crucified and risen Saviour. They would rather climb, pay, suffer, perform, confess to a priest, keep commandments, join a church, endure probation,

improve themselves, compare themselves with others, or promise God they will do better. The gospel offends all of that. First Corinthians 1:18 says, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." The cross is foolishness to religious pride because it tells man that his contribution is worthless. It says Christ paid it all.

That is why the KJV's "strait" and "narrow" are perfect. The verse is not telling sinners that the way to life is difficult like a mountain climb. It is telling them the entrance is restricted to one way. The broad way has room for human merit. The narrow way does not. The broad way has room for every version of "do." The narrow way says "done." The broad way lets Cain bring his own offering. The narrow way requires the blood. The broad way lets men boast. The narrow way says, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded" (Romans 3:27). The issue is not difficulty. The issue is exclusivity.

### **Chapter 6: "Difficult" Can Serve Lordship Confusion**

One of the great confusions in modern evangelicalism is the blending of salvation with discipleship under the banner of Lordship salvation. Men take verses about following Christ, bearing a cross, forsaking all, enduring hardship, and producing fruit, and they load those conditions into the front end of justification. Then they tell sinners that saving faith includes a full surrender, a willingness to obey every command, a lifelong commitment, and a kind of discipleship contract. That produces uncertainty, introspection, and a subtle form of works. It may use grace language, but it smuggles performance into the matter.

Matthew 7:14 with the word "difficult" can be used very easily in that system. The preacher says, "See, the way to life is difficult." Then he proceeds to make salvation sound like a hard path of self-denial that must be successfully walked to prove one has really entered. But Acts 16:31 does not say, "Commit to a difficult life of discipleship and thou shalt be saved." It says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." That does not remove discipleship. That puts discipleship in its right place after salvation, not as the price of justification. The saved man should serve, grow, obey, suffer, and bear fruit, but those works do not buy the new birth.

The KJV wording does not feed that confusion the same way. "Strait" and "narrow" point to the restricted way, not the difficult performance. The sinner must come through Christ. He cannot come through Mary, sacraments, works, Calvinistic perseverance, baptismal regeneration, commandment keeping, repentance as reformation, or church membership. The gate is tight because nothing but Christ fits through it. That is a glorious gospel truth. The NKJV's wording can be made to say something else in the ears of the unstable. And when a version provides wording that works nicely for false gospel confusion, a Bible believer should not clap and call it clarity.

### **Chapter 7: Christ Did the Hard Work**

The gospel is not difficult because Christ did the hard work. He left heaven's glory. He was made flesh. He was born under the law. He resisted every temptation. He fulfilled all righteousness. He endured contradiction of sinners against Himself. He set His face like a flint. He sweat as it were great drops of blood. He was betrayed, mocked, beaten, scourged, stripped, nailed, lifted up, numbered with transgressors, made sin for us, and forsaken as He bore the judgment of God against sin. He cried, "It is finished" (John 19:30). That is the work. That is the cost. That is the difficulty. The sinner does not repeat it. He believes it.

When religion makes salvation difficult, it insults the finished work of Christ. It acts like the cross opened a partial door and the sinner must force it the rest of the way. It acts like Christ made salvation possible, but man must make it actual by religious effort. That is not the gospel of grace. Romans 11:6 says, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works." Grace and works do not mix. If salvation is by grace, it is not by difficult religious performance. If it is by works, it is not grace. The issue is not complicated. Men complicate it because they do not want grace to be that free.

The strait gate is Christ, and He is not hard to receive. He said, "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). He did not say, "Him that climbs high enough, works hard enough, endures long enough, surrenders deeply enough, and performs successfully enough." He said, "him that cometh to me." The sinner's problem is not that the door is difficult to open. The sinner's problem is that he is proud, blind, dead, deceived, and unwilling to come God's way. The gate is narrow because it is Christ alone. But once a sinner comes to Christ by faith, he finds the Saviour has already done everything necessary to save him.

### **Conclusion: Keep the Gospel Narrow, Not Difficult**

Matthew 7:14 in the King James Bible keeps the gospel issue clear. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life." The gate is restricted. The way is narrow. Few find it because men reject the one way God provided. That is not the same as teaching that salvation is a difficult religious achievement. The gospel is not broad enough to include works, sacraments, religious merit, or human boasting. It is narrow because it is Christ alone. It is free because Christ paid. It is sure because God promised. It is simple because the sinner receives it by faith.

The New King James Version's "difficult" wording is dangerous because it can move the English reader toward a different idea. It can make the way to life sound like a hard path of performance rather than an exclusive entrance through Christ. That may look small to those who do not spend their lives dealing with false gospels, but it is not small. Men are already naturally inclined to add works to salvation. Religion is already full of ladders, rituals, sacraments, and difficult paths. A Bible version should not hand them a word that makes that confusion easier.

The gospel is narrow, but it is not difficult because Christ did the work. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31). That is the answer to the trembling sinner. Not climb. Not perform. Not endure to earn life. Not join. Not pay. Not keep sacraments. Not prove yourself worthy. Believe. The King James Bible preserves Matthew 7:14 in a way that guards the exclusiveness of the way without turning salvation into a difficult human work. The NKJV muddies that water. That is the leaven. And when the leaven touches the gospel, it must be exposed.

### **10 of 15: The New King James Leaven - Hebrews 3:16 and the Contradiction Problem**

Hebrews 3:16 is one of those places where the New King James Version steps on a landmine and then expects Bible believers to pretend they did not hear the explosion. The King James Bible says, “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.” That verse is clean. It is careful. It is historically accurate. It lines up with the Old Testament record. Israel as a nation provoked God in the wilderness, but not every individual who came out of Egypt rebelled in the same unbelief. There were exceptions. There was a faithful remnant. There were men like Joshua and Caleb who believed God when the congregation melted down in unbelief. But the New King James Version reads in a way that makes the verse sound like all who came out of Egypt rebelled under Moses. That is not a little update. That is not a harmless change. That is a sentence that can create a contradiction with the Old Testament record if read plainly.

This is exactly why the “little changes do not matter” crowd is dangerous. They do not notice the damage because they do not read with a fine-toothed comb. They skim, shrug, and say, “It basically means the same thing.” No, it does not. Words matter. Grammar matters. History matters. Context matters. If the Holy Ghost says “not all,” and a modern version words the passage so that it can be understood as “all,” something has shifted. The King James Bible preserves the distinction. The NKJV muddies it. You can call that scholarship, clarity, or updated English if you want, but when the result makes the English Bible sound like it contradicts Numbers 13 and 14, the Bible believer has every right to ring the alarm bell.

The point of Hebrews 3 is serious. It is warning Hebrew believers by pointing back to Israel’s wilderness unbelief. The warning is not built on a sloppy version of history. It is built on the actual record. The generation that came out under Moses provoked God, hardened their hearts, tempted Him, saw His works forty years, and fell in the wilderness because of unbelief. But Joshua and Caleb did not share the unbelief of the spies. They followed the LORD fully. They believed God could give them the land. They entered the land. That distinction matters. The King James Bible protects it. The NKJV blurs it. And once again, the New King James Leaven works through something that looks small until you realize the small change has put pressure on the integrity of Scripture itself.

## **Chapter 1: The King James Bible Preserves the Historical Record**

The King James Bible reads Hebrews 3:16 with doctrinal and historical care: “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.” That wording does two things at once. First, it acknowledges the provocation in the wilderness. Israel did provoke God. They did murmur. They did harden their hearts. They did tempt Him. They did refuse His promise. That is the broad national record. But second, it preserves the fact that not every individual who came out of Egypt was guilty in the same way or shared the same unbelief. “Howbeit not all” is the key. The verse warns from Israel’s rebellion without erasing the faithful exceptions.

That is exactly what the Old Testament teaches. Numbers 14:24 says of Caleb, “But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land.” Numbers 14:30 says, “Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swear to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.” There it is. God Himself names exceptions. The generation was judged, but Joshua and Caleb stood apart. They did not join the unbelieving report of the ten spies. They did not say the giants were too strong. They did not tell Israel to turn back. They said, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it” (Numbers 13:30).

The King James Bible’s wording in Hebrews 3:16 respects that record. It does not flatten the history into a careless universal statement. It warns against unbelief while preserving the faithful remnant. That is what a faithful Bible does. It does not create unnecessary problems with other Scripture. It harmonizes. It lets the Scripture interpret Scripture. It does not make Caleb and Joshua disappear into the mass of unbelief. The KJV says Israel provoked, but “not all” who came out of Egypt by Moses did so in the same sense. That is precision. That is accuracy. That is the old Book doing what it always does: telling the truth without needing a modern committee to come clean up the mess.

## **Chapter 2: The NKJV Creates a Problem Where the KJV Has None**

The NKJV’s rendering changes the English effect of Hebrews 3:16. Instead of the KJV’s careful “some” and “not all,” the NKJV reads in a way that asks, “who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses?” That sounds like the answer is yes — all who came out of Egypt rebelled. Now a defender will try to explain the punctuation, the flow, the rhetorical structure, or the possible sense. But the plain English impression has shifted. The KJV gives you a statement that guards the exception. The NKJV gives you a rhetorical question that appears to include everyone. That is not clearer. That is worse.

The problem is not that a clever apologist cannot explain his way around it. The problem is that the English reader should not need to be rescued from his Bible at that point. A Bible translation

should not create a contradiction with the Old Testament record and then require a scholar to step in and say, "What it really means is..." That is the modern-version racket. First they change the verse. Then they explain why the change does not really hurt anything. Then they accuse the Bible believer of being too narrow for objecting. But the question remains: why change a verse that was already clear, accurate, and doctrinally safe in the King James Bible?

If the NKJV sounds like all who came out of Egypt rebelled, then what do we do with Joshua and Caleb? Do we pretend they were included in the unbelief? Do we pretend "all" means all except the two men God specifically excepted? Do we say the verse is only general? Do we start qualifying the modern wording with notes and explanations? That is the point. The King James Bible needs no such rescue. It already says "not all." The NKJV creates a difficulty where the KJV stands clear. When a new version takes a passage that harmonizes perfectly and words it in a way that creates confusion, it has not improved the Bible. It has introduced leaven.

### **Chapter 3: Joshua and Caleb Are Not Minor Exceptions**

Joshua and Caleb are not footnotes in the wilderness story. They are major witnesses. They stand as the faithful remnant against the unbelief of the nation. When the ten spies brought up an evil report, Caleb stilled the people and said, "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). Joshua and Caleb later said, "The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land" (Numbers 14:7). They believed God. They did not deny the giants. They did not pretend the walls were imaginary. They simply believed that the LORD was greater than the giants. That is faith.

God Himself separated them from the unbelieving generation. Numbers 14:6 says Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes. Numbers 14:9 records them warning Israel, "rebel not ye against the LORD." That is important. They called the congregation's unbelief rebellion. They were not part of it. They stood against it. When the congregation wanted to stone them, God intervened. Then God declared judgment upon the unbelieving generation and specifically exempted Caleb and Joshua. Numbers 14:30 names them. Numbers 14:38 says, "But Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of the men that went to search the land, lived still." That is not a minor exception. That is the Holy Ghost marking a distinction.

So any rendering of Hebrews 3:16 that makes the English reader think all who came out of Egypt rebelled in that same unbelief is at best careless and at worst contradictory. Joshua and Caleb came out of Egypt. They were led by Moses. They heard the word. They saw the works. But they did not provoke God in the unbelief condemned in Numbers 14. They believed. The KJV protects that. The NKJV's wording puts a fog over it. A Bible believer should not be expected to call fog an improvement.

### **Chapter 4: The Point of Hebrews 3 Depends on Accurate History**

Hebrews 3 is not using Israel's history loosely. It is making a serious doctrinal application from a real historical event. The chapter quotes Psalm 95: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Then it applies that wilderness warning to the Hebrews being addressed. The argument depends on the fact that a people who had seen God's works could still harden their hearts in unbelief and fall under judgment. That is a sober warning. But the warning is strengthened, not weakened, by the fact that there were faithful exceptions. The chapter is not saying no one can believe. It is warning the hearer not to be among the unbelieving provokers.

