

Mark!" I responded; genuinely glad to see my friend at the door. "Come in, I've called several times lately but never heard back from you. I thought maybe you'd moved."

"Hi, Clothman," Mark said to me, a bit sheepishly. Then he got straight to the point. "Clothman, I haven't been in touch because of a very serious issue which I must talk to you about."

"Hey, if this is about me secretly piercing Ralph's (his dog) ear last year, I apologize again. I had no idea a silver earring would attract ravens like that. By the way, how is Ralph?"

Mark didn't even smile. This must be serious.

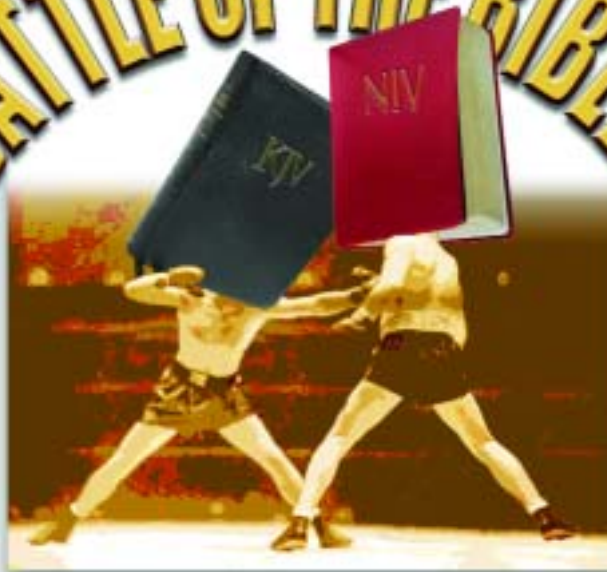
"I'm here to talk about the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible you use. The new church I'm attending has been teaching me how corrupt it is. Satan is using it to deceive and blind the church from the truth about Jesus Christ. In fact, all modern Bible versions are leading people astray."

Mark then passionately appealed to me to toss out my NIV and use only the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. He concluded with this bombshell statement: "Actually Clothman, now I'm not sure if you're even saved. I know you mean well, but you are being deceived—and as long as you use the NIV I'm afraid I won't be able to fellowship with you." Mark had genuine tears of compassion in his eyes as he gave me a tract to read and then hastily left.

I was shocked. Did Mark really think my salvation was at risk because I read the NIV? Was his new religious doctrine so strong as to tear our Christian friendship apart? A quick read through his tract left no doubt.

Recently a "Clothreader" sent me a book defending the same *King James Only* argument. The author concluded by saying, "...if the collective conscience of the

BATTLE OF THE BIBLES



BY GLEN MOYER

church does not admit soon to the seriousness of this matter its future is bleak, indeed. If not for themselves, at least for their children, Christians must recognize that modern translations of the Bible are as traitorous to the 'Written' Word, as Judas was to the 'Living' Word and, therefore, deserves no honors but rather to be rebuked from every pulpit."

Whoa!

On the other hand, I was recently forwarded a document which states this from the opposite perspective. "Please know we feel we were forced to defend our position about the KJV which stems primarily from a strong desire to comprehend the Word of God through the use of reliable translations of the Bible. This letter should be enough to convince you that the 'KJV Only' position, which seems to be of ultimate importance to many people, is based on inconsistency, ignoring the facts and jumping to conclusions which cannot be proven!" They go on to substantiate their case in great detail.

Obviously, well-meaning people on both sides of the debate have become obsessed. The *King James Only* folks vigorously defending their position, and the *Modern Translation* folks aggressively counterattacking. Frankly, I have no

problem with the KJV or the NIV, and I refuse to jump into the fray. What I am concerned about are all the non-Christian folks who haven't a clue what the fuss is about. All they see are Christians fighting with fellow Christians over the same Bible—all to the point of completely missing the point.

In the NIV, John 13:34-35 Jesus says, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

In the KJV it reads, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

In both versions Jesus is abundantly clear: Loving one another, not bickering with one another, is what will help others know what true Christianity is all about.

So what if you have the "correct" Bible version?! If your correctness is gained at the cost of credibility with your non-Christian friends, family and neighbors, you may have won a battle but you just lost the war. □

Clothman (Glen Moyer) is, among other things, pastor of High Point Adventures. Feel free to contact him at www.Clothman.com.

FREE BOOKLET
The King James Bible Controversy

Arguments about the relative quality of Bible translations are hardly new. But some push the issue past any reasonable limits, finding fault with modern-language translations—accusing them of corrupting Scripture, undermining Jesus' divinity, and inserting New Age or even Satanic philosophy. Find out the facts. Request item # **K197**.

