



THE
KING JAMES
BIBLE
CONTROVERSY

Ever since the late 1950s, when modern-language translations of the Bible began flooding the market, the King James Version has stood at the center of a controversy that has only increased in volume. Why all these new translations? Why fix something that's not broken? Critics of newer translations range from those who complain they're of poor quality to those who accuse translators of deliberately distorting Scripture.

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, of undermining Jesus' or the Holy Spirit's divinity, of removing words, or of inserting New Age or even Satanic philosophy. And their actions are often as radical as their rhetoric.

In July 2003, for instance, the Jesus Non-Denominational Church in Greenville, Michigan, held a book-burning, inviting parishioners to destroy copies of the *Harry Potter* series. They also, however, burned Catholic rosaries, Mormon literature—and any Bible that wasn't a KJV.

Some conspiracy theories about any translation that's not a KJV are so lurid that they put one more in mind of *The X-Files*:

- A lesbian helped translate the NIV.¹
- The New King James Version has an occult symbol that stands for the “Mark of the Beast” on its cover.
- The NIV removed 64,000 words from the Bible and no one noticed.

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Unless noted otherwise, scriptures are quoted from the *Holy Bible, King James Version*.

- Plagues have struck down entire committees who worked on modern versions.
- Rupert Murdoch owns Zondervan, publisher of the NIV, and he also owns other non-Christian publishers (no word on how exactly this makes the NIV a dangerous Bible—apparently its tenuous association with unspecified non-Christian material is guilt enough).
- Westcott and Hort, whose Greek text many modern translators use, may have been Freemasons (again, the very imputation seems to be more than enough evidence of wrongdoing for many people).
- The Codex Vaticanus, an important New Testament manuscript not discovered until 1841, is so named because it was stored at the Vatican (once again the mere hint of intrigue condemns the manuscript in the minds of those already suspicious of Catholicism).
- The letters in the words “New International Version” add up to 666.

It’s tempting to relegate imprecatory mutterings like these to the same status as supermarket tabloids. But more mainstream Christian writers, thinkers and theologians have taken modern-language translations to task as well. Ray Comfort, for instance, repeats the claim about hundreds of passages being removed:

“Would it upset you if I took a large marker and crossed out hundreds of portions of your Bible? I hope you would fume with rage. Well, take a look the New American Standard Bible. ...There are literally hundreds of portions of Scripture the translators have left out. You’d probably be better off with the Jehovah’s Witnesses translation. Apparently, they have taken out a lot less than the New American Standard Bible.”²

It may sound a bit melodramatic to insist that a person or persons of evil intent removed hundreds of passages from modern translations—and that only a circumspect few noticed. Yet this is a bedrock belief for many of those who believe the King James Version is the only Bible English-speaking Christians should use.

Bibles, Bibles Everywhere

What’s so great about the KJV? Does its antiquity lend it more weight than any other Bible translation? Was there anything special about its production that sets it above other Bibles? Is it some sort of benchmark we shouldn’t try to improve upon?

This debate often generates far more heat than light—the facts get lost in the shouting. Let’s take a look at the history of the Bible in English, including the King James Version.

A few translators rendered portions of the Bible into Old English up through about 1000 A.D. Old English should really be called Anglo-Saxon, however—“Ye Olde Coffe Shoppe” and the like are Early Modern English, not Old English. Old English is an ancient, dead language known only by a few scholars today.

The science of translating Scripture into English for the common man to read really started with John Wycliffe (1329-1384), who translated the Latin Vulgate into Middle English in 1384. He was pronounced a heretic and condemned, although he died of natural causes before he was caught.

William Tyndale (1494-1536) was the first person to translate the Bible into modern English from its original languages. By 1524, he had issued the Pentateuch and book of Jonah, but was pronounced a heretic and had to flee to Germany.

That didn’t stop Tyndale; he had memorized the Bible in all its original languages and others as well, so he continued his work, even though he had no reference books or any other materials in exile. He was arrested and executed in 1536, after translating the New Testament and about half the Old Testament.