The King James Bible's "some" and "not all" leaves room for the warning and the remnant. It says some provoked, though not all who came out did so. Then verse 17 asks, "But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?" That is the group under judgment. Their carcasses fell because of unbelief. Verse 18 says they could not enter because of unbelief. Verse 19 says, "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." The issue is unbelief. Joshua and Caleb believed and entered. The KJV gives that warning without flattening the faithful into the faithless.

The NKJV's rhetorical wording creates an unnecessary tension with the very point of the chapter. If "all who came out of Egypt" rebelled in the sense condemned, then the faithful remnant is blurred. If the faithful remnant is blurred, the Old Testament record is blurred. If the Old Testament record is blurred, the warning in Hebrews becomes less precise. The Bible believer does not need that kind of help. The old Book had it right. The warning against unbelief does not require overstating the guilt of every individual who came out of Egypt. God judged the unbelieving generation, but God also honored the believing remnant. That distinction preaches.

### **Chapter 5: The Devil Loves Contradiction Problems**

The devil loves to create contradiction problems because contradictions are one of the easiest ways to shake confidence in Scripture. He does not have to destroy every doctrine. He only has to get the reader thinking, "Maybe the Bible contradicts itself here." Once that thought gets planted, the reader starts looking for scholars to rescue him, and final authority begins to slip away. That is why changes like Hebrews 3:16 matter. If the KJV says "not all" and the NKJV sounds like "all," that is not a stylistic preference. That is a contradiction problem in the making.

Bible believers have spent generations defending the Bible against attacks from infidels who claim Scripture contradicts itself. Then modern versions come along and create new English problems that were not there in the King James Bible. That is not progress. That is sabotage dressed as scholarship. The infidel says, "The Bible contradicts itself." The Bible believer answers from the KJV and shows harmony. Then the modern version steps in and muddies the wording until the infidel has another angle. That is not better. That is leaven.

God is not the author of confusion. First Corinthians 14:33 says, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.” When a version introduces confusion into a passage that was clear in the King James Bible, the Bible believer has no obligation to clap. The NKJV defender may insist that the verse can be explained, and perhaps with enough twisting and qualification he can make his case. But the KJV does not need the emergency repair kit. It already fits Numbers. It already fits Joshua and Caleb. It already fits the remnant. It already fits Hebrews. The problem was not in the old Book. The problem came when men tried to improve it.

### **Chapter 6: “Small” Changes Can Alter the Sense**

This is where the fine-toothed comb matters. The average reader may not notice Hebrews 3:16. He may read the NKJV and keep moving. He may assume it means generally what the KJV means. But Bible believers are not supposed to read like careless tourists walking past a historical marker. They are supposed to read like soldiers checking their weapons. A small change in wording can alter the sense of a passage. A question mark can change a statement. A pronoun can change the target. A singular can become a plural. A strong word can become a weak word. A phrase can move from precision to confusion.

The modern version crowd often mocks this kind of carefulness. They say Bible believers are nitpicking. But the Lord Jesus Christ built doctrine on the tense of a verb. Paul built doctrine on the singular form of “seed.” The Bible itself teaches us to care about details. If the Holy Ghost cares about words, the Bible believer should care about words. A man who does not care about words has no business correcting the Bible. Hebrews 3:16 shows why. “Not all” preserves a distinction. A wording that sounds like “all” blurs it. That is not nitpicking. That is reading.

The devil is not bothered by careless Christianity. He is terrified of men who check the wording. He wants Christians to say, “It is close enough.” He wants preachers to say, “No major doctrine is affected.” He wants churches to say, “All versions basically say the same thing.” He wants Bible college students to say, “The scholars know best.” But a Bible believer says, “Show me the words.” The difference between “some” and “all” is not minor when Joshua and Caleb are standing in the record. The difference between clarity and contradiction is not minor when Hebrews is warning about unbelief. Little leaven still leavens the lump.

### **Chapter 7: The King James Bible Gives the Cleaner Reading**

The King James Bible gives the cleaner reading in Hebrews 3:16 because it harmonizes with the Old Testament without creating an unnecessary contradiction. It says some provoked, but not all who came out of Egypt by Moses. That is exactly what the record shows. It is historically accurate, doctrinally useful, and contextually clean. It allows the preacher to warn against unbelief while still pointing to Joshua and Caleb as men of faith. It does not require excuses. It does not require a note. It does not require a rescue operation. It just reads right.

The NKJV does not give the cleaner reading. It gives a reading that can make the verse sound like all who came out of Egypt rebelled. The defender can explain around it, but explanation around a problem is not the same as not having the problem. A good translation should not create unnecessary confusion where the old translation was already clear. If the supposed update makes the verse harder to reconcile with the Old Testament, then the update failed. Bible correction is not automatically improvement. Sometimes Bible correction is damage.

This is why the King James Bible must remain the standard, not the NKJV. If the NKJV differs from the KJV and the difference creates confusion, the Bible believer does not owe the NKJV loyalty. He marks it. The old Book has stood too long and borne too much fruit for every modern committee to come along and demand equal trust. Hebrews 3:16 is another example of the same pattern: the KJV preserves precision, while the NKJV introduces trouble. The more you examine it, the more the “just an update” lie falls apart. The New King James Leaven is not imaginary. It is right there in the wording.

### **Conclusion: “Not All” Matters**

Hebrews 3:16 matters because “not all” matters. Joshua and Caleb matter. The faithful remnant matters. The Old Testament record matters. The warning in Hebrews matters. The King James Bible preserves all of it without confusion. “For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.” That is clear. That is accurate. That fits Numbers. That fits the wilderness record. That fits the doctrine. That fits the warning. The verse does not need a modern committee to make it better.

The NKJV’s rendering creates a contradiction problem by making the passage sound like all who came out of Egypt rebelled. That is not a harmless update. That is not a little stylistic choice. That is the kind of change that shows why Bible believers must examine every word. The devil loves changes that seem too small to fight over until someone notices that they have altered the sense. He does not need to remove Joshua and Caleb from Numbers if he can make Hebrews sound like they were part of the rebellion. That is how subtlety works.

The King James Bible remains the cleaner, stronger, safer Book. It does not blur the faithful into the faithless. It does not create an unnecessary tension with the Old Testament record. It does not leave the reader needing a scholar to explain away the wording. It simply tells the truth. Some provoked, but not all. That distinction is the difference between precision and confusion. And when a version loses that distinction, the Bible believer should not be silent. The leaven must be exposed.

## **11 of 15: The New King James Leaven - "Corrupt" Changed to "Peddling" in 2 Corinthians 2:17**

Second Corinthians 2:17 is one of those verses that ought to make every Bible believer sit up straight, because the verse is not talking about some vague religious disagreement. It is talking about men handling the word of God in a corrupt way. The King James Bible says, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God." That is a thunderbolt. That is a verse with teeth in it. That is the Holy Ghost telling you plainly that there were many, even in Paul's day, who did not merely misunderstand the word of God, neglect the word of God, or fail to appreciate the word of God. They corrupted it. That means the Bible itself warns you that Bible corruption is real, that men can be involved in it, that it is not a conspiracy invented by wild-eyed people who believe God preserved His words, and that the issue is serious enough for Paul to distinguish his ministry from those who were guilty of it.

Then comes the New King James Version, and instead of "corrupt the word of God," it says "peddling the word of God." Now, somebody will rush in with a word study and tell you the term can carry the idea of making merchandise, hawking, selling deceitfully, or handling as a peddler. Fine. Let him unload the lexicon on the table and look satisfied. That does not remove the problem. "Corrupt" and "peddling" do not strike the English reader the same way. They do not accuse the same thing with the same force. "Corrupt" identifies what men do to the word itself. "Peddling" shifts the emphasis toward the commercial handling of it, the profiteering from it, the merchandising of it, or the salesman's abuse of it. Both things can be wicked. Both things can be true in different contexts. But they are not the same charge. A man may peddle something without altering it. A man may sell pure water at a dishonest price, but if he poisons the water, he has done more than peddle. He has corrupted it.

That is why this verse is so important in a series on the New King James Leaven. It is mighty convenient for a modern version to change the verse that warns about corrupting the word of God. The King James Bible gives you the accusation in plain English: men corrupt the word of God. The NKJV gives you a softer, more commercial-sounding word: peddling. That is not merely a different flavor. That is a different direction. The KJV exposes the act of corruption. The NKJV shifts the reader's attention toward religious salesmanship. And while religious salesmanship is certainly a problem, it does not carry the same weight in a Bible-version controversy. If the Bible warns that many corrupt the word of God, then the question becomes unavoidable: where, when, how, and by whom has the word been corrupted? That question terrifies Bible correctors, because the King James Bible puts the issue right on the page.

### **Chapter 1: Paul Warned That Many Corrupt the Word of God**

Paul said, "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God." The phrase "as many" matters. This was not a rare, one-man problem. Paul said there were many. That means Bible

corruption is not a far-fetched idea. It was already present in the apostolic age. Before the ink was dry on the New Testament, men were already mishandling, twisting, adulterating, and corrupting the words and doctrine God had given. The same apostle who preached justification by faith without the deeds of the law also warned about false apostles, deceitful workers, another Jesus, another spirit, another gospel, and men who handled the word of God deceitfully. If you believe Paul on salvation, you had better believe Paul on corruption.

The Bible itself never presents the transmission and handling of truth as a playground where everyone means well and all religious workers are basically trustworthy. Jeremiah 23:36 says, “ye have perverted the words of the living God.” That is Old Testament testimony that men can pervert God’s words. Second Peter 3:16 says that some wrest the Scriptures “unto their own destruction.” That is New Testament testimony that men can twist Scripture. Second Thessalonians 2:2 even warns about deception by “word” or “letter as from us.” Paul knew religious forgery, distortion, and corruption were real. He did not speak like a modern evangelical who thinks every Bible with a cross on the cover deserves trust. He spoke like a man who knew wolves wore wool.

That is why the King James wording is so powerful. It warns the reader in plain English that men corrupt the word of God. The word lands where it should land. It forces the issue. It does not allow the reader to hide behind the comforting lie that Bible corruption cannot happen. It does not let scholars pretend the only real issue is translation preference. It does not let publishers pretend the only issue is readability. Paul says many corrupt the word of God. That means the Bible believer is not paranoid for asking whether modern Bible versions have corrupted God’s words. He is obeying the warning light God put on the dashboard.

## **Chapter 2: “Corrupt” Identifies Damage Done to the Word Itself**

The English word “corrupt” is strong because it points to damage, defilement, adulteration, and spoilage. If a man corrupts food, the food is no longer pure. If a man corrupts water, the water is no longer safe. If a man corrupts justice, justice has been perverted. If a man corrupts a document, the document has been altered or compromised. So when the King James Bible says men “corrupt the word of God,” the reader understands immediately that something is being done to the word itself. That is why the verse is so devastating for the modern version issue. It gives Bible believers biblical vocabulary for what they are seeing.

The devil does not merely oppose the word of God by getting men to ignore it. He opposes it by getting men to alter it, dilute it, question it, subtract from it, add to it, and then sell the altered product as improvement. That is corruption. It is the old wine dealer watering down the wine while keeping the label. It is the pharmacist cutting the medicine while keeping the bottle. It is the counterfeiter printing something that looks close enough to pass. Corruption is often more

dangerous than open rejection because corruption keeps enough truth to remain useful for deception. The thing still looks religious. It still has verses. It still has chapters. It still says “Holy Bible.” But the poison is in the mixture.

The NKJV changing “corrupt” to “peddling” pulls the reader away from that exact accusation. Peddling may suggest a shady salesman, but it does not necessarily mean the goods themselves have been altered. A man can peddle legitimate goods with bad motives. He can hawk something for profit. He can commercialize holy things. That is wicked, but it is not the same as corrupting the product. When the issue is the word of God, the distinction is enormous. The King James Bible charges men with corrupting the word. The NKJV charges them with peddling it. One warns about adulteration. The other warns about merchandising. The Bible-version issue needs the stronger warning, and the King James Bible gives it.

