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The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XII
Issue 276

The KJV: 400 Years of Bondage

1611-2011

ECCLESIASTICAL BONDAGE – ARCHAIC BONDAGE – TRANSLATIONAL BONDAGE – TEXTUAL BONDAGE

(Part 1)

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

This year marks the 400th Anniversary of the Bible translation known as the *Authorized King James Version*.

For some, this is a year of celebration for the *best* of all of the English translations. For others, it is even a time to celebrate their beliefs that it is the *only* trustworthy version. Books are being released and conferences conducted hailing the glories of this historical event.

Little do some realize that 1611 was *not* a high spiritual mark in the history of the church, the Body of Christ. Instead of being a grand year of the pinnacle of preservation or perfection of God's Word, it was rather the sad depths of the subtle corrupting of God's Word by the historic union of governmental and ecclesiastical politics.

Contrary to what some seem to think, 1611 did not mark, for the Body of Christ, some legitimate milestone in the translation of the Scriptures into English. For hundreds of years prior to 1611 English speaking people had translations of God's Word, even better ones than the "Authorized" Version.

There were translations into Old and Middle English. In addition to the hundreds of years of English translation work before William Tyndale's 1526, there were even five notable versions published between his and the *King James Version's* publication in 1611.

English Translations from Tyndale to the KJV

- 1535: *The Coverdale Bible*
- 1537: *The Matthew's Bible*
- 1539: *The Great Bible*
(The first "Authorized Version")¹
- 1560: *The Geneva Bible*
- 1568: *The Bishops Bible*
(The second "Authorized Version")¹

The *truth* has always been embraced by God's church (His *ecclesia*). At the time of the publication of the *King James Version*, *The Geneva Bible* was the Bible of the English Reformation.

Over the past four hundred years, Christendom has been cleverly and craftily led further and further away from God's actual Words by the translation produced by the Anglican priests under the authorization of their English Monarch.

As was the goal of its authorization, *The King James Version* has successfully contributed to keeping people in bondage *from* the truth for 400 years: in ecclesiastical bondage, in archaic bondage, in translational bondage, in textual bondage.

(see **400 YEARS**, page 2551)

1. The *King James Version* was the third "Authorized Version" by the Throne of England.

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XII, No. 276 – January 18, 2011

This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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Local: (814) 701-0063

bsn@studysshelf.com

www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor

(clyde@studysshelf.com)

André Sneider – Managing Editor

Rick Lemons – Associate Editor

Department Managers

Clyde L. Pilkington, III – Office

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ECCLESIASTICAL BONDAGE

The *King James Version* has contributed to keeping people in ecclesiastical bondage. This version put those who used it unknowingly under the influence of Anglo-Catholic (Anglican) theology.

Theodore Letis has well observed,

One reason the Anglican Bible [*King James Version*] became the Bible of the Fundamentalists is because most had no intimate knowledge of the actual history of the English Bible which would have made clear this was the *official* Bible of the Anglican Church.²

What many do not realize is that the *King James Version* is actually an ecclesiastical, governmental Bible. When we learn the true history of the *King James Version* – what surrounded its translation, who authorized it, who translated it, etc. – we will recognize that what is commonly known as the “*Authorized Version*” (AV), could easily be referred to as the *Anglican Version* (AV) – or the *Anglo-Catholic Version* (AV).

King James was the ecclesiastical head of the Church of England – the Anglican Church – and he was the governmental head of Britain – King of England. With England’s marriage of church and state, we have a prime example of Babylon the Great – with James being the religious monarch, the Royal “Defender of the Faith.” Probably the only thing the average “*King James Bible* believer” knows about King James is that their Bible is named after him.³

In authorizing a new version of the Bible to be revised and translated, England’s King James was attempting to firmly solidify and preserve the power over the governmental and ecclesiastical systems which he held in his hands.

In *The Great Ecclesiastical Conspiracy* we read,

An understanding of the political climate of the 16th and early 17th centuries is crucial if we are to comprehend the motives and logic behind the

2. Theodore Letis, *The Ecclesiastical Text*, 1987, page 180.
3. Imagine for a moment if President Barack Obama authorized a national translation of the Bible. Would we then be *President Obama Bible Believers*?

king’s new translation.

England’s doctrine of the *Divine Right of Kings* was the Anglican answer to papal succession, in which active resistance to pope or king was considered a sin worthy of eternal damnation ...

In his first address to the Parliament, James defended his doctrine of the *Divine Right of Kings*. He did not mince words regarding his intention to be an absolute monarch over England. He presented the following logic as grounds for his supremacy.

“The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth.”