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Tyndale's translation was so good that the translators of the King James Version used a great deal of his material. More than 75 percent of the New Testament and 90 percent of the Gospels in the KJV are taken directly from Tyndale's work.

Besides Tyndale's, many other English translations preceded the King James, including Coverdale's Version (1537), Matthew's Bible (1537), Hollybushe's Version (1538), the Taverner's Version (1539), Cranmer's Version (1540), the Geneva Bible (1557), the Bishop's Bible (1568) and the Rheims-Douay Version (1609).

By the time the King James was published, the Geneva Bible had been popular for more than 50 years, ironically prompting many of the KJV's critics to ask the same question

its proponents ask today: Why translate a new Bible when we already have a good one? (see "A Word From the Translators").

Critics of modern Bibles would do well to remember that the flood of new Bibles on the market today is nothing unusual—new Bible translations have been published almost every year since the invention of the printing press in 1454.

1611: Straight From Heaven?

The story of the King James Version is a familiar one: In a move every bit as political as it was pious, King James I convened a series of meetings at Hampton Court in 1604 to discuss a new English Bible translation, the first to be authorized by both crown and church and to be produced by an ecumenical group of scholars.

The 54 scholars, divided into six committees of nine members each, were laymen as well

as Anglican and Puritan clergy, including ranking Oriental and Greek scholars. Two committees were at Oxford, two were at Cambridge and two at Westminster. To produce their new Bible, they drew on all of the previously published English translations, Latin versions, Luther's German translation and consulted Hebrew and Greek texts. In 1611, the translators finished their new Bible, christening it the King James Version.

Interestingly, the KJV was not immediately or widely accepted. Many took umbrage at its challenge to the Geneva Bible; others were offended at the politics involved in its very inception. Believe it or not, many people were aghast at the Shakespearean English so cherished in the KJV today—such common, modern language was by no means fit for Scripture!

Still others were angry that the King James Version included the Apocrypha—the Pilgrims, in fact, refused to bring the KJV to the New World in 1620 for that very reason, preferring the Geneva Bible instead.

Many of the translators had protested about including the Apocrypha, but some of the Catholic scholars threatened to walk out. Hampton Court being an ecumenical, political endeavor as much as a Bible committee, King James himself, rumor has it, stepped in and ordered the Court to include the Apocrypha. It was removed during a revision in 1885.

Nevertheless, the KJV slowly won supporters. It has since undergone numerous revisions, growing in popularity until it has become the best-selling book in history, bar none. Only recently has another Bible—the New International Version—edged it out in annual sales.

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Where Do Bibles Come From?

Obviously, no one just sat down and wrote the Bible; it's a collection of 66 books written by 40 different authors over more than 1,400 years. Modern Bibles are assembled from ancient manuscripts, or handwritten copies, of the original writings.

This production happens in two steps: textual criticism and translation. Only textual critics work directly with ancient manuscripts; translators use printed texts produced by textual critics.

The problem in textual criticism is not that anything is missing; it's that corruptions and additions, called glosses, mean we have a little more than 100 percent of the text of the Bible. The textual critic's job, put rather too simply, is to figure out what the ancient writers really wrote—to determine which reading is correct when variances present themselves, and to identify and eliminate that extra fraction of a percent.

Old Testament manuscripts are relatively few, mostly produced by professional scribes, and are therefore of consistently high quality and reliability.

But the New Testament is a different matter. Textual critics have to deal with a staggering number of manuscripts in every degree of quality—nearly 25,000 altogether—divided into four major families. More on those in a moment.

When the textual critics' work is done, they produce printed original-language texts for translators to use. There are various types of these texts: Some are texts of a specific manuscript or codex (i.e., a manuscript containing more than one Bible book). Some are texts of families, or whole groups of manuscripts. And some are *egalitarian* texts—texts that attempt to conflate and use all the best manuscripts available to the critic.