### **Chapter 3: “Peddling” Shifts the Emphasis to Commerce**

There is no doubt that religious profiteering is a real problem. The Bible warns about men who make merchandise of souls. Second Peter 2:3 says, “And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you.” Paul warns about men who suppose gain is godliness. Judas sold the Lord for silver. Balaam loved the wages of unrighteousness. The modern religious world is full of peddlers, performers, celebrity preachers, publishing empires, conference circuits, sermon brands, and Bible versions wrapped in marketing language. So nobody is denying that commercial abuse exists. The problem is that 2 Corinthians 2:17 in the KJV is stronger than that. It is not merely about salesmanship. It is about corruption.

When the NKJV says “peddling,” it turns the reader’s mind toward commercial handling. The picture becomes a man hawking religious goods for profit. That is an issue, but it is not the full issue. The modern Bible industry would probably prefer that interpretation because it is easier to absorb. A publisher can say, “We are not peddling; we are sincerely distributing Scripture.” A translator can say, “We are not selling deceitfully; we are helping readers.” A professor can say, “We are not making merchandise; we are providing scholarship.” But when the verse says “corrupt,” the question changes. It is no longer merely, “Are you selling it with bad motives?” It becomes, “What have you done to the words?”

That is the question modern Bible defenders do not want to answer directly. What have you done to the words? Why did you remove this? Why did you change that? Why did you soften this doctrine? Why did you replace this term? Why did you insert this footnote? Why did you place rival readings in the margin? Why did you alter the testimony? Why did you turn “worshipping him” into “kneeling down”? Why did you turn “took on him the seed of Abraham” into “give aid”? Why did you turn “corrupt the word of God” into “peddling the word of God”?

The King James Bible asks the real question. The NKJV helps move the conversation to something safer.

#### **Chapter 4: The Verse That Condemns Bible Corruption Gets Softened**

There is a dark irony in the NKJV's handling of 2 Corinthians 2:17. The very verse that warns about corrupting the word of God is changed in a way that softens the warning about corrupting the word of God. That ought to bother any Bible believer with a pulse. If a law against tampering with evidence is itself rewritten to make tampering sound like "mismanagement," you would smell a rat. If a warning label on poison were changed to say "unrecommended beverage," you would know somebody was trying to soften the danger. When a Bible changes the verse that says men corrupt the word of God, that is not a verse to pass over casually.

The King James Bible does not let the reader escape the charge. "Corrupt the word of God" is plain, memorable, direct, and sharp. It arms the preacher. It exposes the Bible-corrector. It gives the saint language to describe what has happened in the modern version movement. The NKJV's "peddling" may still condemn religious hucksters, but it does not hit the same target with the same force. It lowers the temperature in a verse that should be hot enough to burn the gloves off every man who tampers with Scripture.

This is not the first time the devil has tried to soften a warning. In Genesis 2:17, God said, "thou shalt surely die." In Genesis 3:4, the serpent said, "Ye shall not surely die." He did not remove the whole statement. He contradicted the force of it. He softened the certainty. He made death less immediate in Eve's mind. That is how he works. He takes a word with divine force and changes the effect. In 2 Corinthians 2:17, "corrupt" has force. "Peddling" redirects that force. The Bible believer should not be fooled by the fact that the replacement word still sounds negative. The question is whether it preserves the same accusation. It does not.

#### **Chapter 5: Bible Corruption Is a Biblical Doctrine, Not a Conspiracy Theory**

One of the favorite tactics of modern version defenders is to mock Bible believers as conspiracy-minded. They act as though only an unstable person could believe men have corrupted Scripture. But Paul said many corrupt the word of God. Jeremiah said men perverted the words of the living God. Peter said men wrest the Scriptures. The serpent questioned God's words in the first human temptation. Satan quoted Scripture to Jesus while misapplying it. False prophets, false apostles, deceitful workers, and grievous wolves all show up in the Bible. So the idea that religious men can corrupt, twist, mishandle, and abuse Scripture is not a conspiracy theory. It is Bible doctrine.

The problem is that modern Christianity has been trained to trust religious packaging. If it says "Bible," they trust it. If it says "scholar," they bow. If it says "Greek," they surrender. If it says "oldest manuscripts," they tremble. If it says "updated," they relax. The King James Bible does

not train people that way. It teaches them to try the spirits, prove all things, beware of false prophets, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine, and not be carried about with every wind of doctrine. The Bible believer is not supposed to be gullible. He is supposed to be sober.

Second Corinthians 2:17 is one of the verses that gives Bible believers permission to be suspicious when men start changing the Book. Not suspicious in a fleshly, foolish, unhinged way, but suspicious in a biblical way. Paul did not say, "No one would ever corrupt the word of God." He said, "many" did. If many did it then, do not tell me nobody can do it now. If corruption was real in the apostolic age, it did not become impossible in the age of publishers, copyrights, committees, and unbelieving textual criticism. The KJV names the danger. The NKJV softens the word that names it. That is not an accident worth ignoring.

### **Chapter 6: The Commercial Bible Industry Makes "Peddling" Convenient but Incomplete**

There is a place to talk about the commercial Bible industry. There is a place to talk about copyright, marketing, version multiplication, study Bible branding, celebrity endorsements, leather editions, children's editions, devotional editions, and publishing houses making profit off the Bible. That is a real issue. The NKJV's word "peddling" can certainly be used to point at religious merchandising. But even here, the word is incomplete because modern Bible corruption is not merely about selling Bibles. It is about changing them before they are sold.

If a man sells a pure King James Bible, he may still need to watch his motives, but he has not corrupted the text by selling it. If a publisher prints the preserved word of God and distributes it, the issue of commerce is secondary to the purity of the text. But if a publisher produces a new version, changes words, inserts critical notes, alters doctrinal force, copyrights the result, and then markets it as a better Bible, the problem is not merely peddling. The problem is corruption tied to peddling. That is worse. The NKJV's reading can condemn the salesman while leaving the altered goods less directly accused. The KJV hits the altered goods.

That distinction is crucial. A Bible believer should oppose both religious profiteering and textual corruption, but he should not let one replace the other. "Peddling" can make the issue sound like greedy motives. "Corrupt" makes the issue the handling of the word itself. A man can claim pure motives while still corrupting the word. That is why motives are not enough. Sincerity does not sanctify revision. Good intentions do not preserve Scripture. A man may genuinely believe he is helping modern readers and still weaken the Book. Uzzah may have meant well when he touched the ark, but God did not excuse the act. Holy things must be handled God's way.

### **Chapter 7: The King James Bible Exposes What the NKJV Helps Hide**

The King James Bible exposes the Bible-correcting spirit with one word: "corrupt." That word is a searchlight. It shines into seminaries, publishing houses, translation committees, pulpits, and

commentaries. It forces men to deal with the possibility that the word of God can be adulterated by religious hands. It gives Bible believers a clear category for what they see when verses are removed, words are weakened, hell is softened, Christological testimony is blurred, and marginal notes whisper doubt into the reader's ear. The KJV does not hide the issue. It names it.

The NKJV helps hide it by changing the accusation to "peddling." Again, peddling is negative, but it is not the same. It changes the focus. It lets the Bible corrector say, "We are not peddlers. We are sincere scholars." But Paul's KJV wording does not let him off that easily. The issue is not only whether he made money. The issue is whether he corrupted the word. The King James Bible puts that question in front of him and refuses to move. That is why modern versions hate verses like this in their KJV form. They are self-incriminating to the revision industry.

The Bible believer must keep the stronger word because the stronger word is needed. This age is drowning in Bible versions. Every committee wants to improve the Book. Every publisher wants a market. Every scholar wants a platform. Every modern Christian wants an easier read. And under that whole circus, the question remains: has the word of God been corrupted? The KJV says many corrupt it. The NKJV says peddle it. The KJV exposes the wound. The NKJV talks more like it is discussing the vendor. Keep the word that exposes the wound.

### **Conclusion: The Verse Still Testifies Against the Bible-Correctors**

Second Corinthians 2:17 in the King James Bible is one of the great Bible-version verses: "For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God." It proves that Bible corruption is real. It proves that many can be involved in it. It proves that Paul distinguished his ministry from those who mishandled God's words. It gives Bible believers language for the battle. It does not apologize. It does not soften. It does not redirect. It says "corrupt," and the word lands exactly where it needs to land.

The New King James Version's "peddling" is weaker for this battle. It may condemn religious profiteering, but it does not carry the same accusation against the corruption of the word itself. That matters. A version that changes the verse about corrupting the word of God should not be trusted blindly. That is not a small detail. That is a warning flare. The old Book says men corrupt the word. The new version changes the word that says corrupt. If that does not make a Bible believer pause, he has been trained not to notice leaven.

The issue is not whether religious men can make money with Scripture. They can. The issue is deeper: men can corrupt the word of God. They can alter it, dilute it, weaken it, question it, and then sell the result with a clean cover and a pious preface. The King James Bible tells the truth about that danger. The NKJV softens the accusation. That is why this verse belongs in the middle

of this series like a loaded cannon. It is not the King James Bible that needs correction. It is the men who keep correcting it.

### **12 of 15: The New King James Leaven - 2 Timothy 2:15 and the Vanishing Command to Study**

There are some verses the devil would rather you read casually, because if you ever stop and stare at them long enough, they will expose half the religious mess around you. Second Timothy 2:15 is one of those verses. The King James Bible says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." That verse is a command. It is not a suggestion. It is not a devotional option. It is not a seminary slogan for men who want to collect degrees and correct the Bible every Sunday morning. It is a command from God to the believer: study. Study to be approved unto God. Study as a workman. Study so you are not ashamed. Study so you can rightly divide the word of truth. That one verse stands like a guard at the gate of Bible understanding, and it tells the Christian exactly what to do when he faces hard words, hard passages, doctrinal confusion, false teachers, denominational traditions, and spiritual fog. The answer is not to revise the Bible downward. The answer is to study.

That is why the New King James Version's handling of this verse is so revealing. The NKJV changes the command away from "study" and gives the reader something like "be diligent." Now, of course, diligence is a Bible truth. Nobody who loves the Book is against diligence. A lazy Christian is a contradiction in shoe leather. But "be diligent" does not hit the English reader the same way as "Study." It broadens the command into general effort instead of putting the spotlight directly on the believer's relationship to the word of truth. The King James Bible gives you the command that fits the rest of the verse: study, workman, rightly dividing, word of truth. That is a Bible-study verse. That is a Scripture-handling verse. That is a command to get in the Book and learn how God cut the lines. The NKJV moves the word away from the very command that has driven generations of Bible believers to read, search, compare, mark, memorize, and rightly divide Scripture.

There is a spiritual reason this matters. The devil does not fear casual readers. He does not fear a man who owns twelve versions and studies none of them. He does not fear a preacher who skims a commentary, quotes three Greek words he barely understands, and then corrects the Bible to sound educated. He does not fear a congregation that reads a verse once, feels religious, and forgets it before lunch. The devil fears Bible believers who study the Book, compare Scripture with Scripture, rightly divide the word of truth, and find out what has been done to the Bible. He fears Christians who discover that the old Book had the words right before the modern committee showed up. He fears Christians who learn that hard words are not

enemies, that old paths are not prison cells, and that God's words do not need to be dragged down to fit the ignorance of the age. No wonder the modern versions do not like "Study" in the command. A studying Bible believer is dangerous.

### **Chapter 1: The KJV Gives a Direct Command to Study**

The King James Bible does not whisper in 2 Timothy 2:15. It says, "Study." That is direct. That is plain. That is impossible to miss. The word stands at the front of the verse like a drill sergeant barking at a recruit. "Study to shew thyself approved unto God." The verse does not say study to impress men. It does not say study to win arguments. It does not say study to sound scholarly. It does not say study to become a Bible-correcting peacock with a Greek grammar under one arm and unbelief under the other. It says study to show thyself approved unto God. God is the audience. God is the Judge. God is the One whose approval matters. That alone ought to rebuke half the religious scholarship of our time, which cares more about academic applause than divine approval.

The command also assumes that Bible understanding requires labor. Paul says "a workman." A workman is not a tourist. He is not a spectator. He is not a hobbyist. He handles tools. He sweats. He learns his trade. He knows there is a right way and a wrong way to cut. A careless workman makes a mess. A lazy workman leaves gaps. An unskilled workman injures himself and others. That is exactly how it is with the Bible. A man who does not study will eventually mishandle Scripture. He will confuse Israel with the church, law with grace, kingdom doctrine with Church Age doctrine, tribulation passages with Pauline salvation, discipleship with justification, and water baptism with the gospel. Then he will build a ministry out of confusion and call it theology.

