

Is the King James Bible hard to understand?

Introduction

This article is based on a sermon by the same title delivered by Matthew Verschuur at Victory Faith Centre on 26 September, 2006.

The superiority of God and His Word

We're coming to the question, "Is the King James Bible hard to understand?" We must first see that God is supreme. His Word is His, not man's word. And man must do as God says, not merely what man says. Therefore, in approaching the Word of God, it is necessary to come to it based on God's framework, not on a human framework.

The basis of everything to do with the Word of God is the idea that God is powerful enough to give His Word. Those who are saying that the Word cannot be understood are essentially saying that God is weak. But God is strong, able to communicate His Word to man, that is, able to get the Word to us, and it is a Word which is able to be understood.

"In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." (2 Corinthians 2:4, 5).

God is light, and His Word is light. That light specifically relates to presence and comprehension. The problem is not with God, but the world is obviously in darkness. The darkness is in the lack of knowledge, wilful ignorance and deception that exists in the world.

As light is ever able to dispel darkness, so is the power of God as compared to the world. The devils are attempting to maintain the darkness, namely, a darkness (concerning the Word) of the heart of man. But light, when it comes, displaces darkness. Thus, for all the evil operations, when the Word comes, it is really more powerful than any thing in this world. (Although Christ did say that false traditions and things were able to make the Word of none effect, that problem was always in the hearer, and not a problem that the Word itself has.)

So when the Word comes to someone who is in the darkness, they may indeed say that the Word, which is of a completely different nature of light, is hard to understand. Yet, when that light comes — and it does come — it does shine, and men's hearts are changed.

The resistance of certain to the Word

"Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60).

Moses' law is hard, with many rules. If it is difficult to be blameless, and actually impossible to be able to attain unto freedom from sin under it. This seems to indicate that the Word is hard — hard to know every part of it, hard to obey and hard to understand. In fact, offending one point of the law makes one guilty of the whole law.

Christ did not come to destroy the law. (True preaching is establishing the law.) His sayings were rejected by many of His own followers at one time. They accused Christ of giving a hard word, a hard message.

“Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.” (Matthew 13:13–15).

These were in willing darkness, a willing blindness. Those who let the cares of this world, deceitful things, or other lusts enter in have a problem: but the power of the Word is that when it comes, it does outshine darkness. People may hear with their ears, but be unwilling to accept in their heart. This is a great problem. It is not a problem with God, but with them.

“Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.” (Luke 11:52).

Those taking away the key of the knowledge of the Word are hindering those who enter the Kingdom. Those who receive the knowledge will enter into the area of blessing, but those who resist do so to their own detriment.

Those that are willing attain knowledge of the Word

“A wise *man* will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.” (Proverbs 1:5, 6).

The heart or inner man must be receptive to the Word. Part of the soul is the will, which must be willing to hear. Men’s hearts must not be filled with other things. The action of the will is that there is a choice to hear, and to do. His actions are to increase in learning, that is, to get more knowledge in. There must be a going to hear the Word. A believer then has to act, and actually go to the Church to hear the Word. This does not mean go to the world, where there are things against and absent to the Word.

“But the Comforter, *which* is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (John 14:26).

The Spirit of God is working in the Church. Thus, a wise person goes to Church to get the Word in, and so he attains, that is, comes into knowledge.

Man says there are many interpretations. But there are God’s correct interpretations. Men have their worldly learning, but God has the correct way.

The Holy Ghost is not leading people into false doctrines or private interpretations. He is the Spirit of truth, guiding and leading to the Word, to go forward in it.

Dark sayings are dark to those who are not in the light and so the world does not comprehend, but the Spirit is speaking, guiding and leading. We who have been born again have our hearts open and receptive to God’s understanding. Thus, the Holy Ghost is leading us, teaching us and bringing us

to higher knowledge of the Word.

Independence or staying away from the Church is wrong, because God is using the brethren, especially teachers, to get the Word to us. He wants us to be together for the increase of the knowledge of all believers.

A prophecy concerning the King James Bible

Scripture has a prophetic element to it, and this is especially true for the writings of the prophets. In the book of Isaiah, there is a prophecy which applies directly to the current situation regarding the King James Bible.

“And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it *is* sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.” (Isaiah 29:11, 12).

The Word of God has come to us in a form that we can understand, that is, in a book, which we can read and comprehend. (This is true in the natural.) The King James Bible can be looked into by people today.

Some people, when they look into the King James Bible, and with all their learning, cannot understand it, because to them it is sealed. God does not have a problem, but evidently the problem is with those learned, who are learned in the wrong sort of learning. They have the wisdom of this world (what James calls earthly, sensual and devilish). They may know many things, but Greek philosophy is not going to help them understand the Word of God. Even knowledge of what they think is the original Hebrew and Greek of the Bible is not going to help.

But a wise man, who is in the Church and of the Church, not of man and of the world, is going to understand the Word. And so there are some who do not believe the Bible, who approach it in unbelief, who must explain the Scripture away. There is false learning of all kinds, whether not taking the historical accounts literally, saying the prophets wrote after events, that the narratives are exaggerations or myths, and so on. But a person of truth believes the Word is true.