True to his words, James dissolved Parliament and for ten years thereafter he ruled England without it.⁴

Gene Edwards writes,

James needed to make sure the recently founded Church of England gained acceptance. (That was his major reason for ordaining a new Bible. He wanted a Bible that leaned toward vbishops and clergy.)⁵

Listen to King James in his own words:

I will have one doctrine and one discipline, one religion in substance and ceremony ... I shall make them conform themselves, or I will have them out of the land or else do worse. If any would not be quiet, and show his obedience, he were worthy to be hanged.⁶

We can also see that the translators themselves were well aware of the political/social implications of their work as they acknowledged in their *Translators to the Readers*. The very first line reads,

Zeal to promote the common good ...

... Seeking to reduce their Countrymen to good order and discipline ...⁷ ▶

4. George Davis, Michael Clark, Kirk Pearson: *The Great Ecclesiastical Conspiracy*, Third Revised Edition.
5. Gene Edwards, *The Christian Woman ... Set Free*, SeedSowers, Jacksonville, FL, 2005, p. 33.
6. King James VI of Scotland, I of England at Hampton Court, cited by Ross Purdy, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, Bible Student’s Press, 2007.
7. *The Translators to the Reader*, original KJV Preface.

King James – The Man

I here present a short collection of quotations from historians who have written of this king who authorized the Anglo-Catholic Church of England's version of 1611.

Whom should modern Christians believe concerning the character of King James? The two choices are: the Separatists, who lost all their earthly possessions and many of them their lives in opposing James; or modern "KJV-only" authors, who have a theological bias to prove. – Dr. Michael D. Sproul⁸

:::::

As "Defender of the Faith" of the state church, [a title given to King Henry VIII by the pope in 1521 and used by James], King James became the enemy of all believers who would not follow the official doctrines and practices of the state church. In 1614, Leonard Busher claimed that "his Majesty's bishops and ministers had been armed and weaponed with fire and sword and not with Scripture." – Rick Norris⁹

:::::

No prince was ever so much flattered who so little deserved it. – Daniel Neal¹⁰

:::::

[King James was] the rejected and most despicable sovereign that ever held an English scepter. – J.J. Goadby¹¹

Even one of the valued historians of "KJV-Only" proponents writes:

[King James was] undoubtedly one of the worst sort of monarchs. – Alexander McClure¹²

Ecclesiastical and Religious Words

The *King James Version* contains many ecclesiastical and religious *words* that are NOT the words of the Greek Scripture. These words have been forced upon us by the High Church of England.

Again listen to the KJV translators themselves,

We have ... avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave [abandon] old Ecclesiastical words.¹³

"Ecclesiastical words" were the religious words of the Anglican Church. Keeping these "old ecclesiastical" words was at the heart of the translation of the *King James Version*. In fact, the freedom of the translators was in bondage to this end by the King. The King authorized fifteen rules, through Bishop Bancroft, that governed and controlled the translators.

Rule number three is of particular importance to us here. It is this rule that placed the translators under bondage to the Church of England's ecclesiastical words.

The old Ecclesiastical Words to be kept, viz., the word Church not to be translated Congregation, &c.¹⁴

This instruction given to the translators was that they could NOT depart from the Ecclesiastical words of the Church of England. They were NOT free to translate as they saw fit. They were bound by the King's rules to preserve the High Church terminology, thus safeguarding Anglican doctrine and tradition.

Examples of High Church ECCLESIASTICAL words that obscure the truth found preserved in the *King James Version* are:

Bishop	Ordain
Church	Pastor
Deacon	Preach
Office	Presbytery

8. Dr. Michael D. Sproul, *God's Word Preserved: A Defense of Historic Separatists Definitions and Beliefs*, 2005, p. 44.
 9. Rick Norris, *The Unbound Scripture*, pp. 58-59.
 10. Daniel Neal, *The History of the Puritans*, p. 277.
 11. J.J. Goadby, *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*, p. 80.
 12. Alexander McClure, *Translators Revived*, p. 196.

13. *Translators to the Reader*, original Preface to the *King James Version*.
 14. Laurence M. Vance, *A Brief History of English Bible Translations*, Vance Publications.
 Ronald D. Lesley, *Facts from History about Our King James Bible*, Fundamental Bible Institute.

Examples of High Church THEOLOGICAL words that obscure the truth found preserved in the *King James Version* are:

Baptism	Everlasting
Easter	Forever
Eternal	Hell
Eternity	

The ecclesiastical and theological words gave foundation to the doctrines of the Protestant-Romanism of the Church of England and kept the true spirit of the Reformers at bay, and the truth of the Scriptures hidden beneath the rubble of religious tradition.