The KJV command "Study" fits the verse perfectly because the verse ends with "rightly dividing the word of truth." You do not rightly divide by accident. You do not rightly divide by emotional impulse. You do not rightly divide by tradition, denominational slogans, religious feelings, or copying what your favorite preacher said. You rightly divide by studying the words God gave. You compare Scripture with Scripture. You notice who is speaking, who is being spoken to, what dispensation is involved, what covenant is in view, what doctrinal ground is being laid, and how Paul's gospel fits in the mystery revealed to him. That command to study is not dead language. It is one of the most practical commands in the New Testament.

### **Chapter 2: "Be Diligent" Is Not the Same English Force**

The NKJV's "be diligent" may sound noble, but it does not carry the same English force as "Study." Diligence can apply to many things. A man can be diligent in business, diligent in exercise, diligent in parenting, diligent in farming, diligent in cleaning his garage, diligent in building a deck, or diligent in showing up to work on time. But "study" points the reader toward

disciplined attention to learning, searching, examining, and understanding. In the context of “rightly dividing the word of truth,” “Study” is not merely one possible shade. It is the word that sends the Christian straight into the Book. “Be diligent” can sound like a general character trait. “Study” sounds like an assignment from God.

The modern version defender will argue that the underlying word means to be zealous, make effort, be diligent, or give careful attention. Fine. Let him argue. But translation is not merely choosing a broad, bland English word and then congratulating yourself for being modern. The question is what English word best carries the verse in its context. The context is a workman handling the word of truth properly. The workman needs not to be ashamed because he rightly divides the word of truth. What should he do? Study. That is exactly the right English command. The KJV gives the reader a concrete action tied to the handling of Scripture. The NKJV gives a more generalized command that does not strike the same target with the same force.

And this is the pattern we have seen throughout the New King James Leaven. The change is defended as accuracy, but the result is often weaker. “Worshipping him” becomes “kneeling down.” “Corrupt the word of God” becomes “peddling the word of God.” “Hell” becomes “Hades.” “Took on him the seed of Abraham” becomes “give aid.” And here, “Study” becomes “be diligent.” Each one can be defended by a man who wants to defend it. But the question is not whether a defender can build a lifeboat out of a lexicon. The question is whether the King James Bible gives the stronger, clearer, more doctrinally useful English wording. In 2 Timothy 2:15, it does.

### **Chapter 3: Study Is the Answer to Hard Words**

One of the great lies behind modern Bible revision is that hard words are the problem. The reader struggles, so the Bible must be changed. The reader does not understand, so the wording must be modernized. The reader stumbles over an old term, so the committee must rescue him. That sounds compassionate, but it often trains spiritual laziness. The Bible’s answer to difficulty is not always revision. Sometimes the answer is study. If you do not know what a word means, learn it. If you do not understand a passage, compare Scripture with Scripture. If a doctrine seems hard, keep reading. If a distinction is unclear, ask the Holy Ghost for light and stay in the Book.

Second Timothy 2:15 is the perfect rebuke to the modern “make it easier” mentality. The verse does not say, “Revise to shew thyself approved unto God.” It does not say, “Simplify to shew thyself approved unto God.” It does not say, “Find a smoother rendering to shew thyself approved unto God.” It says, “Study.” That means the believer has responsibility. God gave the words, and the believer must apply himself to them. This is not cruelty. This is discipleship. A student who refuses to learn is not helped by burning the textbook. A soldier who refuses to

train is not helped by dulling the sword. A Christian who refuses to study is not helped by replacing the Bible with something that flatters his laziness.

The King James Bible has words that require learning, and that is not a flaw. It is one reason the Book educates the reader. Words like “propitiation,” “justification,” “sanctification,” “dispensation,” “quicken,” “remission,” “charity,” and “concupiscence” are not enemies. They are treasures. They force the reader to slow down and learn doctrine. Modern versions often treat difficulty as a disease to be cured by revision. The King James Bible treats the word of God as a treasury to be searched. Proverbs 25:2 says, “It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter.” That is study. That is the old path.

#### **Chapter 4: Study Leads to Right Division**

Second Timothy 2:15 is not merely a general command to read more Bible. It specifically connects study with rightly dividing the word of truth. This is where the verse becomes a battlefield. Right division is one of the most hated, neglected, and abused truths in modern Christianity. Men who refuse to rightly divide end up stealing Israel’s promises, confusing the kingdom with the body of Christ, turning tribulation warnings into Church Age salvation doctrine, dragging Hebrews and James into places where they use them to overthrow Paul, mixing law with grace, and making a mess of salvation. The command to study is directly tied to the ability to divide the word properly.

The King James Bible’s wording keeps that relationship clear. “Study... rightly dividing.” There is the command and the result. The man who studies as a workman can handle the Book without shame. The man who refuses to study will eventually mishandle it. That explains much of the religious confusion in the world. People are not rightly dividing because they are not studying. They are browsing. They are quote-mining. They are denominationally repeating. They are emotionally reacting. They are building doctrine out of favorite verses without checking context. Then they wonder why the Bible seems to contradict itself. The problem is not the Bible. The problem is the unashamed ignorance of men who will not obey 2 Timothy 2:15.

That is another reason the NKJV’s change matters. When “Study” vanishes, one of the clearest English commands associated with right division is dulled. Yes, diligence is involved. But the old word “Study” has become a banner for Bible believers for a reason. It has driven men into the Book. It has rebuked laziness. It has created a culture of searching, comparing, and dividing. It has stood against the sloppy religious habit of making every verse doctrinally identical to every other verse. The devil hates right division because right division prevents him from using Scripture wrongly. He quoted Scripture to Christ in Matthew 4, but he did not rightly divide it. A studying Bible believer learns how to answer the devil’s misuse of the Book.

#### **Chapter 5: The Devil Fears a Bible Believer Who Checks the Words**

The devil does not fear religious noise. He does not fear church programs. He does not fear sentimental devotionals. He does not fear a preacher who can shout for forty minutes and never open a verse in context. He does not fear a Christian who owns a shelf full of versions and cannot quote one verse correctly. But he fears a Bible believer who checks the words. He fears the man who notices when “corrupt” becomes “peddling.” He fears the woman who notices when “worshipping him” becomes “kneeling down.” He fears the teenager who notices when “study” disappears. He fears the saint who compares the NKJV with the KJV and asks, “Why did they change that?”

That is why study is dangerous to the modern Bible industry. A casual reader can be managed. A studying reader becomes a problem. A casual reader will accept the preface, the marketing line, the pastor’s recommendation, the seminary professor’s assurance, and the publisher’s claim that it is only an update. A studying reader starts comparing verses. He starts marking changes. He starts following footnotes. He starts asking why the margin points to readings from critical texts. He starts seeing patterns. He starts realizing that the NKJV is not merely the KJV with a haircut. It is a bridge into modern-version thinking.

The King James command to study turns the believer into a workman who tests things. First Thessalonians 5:21 says, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.” Acts 17:11 commends the Bereans because “they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” They searched. They checked. They did not swallow religious claims because a respected teacher made them. That is the spirit of 2 Timothy 2:15. Study. Search. Prove. Rightly divide. The devil can handle a church full of sentimental listeners. He has trouble with saints who open the Book and verify every word.

## **Chapter 6: The Command Is Unto God, Not Unto Scholars**

Second Timothy 2:15 says, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God.” That phrase matters. The approval is not unto the academy. It is not unto the denominational board. It is not unto the Greek professor. It is not unto the publishing house. It is not unto the evangelical mainstream. It is not unto men who think Bible believers are ignorant because they refuse to bow before every new committee. The approval is unto God. That means the student of Scripture is not studying to sound respectable to men who already doubt the Book. He is studying to be approved by the God who gave the Book.

This rebukes the scholarship idol. Many men are not trying to be approved unto God; they are trying to be approved unto scholars. They want to sound balanced. They want to avoid being mocked as KJV-only. They want to be accepted in academic circles. They want men with letters after their names to nod in approval. So they learn how to correct the English Bible, talk about the originals, praise modern textual criticism, and treat the King James Bible as a noble but

imperfect stage in the history of translation. That may win human approval, but 2 Timothy 2:15 points the workman higher. The question is not whether scholars clap. The question is whether God approves.

The King James Bible has created men who care more about God's approval than academic applause. That is why it has always produced fighters. A man who believes he has the words of God in his hand is not easily intimidated by a professor with a footnote. He can listen, learn, examine, and still refuse to surrender the Book. He studies not to become a servant of scholars, but to become a workman approved unto God. The NKJV's removal of the word "Study" does not erase the need for diligence, but it removes the sharp English command that has stood like a rebuke against lazy Christianity and scholar-worshipping unbelief.

### **Chapter 7: The Old Book Still Commands What the New Versions Weaken**

The King James Bible still says, "Study." That word remains one of the great dividing lines between Bible believers and Bible browsers. It is a command that fits the whole Bible-believing life. Study the words. Study the context. Study Paul's gospel. Study Israel's covenants. Study prophecy. Study doctrine. Study salvation. Study the differences between the rapture and the Second Advent. Study the difference between law and grace. Study the difference between faith and works. Study the difference between a Jew, a Gentile, and the church of God. Study the Book until the denominational fog burns off and the lines God drew become plain.

The modern versions often weaken that spirit because they are built on the assumption that the Bible should be made easier for a reader who does not study. The King James Bible says the reader should study. That is a fundamental difference. One approach changes the Book to fit the reader. The other changes the reader through the Book. One approach lowers the language. The other raises the student. One approach tells the Christian he needs a smoother version. The other tells him he needs to become a workman. That difference explains much of the modern church's weakness. It wants understanding without labor, doctrine without study, and authority without submission.

The old Book still tells the truth. If you want to be approved unto God, study. If you do not want to be ashamed, study. If you want to rightly divide the word of truth, study. If you want to answer false doctrine, study. If you want to spot the leaven in modern versions, study. If you want to stop being tossed around by every preacher with a microphone and every scholar with a new rendering, study. The command has not expired. The modern committee may move away from it, but the King James Bible still stands there with its finger in your chest saying, "Study."

### **Conclusion: The Command Did Not Need to Vanish**

Second Timothy 2:15 did not need to be changed away from "Study." The King James Bible gives the English-speaking believer a direct command that fits the verse, the context, and the life of a

Bible believer. “Study to shew thyself approved unto God.” That command is clear. It is practical. It is doctrinal. It is convicting. It tells the Christian what to do with the Book. It tells him not to be lazy. It tells him not to be ashamed. It tells him to rightly divide the word of truth. It has produced generations of Christians who searched the Scriptures and handled the Book as workmen.

The NKJV’s change to a broader expression weakens that direct English command. It may be defended by lexical arguments, but the result is still a loss of force. “Be diligent” is true, but “Study” is sharper in this context. The modern age does not need less command to study. It needs more. It needs Christians who stop asking for the Bible to be lowered and start obeying the Bible they have. It needs preachers who stop correcting the Book and start being corrected by it. It needs saints who know the words well enough to detect when they have been changed.

The devil does not fear shallow religion. He fears Bible believers who study. He fears men and women who compare Scripture with Scripture, rightly divide the word of truth, and refuse to let modern committees tamper with the Book God preserved. That is why 2 Timothy 2:15 matters. The King James Bible gives the command plainly. The New King James Leaven dulls it. Keep the old command. Keep the old Book. Study to shew thyself approved unto God.

### **13 of 15: The New King James Leaven - The Servant Becomes a Slave**

One of the most subtle shifts in modern Bible language is the movement from the rich, balanced, relational word “servant” toward harsher bondage language like “slave” or the awkward hybrid “bondservant.” Now before some Bible corrector runs in waving a Greek lexicon like a wet towel at a house fire, let the matter be stated plainly: the issue is not whether the believer belongs to Christ. He does. The issue is not whether the believer has been bought with a price. He has. The issue is not whether the Christian is under the lordship and authority of Jesus Christ. He is. First Corinthians 6:19-20 says, “ye are not your own” and “ye are bought with a price.” Romans 6 teaches that the saved man is no longer the servant of sin, but should yield himself unto God. The Bible-believing position does not deny ownership, submission, surrender, obedience, or service. The issue is whether the King James Bible’s word “servant” gives the proper doctrinal balance in English, and whether replacing that word with bondage-loaded language changes the spiritual flavor of the passage. It does.