There are also another class of people: those who are not learned concerning the King James Bible. They are people who say that King James Bible is too hard to understand, dry and out-of-date. They are saying, “We must bring out a simple, modern new translation.” They are really saying, “Let’s water things down to a place where we can understand them, and bring out the real meaning, which isn’t really what God said or intended, but what we wanted to say in the first place.” That is, “God is wrong, but we are right.” Such things are foolishness.

“Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:13, 14).

The reason for the loftiness, grandeur and superiority of the Bible

There is a higher level of understanding above mere human intellect, or the wisdom of men. It is so that men must come to have to make a decision to rely on God. God has made it so that people can attain to His level, to His interpretations, which means non-reliance of the ways of man, but to make a choice of the will, to humble ourselves and come to Him.

We have to come to the right place and time. God's operations are to build up things, and to reveal them in their due seasons. There is a progressive work.

“And the vision of the evening and the morning which was told *is* true: wherefore shut thou up the vision; for it *shall be* for many days. And I Daniel fainted, and was sick *certain* days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business; and I was astonished at the vision, but none understood *it*.” (Daniel 8:26, 27).

The Word was shut up, but there is a due time when the Word is revealed. There are some things which a believer may not understand initially, but he must grow in knowledge. There are some things which become clear to the Church only at a certain time.

In the right season and in the right time, God gives the right level of revelation. If people are unwilling, when a time of revelation comes, they will not be in a position to receive it. But those who are hearing, growing and receptive are in the progressive revelation, which builds upon the last revelation. (God is in control, He is bringing things out in their season, toward certain ends, according to His purpose, as is evidenced throughout history.)

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (2 Timothy 2:15).

If a believer comes to a part of the Bible or a word or a concept He does not understand, he must put in some sort of effort to understand it. He must receive from the Spirit; put himself in an environment where He can hear, and be ready. God is not holding knowledge back from people, but is wanting them to come into knowledge. God is strong, not weak and is able to get His Word through.

One person who knew about difficulties in the Bible, who had to combat those who were rejecting the King James Bible was a man named Burgon (especially around 1882). He said that difficulties of the Word are tests of the heart of man. That is, God is testing you whether you will seek him, or whether you are looking for an excuse to reject Him.

When a time of revelation of the Word comes, a believer must be ready, in a place to receive from the Lord. There is a lot that has been put forth about how the King James Bible is different to normal speech, and so on. But as God reveals this to be His Word in English, the test is whether a person accepts this or rejects this.

God is communicating perfectly in the King James Bible

The King James Bible is different from ordinary speech. Its language, while comprehensible to a modern English speaker, is different to any form of the English language ever spoken. It is not the English of Shakespeare, nor the English of the twenty-first century. In fact, in the Bible we are observing God's use of the English language. It is Biblical English, in every way superior to the ordinary language, its grammar being exact, its old fashioned words being entirely correct, its nature being the very communication of God to the world in the English language.

The King James Bible is not in Old English, which was the language being spoken in the time of the Vikings in the Dark Ages, but in Biblical English, and it can be understood by anyone in the time of Modern English.

It can be understood even by children, because God is strong to communicate to children, “And that

from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:15).

God is able to communicate to those who have not had much education, or are simple, “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” (Acts 4:13).

God was able to mightily use the evangelical and Pentecostal pioneers, some of which did not have education. Yet they were able to preach the Word at a high level. This is because what God brings in is higher than man’s way. Man’s thoughts are changed by the Word.

Education is good. For example, the King James Bible translators were mainly university people. But what is important is godly learning, as can be found in the Church.

“For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth” (Colossians 1:5, 6).

God is strong enough to communicate the Word, and bring it to the whole world. The whole world is going toward using English. God is not weak, but strong to use the English language for the preaching of the Word. He is not weak, but strong to be able to use the Bible, that is, the King James Bible, which He has even intended, to use it to get His Word through to people everywhere.

“But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith” (Romans 16:26).

God is able to get the Word through, to children, to unlearned, to multitudes, even today.

Historically, God has communicated to people by the King James Bible. The whole of British, American and Australian culture was affected by it. Furthermore, even today, where English is the predominate language in the world, the predominate Bible is the King James Bible.

It is still commonly available, regardless of all the attack on it. (Those changing the Scripture, making foreign translations and relying on new methods are altogether in error and are actually failing.)

For example, when a person looks for the Bible on the internet, or gets Bible software for their computer, invariably the King James Bible can be attained or is one of the several versions available. This is no accident. This is showing the providence of God, that in the time of digital communication technology, the King James Bible is ascendant.

The prophecy of the Scripture is that the Word of God should be made known to all nations, and this is happening as the English tongue is commonly spoken, and the King James Bible spreads abroad. Thus, it remains that we must believe, see and actively promote these ideas, especially in regard to nations coming into obedience. As believers, we have actually a role to play in this.