The robed clerics of the Anglican Church managed to master the withholding of truth in pristine Pharisaical tradition. For four hundred years unsuspecting readers of the *King James Version* have been brought under the inherent dangers of the bondage of non-scriptural, religious language.

Why King James Authorized the New Bible (A Historical Perspective)

By 1600, the *Geneva Bible* had become the Bible of choice of English speaking Protestants.¹⁵

The new king of England had no interest in promoting the *Geneva Bible*. His secret agenda was to destroy, discredit or displace it – whichever could be achieved more rapidly.¹⁶

By January 1604, it had become clear that James had taken an intense personal dislike to this Bible. The reason for his dislike is not difficult to discern ... The ultimate grounds for James' hostility toward the *Geneva Bible* was the challenge its marginal notes posed to his passionate belief in the doctrine of the "divine right of kings."¹⁷

King James, while on the throne of Scotland wrote works in support of the doctrine of the "Divine Right of Kings." These works were, *True Law of Free Monarchies* and *Basilikon Doron*.

James became persuaded that his role as the new Constantine could be exercised only with the support of the bishops."¹⁸

[Anglican Archbishop] Richard Bancroft was one of the most relentless opponents of Puritanism in England ... He declared that the Puritans were "false prophets" who were threatening to destroy the fabric of church and nation. For Bancroft, the facts of the matter were simple. God meant the Church of England to be governed by a monarch and bishops, and that was the end of the matter.¹⁹

James had every reason to hope that his new translation of the Bible would be a powerful factor in creating a cohesive English national identity ... The production, at the king's initiative, of a new English translation of the Bible would reinforce the image of the king as the political and spiritual leader of his people.²⁰

The *King James Bible* is an outstanding example and embodiment of the ideas of its own period.²¹

It is impossible to overlook the fact that the *King James* translators did not begin to translate with blank sheets of paper in front of them.²²

A number of scholars have suggested that what was actually delivered to the printer was a copy of the *Bishop's Bible*, with the alterations entered directly into the text of the work.²³

[Archbishop] Bancroft ... reserved for himself the privilege of making revisions to what all had hitherto thought of as the final draft.²⁴

[Miles] Smith complained loudly to anyone who would listen that Bancroft had introduced fourteen changes into the final text without any consultation.²⁵

The new Bible, which came to be known as the ►

15. Alister McGrath, *In the Beginning*, p. 129.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 176.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 196.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 178.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

Authorized (or King James) Version, eliminated the alleged threat to national security ...²⁶

One Parliamentary group, meeting in 1652-53, argued that the *King James Bible* used “prelatical language” – in other words, the traditional church terminology, such as “bishop.”²⁷

The evidence strongly suggests that the first English Bible to be brought to the New World was the Geneva Bible.²⁸

Rather than reform any further, the English Establishment wanted to see uniformity of practice and doctrine in the realm which would be good for stability. Those who were not satisfied with this status quo were looked upon as agitators who threatened the peace and stability of the kingdom. They were considered as enemies even.²⁹

Modern American independent churches would not have been comfortable under the power and influence of either Scotland’s or England’s state churches because they controlled as much what you did outside the church as in!³⁰

Buying it [his new Bible] was the only patriotic thing for English citizens to do. He asked how could loyal Englishmen buy a Bible produced by foreigners and printed by foreigners in a foreign land? Rather they should buy Bibles produced in England in support of the local English printers. Of course, he did not tell them that he was responsible for preventing English printers from printing the popular *Geneva Bible*, which also would have supported them nicely, nor was the Geneva allowed on the English market that demanded it.

Yet people continued to buy imported *Geneva Bibles*. But Laud managed to arrest the importation of the popular *Geneva*, and English people were forced eventually to buy the *King James Bible*. There was no other choice if they wanted to replace their old ones. Only *King James Versions* were permitted to be produced and sold. By

means of this campaign the *Geneva* was finally squashed. Contrary to what is often mistakenly repeated, the *King James Version* gained ascendancy not by any virtue or merit of its own, but rather by virtue of there being no competition or any choice ... folks had no choice but to buy a *King James Version*. One that was under the King’s copyright and printed under the monopoly of a single printer whose family held it for over a hundred years. It is to be noted that such a printing monopoly and long held copyright has never been matched by any modern version as of yet.³¹

Another irony is that those who promote the *King James Bible* as the only Bible that English speaking people should use owe their heritage to the nonconformists and independents that King James and his bishops persecuted.