The King James Bible knows how to speak about Christian service without turning liberty into a chain gang. It says, “by love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13). It says Paul was “a servant of Jesus Christ” (Romans 1:1). It says Moses was the “servant of the LORD.” It says believers are to serve the Lord with fear, gladness, singleness of heart, and love. That word “servant” in the King

James Bible is not weak. It is not soft. It is not a modern customer-service word. It is rich. It can carry duty, ownership, loyalty, submission, humility, stewardship, household responsibility, ministry, and devotion without losing the personal and willing nature of service under a righteous Master. The word has spiritual range. It can speak of a purchased man, a chosen man, a loyal man, a ministering man, or a man honored by God to serve in His house. It is not sentimental. It is balanced.

But “slave” carries a different weight in English. It drags with it images of forced labor, dehumanization, kidnapping, chains, brutality, racial history, and legal bondage. A man can argue all day that the underlying word in certain places has a slave range, and sometimes it does. But translation is not merely the art of grabbing the harshest technically possible word and dropping it into the verse like a cinder block through a stained-glass window. English words have connotations. They have history. They carry impressions. The devil loves to take Christian liberty and make it sound like bondage, just like he loves to take grace and make it sound like law. The King James Bible gives the right balance. It tells you that you belong to Christ, yet you are free in Christ. You serve Him, yet you serve by love. You are bought, yet you are not treated like chattel. You are under authority, yet you are a son. That balance matters.

### **Chapter 1: The King James Bible’s “Servant” Is Not a Weak Word**

Modern Bible correctors often act as if “servant” is too mild, as if the King James Bible somehow softened the text because the translators were afraid of the harder realities of service and ownership. That is nonsense. The King James Bible is not afraid of hard words. It says “hell.” It says “damnation.” It says “blood.” It says “wrath.” It says “fire.” It says “judgment.” It says “whoremongers.” It says “corrupt.” It says “fool.” It says “bastards” in Hebrews 12:8. The old Book is not timid. So when the King James Bible uses “servant,” it is not because it lacks courage. It is because “servant” is the right English word for the spiritual range and doctrinal balance intended in many passages.

A servant in the Bible is not merely a hired employee clocking in and out with a lunch break and an attitude. Moses was called “the servant of the LORD.” Joshua was called “the servant of the LORD.” David was called the LORD’s servant. Paul called himself “a servant of Jesus Christ.” That word is honorable when attached to the right Master. It means a man is under command, but also under care. It means he has duties, but also relationship. It means he is not autonomous, but neither is he treated as worthless property. In the King James Bible, “servant” can be humble and glorious at the same time. That is why it fits the Christian life so well.

The Bible believer should not let a modern reviser sneer at “servant” as though it is too weak. The issue is not weakness. The issue is spiritual accuracy in English. The King James Bible’s “servant” preserves authority without importing unnecessary connotations of cruel bondage

into places where the doctrine is Christian devotion. The believer's service to Christ is not the bondage of Egypt. It is not Pharaoh's brick pits. It is not Roman chains without hope. It is not the devil's slavery to sin. It is loving service to the Lord who bought him, saved him, washed him, sealed him, and made him accepted in the beloved. That is not weak. That is Bible balance.

## **Chapter 2: The Believer Is Bought, But He Is Also Free**

The New Testament teaches both purchase and liberty. A Bible believer does not have to choose one truth and murder the other. First Corinthians 6:20 says, "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." That is ownership. The believer belongs to God because he was purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Acts 20:28 speaks of "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." First Peter 1:18-19 says we were not redeemed with corruptible things, but "with the precious blood of Christ." So yes, the saved man is bought. He is not his own. He has no right to live as if his body, his time, his tongue, his mind, and his future belong to him.

But the same Bible also says, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free" (Galatians 5:1). It says, "if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36). It says, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17). It says we are not under the law, but under grace. It says we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." So the believer is bought, but he is not thrown into spiritual bondage like a beast in a pit. He is redeemed. He is adopted. He is made a son. He is joined to Christ. He is seated in heavenly places. He serves, but he serves in liberty.

That is why the language matters. If every service passage is made to sound like slavery, the balance can be shifted in the English reader's mind. The Christian life becomes framed more by bondage than by grateful devotion. The believer is indeed under Christ's authority, but that authority is not Pharaoh's lash. It is the rule of the Saviour who loved him and gave Himself for him. Galatians 5:13 gives the right balance: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." There it is. Liberty and service in the same verse. Not bondage service. Not law service. Not slavish fear. Loving service flowing from liberty.

## **Chapter 3: "Slave" Carries English Baggage That "Servant" Does Not**

Words carry baggage. Any honest translator knows that. A word may be technically possible in one sense and still be spiritually unwise in another. "Slave" in English carries a heavy freight of forced ownership, abuse, violence, racial history, dehumanization, and involuntary bondage. That does not mean the word can never be used in any historical context. The Bible certainly deals with bondmen, servants, masters, captives, and forms of servitude. But when speaking of the believer's relationship to Christ or the apostolic ministry, the King James Bible's "servant"

gives a rich, doctrinally balanced English word that does not unnecessarily drag the reader into the emotional and historical swamp attached to “slave.”

This is where men who worship lexicons can become spiritually tone-deaf. They know a dictionary range, but they do not know the sound of the sheep. They know the possible glosses, but they do not know the spiritual flavor. They know how to say, “The Greek word can mean slave,” but they do not seem to understand that English readers hear more than etymology. When Paul says he is a “servant of Jesus Christ,” the King James Bible gives the English reader a word that carries humility, submission, and ministry without making Christ sound like a cruel slaveholder. When modern revisions replace that spiritual language with slavery terminology, they may claim technical accuracy, but they risk damaging the reader’s perception of the Master.

Jesus Christ is no tyrant. He is Lord, Master, King, Saviour, Head, Shepherd, Redeemer, and Friend. He said, “my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:30). He said in John 15:15, “Henceforth I call you not servants... but I have called you friends,” while still maintaining His authority and commandment. That does not erase service; it deepens relationship. The King James Bible understands that balance. The modern reviser who constantly reaches for “slave” or similar bondage language can flatten the beauty of that relationship into something harsher than the context requires. Not every technically arguable rendering is spiritually wise.

#### **Chapter 4: Paul’s Servanthood Was Willing, Not Forced Like Sin’s Bondage**

Paul called himself “a servant of Jesus Christ” in Romans 1:1. That phrase is powerful. Paul was not a freelancer. He was not a religious celebrity building his own brand. He was not a motivational speaker with a gospel theme. He was a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God. His service was absolute, but it was not the forced bondage he once had under sin, law, blindness, and religious zeal without knowledge. Christ met him on the Damascus road, saved him, commissioned him, and made him a minister. Paul served because grace conquered him, not because Christ dragged him in chains like Pharaoh’s prisoner.

Romans 6 gives the contrast. Before salvation, men are servants of sin. That is bondage. Sin pays wages, and the wages of sin is death. But being made free from sin, believers become servants to God. That is not the same slavery under a different tyrant. That is deliverance from the worst master into service under the righteous Lord. Romans 6:18 says, “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Notice the balance. Made free, then servants. Liberty and service. Freedom from sin does not mean independence from God. It means the privilege of serving the right Master.

The word “servant” in the King James Bible carries that balance beautifully. It allows the contrast to breathe. Sin is a tyrant. Christ is Lord. Sin enslaves unto death. Christ redeems unto life. Sin degrades. Christ sanctifies. Sin pays wages. Christ gives eternal life. If modern wording makes the believer’s service to Christ sound too much like the old bondage, something has been spiritually flattened. The Christian is not liberated from sin so he can boast in autonomy, but neither is he saved into the same kind of bondage under a new name. He is redeemed into loving, willing, grateful service under grace.

### **Chapter 5: The Devil Loves Turning Grace Into Bondage**

The devil has always tried to turn grace into bondage. If he cannot keep a man lost, he will try to make the saved man live like a slave under fear, uncertainty, legalism, and performance. He will use bad doctrine, bad preaching, bad versions, bad churches, and bad traditions to make Christians think God is holding a whip over them instead of chastening them as sons and leading them as a Father. Hebrews 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” Chastisement is not hatred. It is sonship discipline. God corrects His children, but He does not treat the blood-bought believer like a disposable slave in a pagan field.

This is why language matters. The believer should fear God, obey God, serve God, and submit to God. But he should not be pushed into a spirit of bondage again to fear. Romans 8:15 says, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption.” That verse is crucial. The saved man is not brought into a relationship defined by slavish terror. He is brought into adoption. He cries, “Abba, Father.” He is an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. He is a servant, yes, but also a son. He serves in the household because he belongs to the Father, not because he is under Pharaoh’s lash.

The New King James Leaven often sounds like it was produced by men who know word ranges better than spiritual instinct. They can tell you what a word may mean in a lexicon, but they do not always preserve the doctrinal music of the King James Bible. The KJV gives “servant,” and the believer hears duty, humility, love, ministry, obedience, and belonging. Push everything toward “slave,” and the sound changes. The devil does not mind that. He loves turning grace into law, liberty into bondage, sonship into fear, and service into chains. The KJV resists that imbalance. It keeps the old path clear.

### **Chapter 6: Christian Service Is By Love, Not the Lash**

Galatians 5:13 says, “by love serve one another.” That is one of the great Christian service verses. It does not say by terror serve one another. It does not say by bondage serve one another. It does not say by the lash serve one another. It says by love. Christian service is not lawless, but neither is it loveless. It is not fleshly independence, but neither is it forced bondage. The saved man serves because Christ loved him first. “We love him, because he first loved us” (1

John 4:19). That order matters. Love produces service. Grace produces gratitude. Redemption produces devotion.

The King James Bible's "servant" language harmonizes with this. A servant may be under authority, but in the biblical and spiritual context, he may also be honored, trusted, loved, and rewarded. The Lord says, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21). That is not the language of contempt. That is the language of approval. In the kingdom of God, servanthood is greatness. The Lord Jesus said, "whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant" (Matthew 20:27). He Himself took upon Him "the form of a servant" (Philippians 2:7). The word is holy when attached to Christ.

Modern bondage language can obscure that beauty. It can make service sound purely coerced, when the New Testament often presents it as grateful, willing, loving, and honorable. Paul was constrained by the love of Christ, not merely driven by terror. Second Corinthians 5:14 says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us." That is Christian ministry. The love of Christ presses the believer forward. The saved man is not serving to earn redemption. He is serving because redemption has already been purchased. If a translation choice makes that service sound like raw slavery, it may be technically arguable in certain minds, but it is not spiritually superior to the King James balance.

### **Chapter 7: The KJV Gives the Full Relationship, Not a Flattened One**

The believer's relationship to Christ is multi-layered. He is a servant, a son, a soldier, a sheep, a member of His body, a purchased possession, a friend, a brother, a bride in the typological and prophetic sense of the church's relationship to Christ, an heir, an ambassador, and a saint. The Bible uses many terms because one term cannot exhaust the relationship. The King James Bible preserves this richness. It does not reduce the Christian life to one harsh category. It lets the full range of doctrine speak.

That is where modern versions often fail. They take one possible lexical emphasis and hammer it flat across passages where the English spiritual balance requires more care. "Slave" may be useful in showing bondage to sin or historical servitude in certain contexts, but when applied broadly to Christian service, it can sound like the believer's relationship to Christ is defined by dehumanizing bondage rather than redeemed devotion. The KJV's "servant" is broad enough and deep enough to carry the doctrine without needless distortion. It lets the reader see authority without losing affection, ownership without losing adoption, obedience without losing love.

This is why the issue belongs in the New King James Leaven series. The leaven is not always a missing verse or a footnote. Sometimes it is a changed flavor. Sometimes a word alters the atmosphere of a doctrine. Sometimes a modern rendering may be defended in a narrow

technical way while still failing the larger test of spiritual balance. The King James Bible has that balance. It was not written by men trying to sound like modern academics. It was forged in a reverent fear of God, and its words have fed saints for centuries. When the servant becomes a slave in the ears of the reader, something precious can be lost.

### **Conclusion: Do Not Let Liberty Sound Like Bondage**

The King James Bible's word "servant" is not obsolete weakness. It is doctrinally rich, spiritually balanced, and historically fruitful. It tells the believer he belongs to Christ, owes Christ obedience, serves under Christ's authority, and lives for Christ's glory. But it does so without making the Christian life sound like a return to Egypt. It preserves the balance between being bought with a price and standing fast in liberty. It lets the believer serve with fear and reverence, but also with love, joy, gratitude, and sonship.

The modern push toward "slave" or bondage-heavy language may be technically defended in certain passages, but it is not always spiritually wise. English words carry meaning beyond a lexicon entry. "Slave" brings harsh connotations that can distort the flavor of Christian service. Christ is Lord, but He is not Pharaoh. Christ owns the believer, but He also calls him friend. Christ commands obedience, but He also gives liberty. Christ chastens His children, but He does it because He loves them. The King James Bible preserves that balance better than the modern revision instinct.

The devil loves to take liberty and make it sound like bondage. He loves to take grace and make it sound like law. He loves to take willing service and make it sound like forced servitude. The King James Bible says, "by love serve one another." That is the spirit of Christian service. The believer is not his own, but he is not in chains to a cruel master. He is redeemed, adopted, indwelt, sealed, loved, and called to serve the Lord who bought him. Keep the old Book's balance. Keep the word that carries the doctrine without poisoning the flavor. Keep "servant" where God's English Bible gives it, and do not let modern revision turn the liberty of Christ into the sound of bondage.

### **14 of 15: The New King James Leaven - When the NKJV Walks With the Modern Versions**

The New King James Version has survived in many conservative circles because it knows how to stand close enough to the King James Bible to look innocent while walking close enough to the modern versions to be dangerous. That is the trick. That is the bridge. That is the little leaven. It does not always run ahead with the NIV, NASB, RSV, ESV, and the rest of the modern-version parade while waving a flag. Sometimes it stays just a few steps behind, wearing the King James

name, speaking enough familiar language, and convincing sleepy Christians that everything is fine. But when you start checking the verses, when you stop reading the advertising and start comparing the words, you begin to see the pattern. The NKJV is not simply the King James Bible in modern dress. It often travels in the same direction as the modern versions, and that direction is away from the old Book.

This is where the receipts matter. A man can argue theory all day long. He can talk about the preface, the translators, the original languages, the need for readability, the supposed difficulty of old English, and the claim that the NKJV follows the same basic textual tradition. But after the speech is over, the question still stands: what did they do to the words? Did they preserve the King James Bible, or did they produce another version that often lines up with the modern crowd in wording, punctuation, interpretation, and textual flavor? Matthew 22:10, Matthew 26:45, Luke 1:35, Luke 12:49, John 18:24, Acts 10:7, Romans 7:6, 2 Corinthians 4:14, 2 John 7, Jude 3, and many other places show why the NKJV cannot be treated as a harmless update. It repeatedly makes changes that bring it into the orbit of modern-version thinking while still borrowing the trust of the King James name.

That is what makes it so effective as leaven. The NIV is obvious to many King James Bible believers. The RSV has its own smell. The ESV comes polished and educated but still carries the same modern critical atmosphere. But the NKJV walks in with a familiar face. It says, "I am one of you." It says, "I respect the Authorized Version." It says, "I am only updating old words." Then, little by little, it gets people comfortable with modern wording, modern notes, modern categories, modern uncertainty, and modern dependence on scholars. The devil does not have to drag a King James Bible believer all the way into the modern Bible mess in one yank. He just has to get him walking in that direction. The NKJV is that first step for many people. It is the bridge Bible, and a bridge is built to take you somewhere.

### **Chapter 1: The NKJV's Bridge Function Must Be Understood**

The first thing to understand is that the NKJV does not function the same way as the more obvious modern versions. It functions as a bridge. A bridge does not have to be the destination. It only has to move you from one side to the other. The NKJV takes people who still have some affection for the King James Bible and moves them toward the world of modern revision. It keeps the King James label so the conscience does not panic, but it introduces a different way of thinking. It says the old Book is worthy of honor, but not final. It says the old wording is beautiful, but not always best. It says the old text can be respected, but the margins should still be filled with rival readings. That is not the old path. That is the beginning of departure.

A man who would never touch the NIV may accept the NKJV because it feels safer. That is the point. Satan knows how to use degrees of compromise. He does not start every man at the

same place. Some men are already so far gone that any modern version will do. Others still have enough spiritual instinct to distrust the obvious corruptions. So the devil gives them something that looks conservative. He gives them the “New King James.” That name is the hook. It sounds like continuity. It sounds like preservation. It sounds like the old Bible has simply been freshened up. But a counterfeit’s strength is not that it looks foreign. Its strength is that it looks familiar.

The bridge function is visible in the way people talk after they adopt the NKJV. They begin by saying, “It is basically the same as the KJV.” Then they say, “The KJV has some outdated words.” Then they say, “No translation is perfect.” Then they say, “The original languages are what really matter.” Then they say, “The footnotes help us see the evidence.” Then they say, “Modern versions are not all bad.” Then they say, “KJV-only people are divisive.” The movement is predictable. The NKJV does not have to overthrow a man’s confidence all at once. It just has to get him used to the language of revision. That is how leaven spreads.

### **Chapter 2: Matthew 22:10 and the “Wedding Hall” Shift**

Matthew 22:10 in the King James Bible says, “So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.” The verse is part of the kingdom parable of the marriage for the king’s son. The language is not difficult. The servants gather guests, and the wedding is furnished with guests. The focus is the wedding itself being supplied, filled, and furnished. The English is plain, dignified, and consistent with the parabolic picture.

The NKJV changes the wording toward “wedding hall,” which walks in the direction of modern versions. Now somebody will say, “What is the big deal? A wedding has a hall.” But that is exactly how the leaven gets dismissed. The question is not whether a wedding hall exists in the scene. The question is why the wording needed to be changed away from the King James reading. The KJV says “the wedding was furnished with guests.” That is broader and more fitting to the parable’s structure. It is not merely a room being filled. It is the wedding feast being furnished. The NKJV’s shift is not simply updating old English. It is choosing a different wording that lines up with modern translational instincts.

This is one of those places where the NKJV reveals that it is not content to preserve the KJV’s exact English sense. It revises. It reshapes. It follows a different path. A single example like this may not look earth-shaking, but patterns are made of pieces. You do not spot a trail by staring at one footprint and pretending it means nothing. You follow the prints. When the NKJV repeatedly leaves the KJV wording and walks with modern-version choices, the honest Bible believer starts asking why. If it is only an update, why does it keep sounding like the modern crowd?

### **Chapter 3: Matthew 26:45 and the Change From Statement to Question**

Matthew 26:45 in the King James Bible says, “Sleep on now, and take your rest.” That is a statement. The Lord has found the disciples sleeping while He is in agony. He has warned them. He has prayed. He has returned. The hour is at hand. The words carry solemn irony and judgment. Then He says, “behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.” The King James reading has weight. It lets the passage stand with the Lord speaking in the grave solemnity of the moment.

The NKJV turns the wording into a question: “Are you still sleeping and resting?” That is not just removing archaic language. That is changing the shape of the sentence. It changes the tone. It changes the reader’s experience of the moment. It lines up with the modern habit of reworking punctuation, sense, and flow where the KJV already speaks clearly. Again, the defender may argue that the Greek allows the question. But the issue is not merely what can be defended after the fact. The issue is whether the King James Bible’s wording needed correcting and whether the NKJV is truly preserving the old Book or revising it.

This matters because punctuation and sentence structure affect meaning. A statement is not the same as a question. A command, a statement, and a question can all carry different force. The NKJV defender wants to call this an update, but changing a statement into a question is not an update like changing spelling. It is an interpretive decision. It is a revision. It shows that the NKJV committee was not merely dusting off old English. They were making different choices. And in this case, they walk in the same direction as modern renderings. That is exactly the point of this essay. The NKJV does not merely stand with the KJV. It often walks with the modern versions.

#### **Chapter 4: Luke 1:35 and the Missing “Of Thee”**

Luke 1:35 in the King James Bible says, “therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” Those two words “of thee” matter because the verse concerns the virgin birth and the humanity of Christ through Mary. The Holy Ghost comes upon her. The power of the Highest overshadows her. The child born of her is called the Son of God. This is not a casual verse. It deals with one of the holiest doctrines in Scripture: the miraculous conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The NKJV omits “of thee” in the verse, following the same direction as modern versions. Again, somebody may try to defend the omission by appealing to manuscripts or textual decisions. But step back and look at the spiritual issue. The KJV gives the reader a direct statement that the holy thing would be born “of thee.” The wording ties the birth directly to Mary’s womb without compromising Christ’s sinlessness or deity. It strengthens the testimony that He truly came through the woman as the promised seed. Genesis 3:15 said the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head. Luke 1:35 in the KJV gives you the miracle in plain English.

This is not a place where a Bible believer should tolerate weakening. The virgin birth, the incarnation, the true humanity of Christ, and His identity as the Son of God are not doctrines to handle loosely. The modern version crowd has a long history of weakening, omitting, or confusing testimony touching Christ. The NKJV may not go as far as some of them in every place, but when it walks in their direction in a verse like Luke 1:35, the alarm should go off. The question is not whether someone can prove the virgin birth elsewhere. The question is why any witness should be weakened at all.

### **Chapter 5: John 18:24 and the Timeline Confusion**

John 18:24 is another place where the King James Bible gives a clean reading: “Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.” That word “had” matters. It helps preserve the timeline. Jesus had already been sent to Caiaphas. The verse refers back to something already done. The King James Bible keeps the narrative from sounding like Annas sends Him to Caiaphas only after the questioning described in the previous verses. It harmonizes the flow of the Gospel account and keeps the chronology steady.

The NKJV reads more like “Then Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas the high priest,” which can make the reader think the sending happens at that point in the narrative. That creates a possible chronological problem with the surrounding passages. Once again, the modern version defender may come in with explanations, but the KJV does not need the rescue. The old Book already has the sense right. It gives the reader “had sent,” and the problem disappears. The NKJV chooses wording that can create confusion. Why call that an improvement?

This is one of the most practical examples in the series because it shows how one small English word can matter. “Had sent” and “sent” are not the same in narrative flow. Bible critics love to claim contradictions in the Gospel accounts. A faithful translation should not hand them unnecessary ammunition. The King James Bible gives the cleaner reading. The NKJV walks with the modern versions and creates difficulty. That is not better. That is not clearer. That is not harmless. It is another footprint in the wrong direction.

### **Chapter 6: Acts 10:7 and the Reworked Reading**

Acts 10:7 in the King James Bible says, “And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants.” That is straightforward. The angel spoke unto Cornelius. When the angel departed, Cornelius called two servants. The subject is clear. The flow is clear. The English reader has no problem seeing what happened. There is no need for a committee to come along and rearrange the furniture.

The NKJV changes the form of the reading and walks with modern-version handling in a way that does not simply update the KJV. It moves away from the received wording and creates a different English presentation. This is the kind of change that is easy to miss because it may not

seem doctrinally explosive at first glance. But again, the question is not whether the verse still has a general narrative meaning. The question is why the NKJV keeps departing from the King James Bible when it claims to be a faithful update. A faithful update would preserve the KJV sense unless there were a true need to clarify. Here the KJV is already clear.

This is how the leaven functions across a whole version. It is not always one famous proof text. It is a thousand little departures that train the reader to accept difference as harmless. By the time he reaches the bigger issues, he has already been conditioned. He has learned not to care when words shift. He has learned to trust the committee. He has learned to assume the old Book needed adjustment. That is why narrative changes matter too. The Bible is not only doctrine in Romans. It is every word in every passage. “Every word of God is pure” (Proverbs 30:5). That includes Acts 10:7.