These “King James Bible-Only” folk would find themselves scorned by King James and punished for not submitting to sacraments and attending worship services that they probably would not be able to distinguish from that of the Roman Catholic Church. Sure, the Church of England is “reformed” per se, but relative to where the American fundamental independent local assembly sits on the spectrum, the Anglo-Catholic Church of England is on the opposite end of the spectrum quite near the Roman Catholic Church.

The heritage of the American fundamentalist is far closer to those whom King James persecuted for nonconformity to his Church’s doctrine and practice. These same nonconformists rejected the Church of England and its Bibles in preference to the *Geneva Bible*. Otherwise, the Pilgrims would have been Episcopalians and would never have left England!³²

What is transparent is that King James and his Church prelates were influenced far more by their ambition than by the reading of God’s Word. Their judgment upon the *Geneva* was due to their close attention to the notes rather than the text. What is also apparent today is that the age and idiosyncrasies of the *King James Version* makes it susceptible to being used by those who would

26. Peter J. Thuesen, *In Discordance with the Scriptures*, p. 29.

27. McGrath, *Ibid.*, p. 286.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

29. Ross Purdy, *I Will Have One Doctrine and One Discipline*, Bible Student’s Press, 2007.

30. Purdy, *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

abuse spiritual authority and teach false doctrine. This is a great and growing problem as time marches on and more generations are confused. The agenda of King James and his Church has affected considerable damage in the most subtle of ways and it has been by God's grace that it is not more serious.³³

There are many who have learned King *James Version English* in addition to the normal English vernacular they speak, but they have had to spend many years and much effort learning it.³⁴

That is exactly what King James and his bishops intended to do with their new Bible. They believed that it would promote their agenda of uniformity to the religion of the Church of England. They were hostile to the Puritans and any other non-conformists and separatists who were a political threat to the English Monarchy and Episcopacy! Again, if King James were alive today, how he would mock the American groups calling themselves fundamental and independent where they also promote the *King James Bible* as the only English Bible we ought to use.³⁵

The *King James Bible* is a revision that was guided by those with an evident agenda to preserve monarch and bishops in a governing position of power over other competing polities. This is plainly evident in the Dedicatory penned by the translators to King James! To deny this is to deny the historical facts and circumstances. The *King James Bible* has lent itself to be used by authoritarian groups and cults who demand uniformity and conformity to their authority, just like old King James!³⁶

A Bible Forced upon the People

The irrefutable evidence is that far from rushing out to buy or make use of this new translation, people preferred to use an English translation from fifty years earlier – *the Geneva Bible*. The *King James Bible* of A.D. 1611, that monument of dignity and reverence, has not always been as beloved as some people would like to think ... In

fact, it was so objectionable to many people of its time they would have nothing to do with it. The Pilgrims, for example, would not even allow it onboard the *Mayflower*, preferring instead the *Geneva Bible* of 1506 (which was also the Bible of William Shakespeare).³⁷

The simple truth is that the “new Bible” was initially regarded with polite disinterest. Nobody at the time really liked the new translation very much. Even some of those who were prominently involved in the translation of the *King James Bible* seemed hesitant to use it, preferring to cite from the *Geneva Bible* instead – hardly a commendation for their work. The *King James Bible* might be the Bible of the English religious and political establishment; it had a long way to go before it became the Bible of the English people.³⁸

To support the *Geneva Bible*, he [William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury] argued, was unpatriotic.³⁹

Samuel Johnson once remarked that “Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.”⁴⁰

The *King James Bible* was now seen as a pillar of Restoration society, holding together church and state, the bishops and the monarch, at a time when social cohesion was essential to England's future as a nation.⁴¹

The “new translation” – as the *King James Bible* was still termed even late in the seventeenth century – was still regarded with some misgivings at the opening of the eighteenth ... The first 150 years of its history were encumbered with hints of discontent, criticism, and suspicion ...⁴²

The new Bible [KJV] did eventually replace the *Geneva* through aggressive campaigning of the [Anglican] Church. It really did not come into its own until some forty years later.⁴³

(to be continued)

33. *Ibid.*

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*

37. Eugene H. Glassman, *The Translation Debate*, 1981, pp. 14-15.

38. McGrath, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 277, 278.

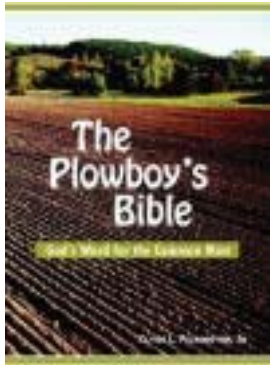
39. *Ibid.*, p. 282.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 288.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 289-290.

43. Purdy, *Op. Cit.*



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by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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