### **Chapter 7: Romans 7:6 and Doctrinal Reorientation**

Romans 7:6 is a serious doctrinal verse. The King James Bible says, “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held.” The context is the relationship of the believer to the law, illustrated through the marriage bond in the opening verses of Romans 7. The KJV wording preserves the doctrinal flow in a way that connects with the believer’s deliverance from the law’s old dominion. The verse is not a playground for modern committee preferences. Romans is one of the greatest doctrinal books ever written, and small changes in Romans can have large doctrinal consequences.

The NKJV reads differently, saying, “having died to what we were held by,” aligning with the modern-version direction. A defender may argue that this is the better reading or better interpretation. But again, we are told the NKJV is merely a King James update. If that is true, why does it keep making choices that match the modern versions rather than preserving the KJV? Romans 7 is already a battlefield where men confuse law, grace, death, union with Christ, sanctification, and Christian liberty. A version that shifts the wording in such a passage is not merely replacing old English. It is making doctrinal decisions.

This is the pattern: the NKJV wears the King James label while walking in the same direction as modern-version choices in key passages. A Bible believer should not treat that as irrelevant. The issue is not whether one can still preach some truth from the NKJV. Of course one can. Truth remains in many places. The issue is whether the version is faithful enough to replace or stand beside the King James Bible as a safe update. Romans 7:6 says no. The old Book does not need a modern detour. It needs to be believed.

### **Conclusion: The Pattern Gives the Game Away**

The NKJV’s defenders want each change examined in isolation, explained away, and forgotten. They want to say, “That one is not a big deal.” Then when the next one is raised, they say, “That

one is not a big deal either.” Then another and another and another. But the issue is the pattern. Matthew 22:10, Matthew 26:45, Luke 1:35, John 18:24, Acts 10:7, Romans 7:6, and many more show the NKJV repeatedly walking in the direction of modern versions while still wearing the King James name. That is the bridge function. That is the leaven.

A Bible believer is not obligated to ignore a pattern because each individual example has an apologist. Men can defend almost anything if they want to badly enough. The question is not whether the NKJV can be defended by a committed defender. The question is whether it should have made these changes in the first place. If the King James Bible is the preserved word of God in English, then a version that departs from it again and again is not helping. It is moving. And if it is moving in the same direction as the modern versions, then it is not standing on the old path.

The New King James Version is not simply the KJV in modern dress. It is a bridge Bible. It keeps enough King James language to calm conservative readers while introducing them to modern-version choices, modern textual categories, modern translation habits, and modern uncertainty. It does not have to drag them all the way in one step. It just has to get them walking. That is why this series exists. The leaven is being exposed, and the pattern is now on the table.

### **15 of 15: The New King James Leaven - The Final Answer to Joshua Barzon and the “Forgotten Preface” Argument**

This final essay brings the whole matter to the table. The issue is not merely Joshua Barzon. The issue is not merely one short book. The issue is not whether a man can say nice things about the King James Bible while steering people toward the New King James Version. The issue is whether the words of God are settled, preserved, and available, or whether every generation must keep handing the Bible back to committees, scholars, publishers, and textual critics for another round of adjustments. Joshua Barzon’s *The Forgotten Preface* presents itself as a recovery of something neglected from the King James translators, but the practical result of the argument is not stronger confidence in the King James Bible. It is weakened confidence. It takes the translators’ humility, their respect for prior English Bibles, their defense of vernacular Scripture, their use of marginal notes, and their humanity, then uses those facts to suggest that modern revision, especially the New King James Version, is a reasonable continuation of their spirit. That is the problem. The facts may be historical, but the conclusion is doctrinally rotten.

The King James translators’ humility does not prove the NKJV. Their respect for previous English Bibles does not prove perpetual revision. Their belief that Scripture should be in the language of the people does not prove that the Bible must be updated every time the culture becomes

more ignorant. Their marginal notes do not justify modern critical-text doubt. Their human limitations do not cancel God's providence. Their refusal to call themselves inspired prophets does not mean God failed to preserve His words through their labor. That is the forgotten difference. There is a difference between what men consciously claimed about themselves and what God providentially accomplished through them. Men can be humble instruments while God does something larger than they fully understand. Caiaphas prophesied more than he knew. Cyrus fulfilled God's purpose before he understood God's hand. Balaam's ass spoke truth while the prophet was mad. God has never needed perfect men to perform perfect work.

This series has exposed the New King James Leaven from many angles. The counterfeit kept the King James name. The "just an update" lie concealed a new translation philosophy. The footnotes whispered, "Yea, hath God said?" The original autographs trap moved authority out of the believer's hand and into the scholar's office. The old pronouns were mocked as obsolete while precision was removed. Hell was cooled into Hades and Sheol. Worship became kneeling down. The incarnation witness in Hebrews 2:16 was weakened. Matthew 7:14 made the gospel sound "difficult." Hebrews 3:16 created a contradiction problem. "Corrupt the word of God" became "peddling." "Study" vanished from 2 Timothy 2:15. Servanthood was shaded toward slavery. The NKJV was shown walking with the modern versions while wearing the King James label. Now the conclusion is simple: the NKJV is not harmless. It is leaven. And "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Galatians 5:9).

### **Chapter 1: The Preface Proves Translation, Not Perpetual Revision**

The King James translators' preface proves that they believed Scripture should be translated. Amen. It proves they opposed Rome's attempt to keep the Scriptures locked away from common people. Amen. It proves they respected earlier English Bible work and did not pretend they were the first men God had used in the English stream. Amen. It proves they understood translation involved labor, difficulty, comparison, judgment, and reverence. Amen. But none of that proves the New King James Version. None of that proves that God intended English-speaking Christians to live forever under an endless chain of revisions. None of that proves that the Book God blessed for over four hundred years must remain on probation before every new committee that walks in with a dictionary and a copyright contract.

That is the sleight of hand. The argument takes a true historical point and stretches it into a false doctrinal conclusion. The translators revised prior English Bibles; therefore, we are told, later men may revise the King James Bible. But that assumes what it must prove. It assumes the process never reaches completion. It assumes refinement must be endless. It assumes providence has no settled point. But a process can reach its appointed end. A sword can be forged, heated, hammered, sharpened, polished, and finished. The fact that the sword passed through a process does not mean every man with a file gets to keep grinding on it forever. The

King James Bible came through a providential stream of English Bible history. That does not mean every modern revision is a continuation of that providence.

God works through stages, but God also brings things to fulness. Galatians 4:4 says, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." God prepared the world for Christ through promises, covenants, prophets, types, shadows, kings, priests, sacrifices, and centuries of history. But when Christ came, the process reached its appointed fulfillment. Likewise, the English Bible came through a line of preparation. That does not mean the English Bible must remain forever unfinished. The translators' preface supports the work of translation. It does not establish the doctrine of perpetual revision. To use it that way is to make the preface say more than it says and prove what it never proves.

## **Chapter 2: Translator Humility Does Not Disprove Divine Providence**

One of the great abuses of the King James translators' preface is the idea that because the translators were humble about their work, no Bible believer can claim God providentially preserved His words through that work. That is foolishness. The humility of the instrument does not limit the perfection of God's purpose. If God could only use men who fully understood the final significance of their labor, most of the Bible would collapse. The prophets often searched what the Spirit of Christ signified in their own writings. Peter says they "enquired and searched diligently" concerning the salvation they prophesied of (1 Peter 1:10-11). They wrote more than they comprehended. Their limited understanding did not make God's words uncertain.

The King James translators did not need to stand up in 1611 and say, "We have just produced the final English Bible for the next four hundred years and beyond." That is not how providence has to announce itself. Joseph did not understand the whole plan when his brothers sold him. Moses did not see the whole wilderness history when he fled Egypt. David did not see every Messianic fulfillment when he wrote the Psalms. Caiaphas did not understand the glory of his own prophecy when he said it was expedient that one man should die for the people. John 11:51 says, "And this spake he not of himself." God can put truth through the mouth of a man who does not grasp the full providential reach of what he is saying. That is a Bible principle.

So the argument that the translators were humble is not an argument against preservation. It is an argument against worshipping the translators. Bible believers do not worship the translators. They believe God used them. The issue is not whether those men were perfect. The issue is whether God is faithful. Psalm 12:6 says, "The words of the LORD are pure words." Psalm 12:7 says, "Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever." If God promised to preserve His words, He can use fallible men in a providential process to produce a perfect Book. The translators' humility does not overthrow that. It actually fits it. God uses humble instruments, and then He gets the glory.

### **Chapter 3: Vernacular Scripture Does Not Mean Endless Modernization**

The translators believed Scripture should be in the common tongue. Good. That is one reason Bible believers love the English Bible. The issue is not whether the Bible should be available to common people. Of course it should. The issue is whether “common tongue” means the Bible must be continually lowered to match every generation’s decreasing vocabulary, impatience, ignorance, and addiction to casual speech. The modern revision argument often hides behind compassion for readers. “People do not understand the old words.” “Language changes.” “We need clarity.” But the Bible’s answer to ignorance is not always revision. Often it is teaching.

Nehemiah 8:8 gives the pattern: “So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.” They did not throw away the Book because the people needed help. They read it distinctly. They gave the sense. They caused understanding. That is preaching. That is teaching. That is Bible ministry. A hard word is not always an enemy. Sometimes it is a doorway into doctrine. Words like “propitiation,” “sanctification,” “justification,” “dispensation,” “quicken,” “remission,” and “charity” should be taught, not sanded down until the doctrinal grain disappears. The King James Bible has educated generations. Modern versions often surrender to the ignorance they should be correcting.

The NKJV uses “clarity” as a public excuse while doing more than clarifying. It changes words, changes force, removes distinctions, inserts textual doubt, and alters the reader’s relationship to authority. That is not simply putting the Bible into understandable English. That is making the Bible answer to modern revision principles. There is a difference between translating the Bible into English and endlessly updating the Bible to match the language decay of a careless age. The old paths do not need to be repaved every time a generation forgets how to walk.

### **Chapter 4: Marginal Notes in 1611 Do Not Justify Critical-Text Doubt**

Another argument taken from the preface is the use of marginal notes. The King James translators used marginal notes, therefore, some argue, the NKJV’s notes are harmless. That is shallow. Not all notes are equal. A note that gives an alternate English rendering, explains a word, or clarifies a difficulty is not the same thing as a modern textual note that tells the reader the NU-Text omits, changes, or reads differently. The issue is not whether a Bible can ever have helpful notes. The issue is whether the notes train the reader to doubt the text.

The NKJV’s note system repeatedly introduces the reader to rival textual authorities. NU says this. M says that. Other manuscripts read differently. The body may often preserve something close to the traditional reading, but the margin keeps whispering that the matter is not settled. That is the serpent’s old method. Genesis 3:1 says, “Yea, hath God said?” The devil did not start by burning the word. He started by questioning it. A footnote can become a pulpit for doubt if it

keeps placing alternatives beside the words God preserved. The average reader may not understand the full textual apparatus, but he understands enough to know that the Bible in front of him is being placed under review.

The King James Bible gives a clear trumpet. The NKJV margin gives an uncertain sound. First Corinthians 14:8 says, “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” The Bible believer needs a sword, not a seminar every time he reads a verse. He needs the words of God, not a committee whispering about rival readings in the margin. The translators’ historical use of notes does not justify modern critical-text leaven. That argument confuses categories. It turns helpful explanation into permission for textual uncertainty. That is not honesty. That is using history as a disguise for doubt.

### **Chapter 5: Respecting the KJV While Replacing It Is Not Harmless**

One of the most subtle dangers in Joshua Barzon’s argument is the tone of “respect.” The King James Bible is respected. The translators are respected. The legacy is respected. The beauty is respected. The influence is respected. But after all the respect is spoken, the reader is still being led toward the New King James Version and modern revision logic. That is not harmless. A man can praise a landmark while building the road around it. He can salute an old flag while lowering it. He can speak kindly of a king while transferring power to a committee. Respectful language does not cancel the effect of the doctrine.

The issue is not whether someone says, “I love the KJV.” The issue is what his teaching does to confidence in the KJV. Does it leave believers with a perfect Bible in their hands, or does it leave them with a respected historical translation that still needs improvement? Does it strengthen final authority, or does it move authority to scholars, manuscripts, margins, autographs, and committees? Does it teach the saint to say, “It is written,” or does it teach him to say, “Other texts read”? That is the test. A man can say respectful things about the Bible while weakening trust in the Bible. The devil has never objected to religious compliments if he can get the authority moved.

This is why the NKJV is so dangerous. It does not come saying, “Throw away the King James Bible.” It comes saying, “Honor it, but use this.” It comes as the safe middle ground. It comes as the conservative compromise. It comes as the bridge. But bridges go somewhere. The NKJV helps move people from a settled Bible to a comparative Bible, from final authority to scholarly options, from “the words are preserved” to “the originals were inspired,” from old paths to updated paths. Respecting the KJV while training people to move beyond it is not harmless. It is leaven with a smile.

### **Chapter 6: The New King James Version Is the Leaven, Not the Loaf**

The NKJV does not need to be the worst modern version to be dangerous. That is a crucial point. Some people defend it by saying, "It is better than the NIV," or "It is closer to the KJV than the ESV," or "It uses the traditional text more than most modern versions." That may be true in a relative sense, but relative comparison is not the standard. A little leaven does not defend itself by saying it is not the whole lump. Galatians 5:9 says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." The issue is not how large the leaven is. The issue is what it does.

The NKJV's danger is precisely that it is close. It keeps enough King James language to get into places where other modern versions would be rejected. It keeps enough traditional readings to sound safe. It keeps enough familiar rhythm to calm suspicion. Then it introduces the principles of the modern version movement: readability over reverence, updating over study, textual notes over certainty, original autographs over present possession, and committee authority over preserved words. That is leaven. It spreads by being tolerated. It works because people say, "It is not that bad." That is exactly how compromise wins.

The Bible believer does not have to prove the NKJV is worse than every other version on the shelf. He only has to show that it is not the preserved Book and that it trains the reader in the wrong direction. A counterfeit does not have to be the ugliest fake in the pile. It only has to pass as close enough to the real thing. The NKJV borrowed the King James name, but it did not preserve the King James authority. It looks conservative enough to deceive the cautious and modern enough to satisfy the revisers. That is why it is the perfect bridge Bible. It is not the whole loaf of apostasy. It is the leaven that gets kneaded in.

## **Chapter 7: The Final Question Is Preservation**

At the bottom of this whole series is one question: did God preserve His words or not? Not merely the message. Not merely general doctrine. Not merely thoughts, concepts, ideas, or broad religious truth. His words. The Bible says, "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). The Lord Jesus said man shall live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). Those verses do not allow a vague preservation theory where the perfect words are locked in vanished originals, scattered through manuscript evidence, and reconstructed by scholars who cannot agree.

If God preserved His words, those words must be somewhere. They must be accessible. They must be usable. They must be preach-able. They must be readable. They must be capable of being memorized, believed, and obeyed. Paul told Timothy that from a child he had known "the holy scriptures" (2 Timothy 3:15). Timothy did not possess Moses' original autograph. Yet Paul called what he had holy Scripture. The Lord Jesus held men accountable to written Scripture in

His day. He did not act as if preservation was a theoretical doctrine trapped in lost originals. He said, "Have ye not read?" That assumes the words were available.

For English-speaking believers, the King James Bible has borne the marks of providential preservation like no other Book. It has produced fruit. It has stood. It has preached. It has converted. It has armed missionaries. It has fed saints. It has been hated by Rome, mocked by modernists, corrected by scholars, attacked by cults, and still it stands. The NKJV does not strengthen that testimony. It weakens it by introducing the idea that the old Book must be revised, updated, footnoted, and corrected. That is why the final answer to Barzon's thesis must be plain: God did not preserve His words so modern committees could keep improving them. He preserved them so His people could believe them.

### **Conclusion: Purge the Leaven**

The final answer to Joshua Barzon and the *Forgotten Preface* argument is simple: the preface does not prove what he wants it to prove. It proves the translators believed in translation. It proves they respected prior English Bibles. It proves they were humble. It proves they understood difficulties in translation. It proves they defended Scripture in the common tongue. But it does not prove the New King James Version. It does not prove perpetual revision. It does not prove that modern critical-text notes are harmless. It does not prove that the King James Bible must remain forever subject to later committees. It does not prove that God failed to give English-speaking believers a settled Book.

The King James translators were men. God is God. Their humanity does not cancel His providence. Their humility does not cancel His preservation. Their preface does not authorize the modern Bible industry. Their use of prior English Bibles does not justify every later revision. Their marginal notes do not sanctify the NKJV's textual doubt. Their desire for understandable Scripture does not mean the Bible must be lowered to every generation's ignorance. The argument fails because it confuses translation history with final authority. The Bible believer can appreciate history without surrendering the Book.

The New King James Version is leaven because it borrows King James language while introducing the modern-version principle of uncertainty. It honors the old Book with one hand and revises it with the other. It says "King James" on the cover while teaching readers to think beyond the King James Bible. It is not harmless. It is not merely an update. It is not the old path. The Bible says, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," and the command is not to spread the leaven, defend the leaven, tolerate the leaven, or call the leaven balanced. The command is to purge it out. The old Book still stands. The King James Bible still gives a clear trumpet. The question is not whether the modern scholars will ever stop correcting it. The question is whether Bible believers will stop letting them.

## **Conclusion to the Series: The New King James Leaven**

After fifteen essays, the matter is no longer hidden. The New King James Version is not the King James Bible with a haircut. It is not the old Book with a little dust brushed off. It is not merely the Authorized Version with a few “thees” and “thous” exchanged for modern pronouns. It is not the harmless twin of the King James Bible. It is not a safe middle ground. It is not the old path in modern shoes. It is a bridge Bible, a counterfeit Bible, a leavened Bible, and a Bible that borrowed the King James name while introducing the modern-version principle of doubt, revision, comparison, and uncertainty. That is the point this series has labored to prove. Not with emotion alone. Not with empty accusation. Not with blind loyalty. But by looking at the words, the changes, the footnotes, the philosophy, the direction, and the fruit.

The Bible says, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9). That verse has been the heartbeat of this whole series. The danger of the NKJV is not that every verse screams corruption on the surface. That is not how leaven works. Leaven works quietly. Leaven spreads slowly. Leaven changes the lump from within. The New King James Version keeps enough King James flavor to calm the unsuspecting, but changes enough to move the reader away from a settled Book. It leaves enough familiar wording to sound safe, but adds enough modern-version thinking to train the mind to compare, doubt, revise, and defer to scholars. That is why it is so dangerous. A corrupt Bible that looks obviously corrupt is easy to reject. A corrupt Bible that dresses modestly, carries the family name, speaks respectfully of the old Book, and then quietly alters the words is much more dangerous.

By now, the pattern has been laid out plainly. We saw the counterfeit that kept the King James name. We answered the “just an update” lie. We exposed the footnotes that whisper, “Yea, hath God said?” We dealt with the original autographs trap that moves authority away from the Bible in the believer’s hand and into the scholar’s office. We showed why “thee,” “thou,” and “ye” are not obsolete junk but grammatical tools. We exposed how hell gets cooled into Hades and Sheol. We watched worship become kneeling down. We saw Hebrews 2:16 move away from the incarnation emphasis. We saw Matthew 7:14 make the way to life sound “difficult.” We saw Hebrews 3:16 create a contradiction problem. We saw “corrupt the word of God” softened into “peddling.” We saw the command to “Study” vanish from 2 Timothy 2:15. We saw servant language pushed toward slavery language. We saw the NKJV walking with the modern versions while still wearing the King James label. And finally, we answered the argument that the King James translators’ humility and preface somehow justify perpetual revision. They do not.

The issue is no longer, "Can someone find truth in the NKJV?" Of course he can. A counterfeit dollar still has numbers and pictures on it. Rat poison is mostly food. The issue is not whether the NKJV contains many true statements. The issue is whether it is pure. The issue is whether it is preserved. The issue is whether it strengthens confidence in the words of God or weakens that confidence. The issue is whether it keeps the believer standing on final authority or moves him into the endless swamp of textual notes, alternate readings, original-autograph theories, modern scholarship, and committee revision. The Bible does not say, "Most words of God are pure." It says, "Every word of God is pure" (Proverbs 30:5). It does not say man shall live by general ideas. It says man shall live by "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

That is why this matter cannot be brushed aside as a preference issue. This is not vanilla versus chocolate. This is not old hymns versus new songs. This is not whether someone likes leather covers, red letters, paragraph format, or verse-by-verse layout. This is the word of God. Every doctrine rests on the words. Salvation rests on the words. The deity of Christ rests on the words. The blood atonement rests on the words. Hell rests on the words. Eternal security rests on the words. The gospel of grace rests on the words. The rapture, the judgment seat of Christ, the body of Christ, the mystery revealed to Paul, the difference between Israel and the church, and the whole structure of sound doctrine rests on the words. Touch the words, and you touch the foundation.

And let it be said plainly: once a man has seen the corruption and still decides to defend it, that is no longer ignorance. James 4:17 says, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." A man may not have known. A man may have used the NKJV because a pastor gave it to him. A man may have trusted it because he saw "King James" on the cover. A man may have sincerely believed it was only an update. God knows the heart. But after the evidence is laid out, after the changes are shown, after the leaven is exposed, after the danger is marked, a man is responsible for what he does with the light he has been given. You can ignore it. You can mock it. You can defend the NKJV anyway. You can say it does not matter. But you will not be able to say you were never warned.

The Lord Jesus said in John 12:48, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him." Then He said, "the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." That ought to make any Bible corrector tremble. Men are careless with words because they do not fear the judgment connected to words. They think it is a game. They think it is scholarship. They think it is readability. They think it is publishing. They think it is translation theory. But Jesus Christ said His word will judge men in the last day. If the words are going to judge, I would be very careful about changing them, correcting them, softening them, replacing them, footnoting them into doubt, or telling people they do not have them perfectly.

The King James Bible does not need the New King James Version. The old Book was not waiting for a twentieth-century committee to improve it. It was not limping through history until modern scholars could rescue it. It was not a rough draft. It was not a noble but imperfect stepping-stone. It was not an antique to be honored and replaced. It was, and is, the preserved word of God in English. It has stood through popes, priests, modernists, liberals, cults, professors, critics, publishers, compromisers, and polished evangelical apologists. It has outlived the men who mocked it. It will outlive the committees that corrected it. It will outlive every modern version that tried to replace it.

The New King James Version, by contrast, is the perfect picture of subtle corruption. It says "King James," but it is not the King James Bible. It says "update," but it revises. It says "clarity," but it removes precision. It says "helpful notes," but it plants doubt. It says "same tradition," but it walks with the modern versions. It says "respect," but it undermines final authority. It says "readability," but it weakens force. It says "scholarship," but it trains people to doubt the Book. That is leaven. It may be small in places. It may be subtle in places. It may be defensible to those determined to defend it. But leaven does not need to be large to be dangerous. It only needs to be allowed.

So the conclusion of the matter is simple: purge the leaven. Do not defend it. Do not excuse it. Do not spread it. Do not hand it to new converts as if it is basically the same. Do not place it beside the King James Bible as an equal authority. Do not let smooth-talking men tell you that a little corruption is acceptable because most of it still sounds familiar. The command in 1 Corinthians 5:7 is, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump." When the leaven touches the words of God, it must be marked, exposed, rejected, and removed.

This series was not written to win a popularity contest. It was written to put the New King James Version under the light of the King James Bible and show what is really there. And what is there is not purity. It is not preservation. It is not the old path. It is a modern bridge dressed in King James clothing. Like any harlot trying to dress modestly, the outward appearance may fool the undiscerning for a while, but the character eventually shows through. Once the paint is scraped, once the dress is lifted from the deception, once the wording is compared, once the footnotes are read, once the pattern is traced, the thing is exposed.

The old path still stands. "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16). The old Book still speaks. The old Book still cuts. The old Book still preaches. The old Book still corrects. The old Book still feeds. The old Book still exposes. The old Book still gives a clear trumpet. The question is not whether God preserved His words. He did. The question is whether men will believe Him or keep running to committees that tell them the Bible needs another update.

As for this series, the warning has been sounded. The evidence has been laid out. The leaven has been marked. What a man does with that is between him and God. But I would be careful. Very careful. Because this is not a debate over religious furniture. This is the word of God. And the same word men reject, correct, soften, and revise will judge them in that day.