Greek New Testament manuscripts are divided into four major families: Alexandrian, Western, Caesarean and Byzantine. Each of these text families is named after the geographical

region in which it was produced, and each has distinct characteristics: The Alexandrian text is the smallest and oldest family, and is generally considered to be the most faithful in preserving the original words of the authors. Western manuscripts tend to paraphrase. The Caesarean text is a mixture of Alexandrian and Western readings. And the Byzantine text is by far the largest text family. Because of this, the Byzantine text is sometimes called the Majority Text.

The Majority Text Debate

Much of the debate over the KJV centers on the Majority Text, simply because the KJV's New Testament was translated exclusively from Byzantine manuscripts. Stemming from this is preservationist doctrine: the widely held belief among KJV proponents that God's preserved word (Psalm 12:6-7) is the one most widely used by the Church. Since the Byzantine text is the largest and the base of such important Bibles as the Luther Bible and the KJV, they reason, it alone is God's Word.

There are several problems with this theory:

1. Word of God or Words of God?

As theologian Edward Goodrick pointed out in his seminal *Is My Bible the Inspired Word of God?*, the term "Word of God" in this debate is often misused to mean the specific *words* used in Scripture. Goodrick contends that if this is true, the inspiration of Scripture could not survive translation at all.

Furthermore, he asks, why then was the Bible written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek rather than some special language reserved for

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Scripture alone? The New Testament, for instance, shares 90 percent of its vocabulary with *The Golden Ass*—an ancient work of pornography! If the specific *words* of Scripture are inspired, doesn't that mean 90 percent of *The Golden Ass* is inspired, too?

No, Goodrick says, inspiration does not live in the individual words of Scripture. Therefore the Bible can be written in everyday languages, even translated into other languages, and still be inspired:

“...We really mean ‘the wording in the Bible is inspired.’ By this we mean not only the actual words but also their forms and their arrangement. But we do not put a halo around each word. We put a halo around the whole book. Therefore, the statement ‘Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons’ can be either inspired or uninspired depending on whether we find the statement in Epimenides’ *de Oraculis* or in Paul’s Epistle to Titus (1:12).”³

2. Bigger Is Not Necessarily Better:

Another problem is the assumption that the Byzantine text family’s size has anything to do with its relative quality. In reality, the Byzantine text is largest for a simple reason: Byzantium was overrun by Islam in 1453, almost 800 years after the other three textual centers—meaning that for almost 800 years, only Byzantium was producing New Testament manuscripts.

3. Majority As of When?

Egalitarian translators point out that the Majority Text was, therefore, no such thing until after the 7th century A.D.

4. Bigger Is Not Necessarily Better II:

Textual critics also know that the Byzantine text’s huge number of manuscripts and the way its production sprawled across twice as many years as the other text families means just one thing—it’s the family with the most corruptions and glosses.

A critical point to remember, however, is that these relative differences are apparent only to biblical language professionals. In fact, as the translators of New King James Version point out in their preface, although they felt the Majority Text has a slight edge over the other families, the actual differences between text families are so vanishingly small that they’re statistically meaningless.

The most important point in the Majority Text debate *vis a vis* the KJV, however, is this: No one ever assembled and published a Majority Text until 1982. Indeed, the King James is not based on the Majority Text at all, but rather a printed text called the *Textus Receptus*.

The Textus Receptus

In 1515, a Swiss printer named John Froben heard of Cardinal Ximenes’ *Complutensian Polyglot*, a printed Greek text still in production, and decided to beat it into print.

He hired Desiderius Erasmus to produce a Greek text; Erasmus hastily assembled one from six very late Byzantine manuscripts in less than nine months.

One of the manuscripts was so corrupted Erasmus was forced to resort to the Latin Vulgate to fill in the gaps. He was in such a hurry, in fact, that in places he actually wrote corrections right on the manuscripts and sent them to the printer. The printing itself was no better, containing thousands of errors.

Erasmus’ text sold well, however, despite dozens of revisions and hundreds of corrections over the next 200 years, and it was dubbed *Textus Receptus*, or Received Text, in 1633, by which time it had been modified so much it was almost a text family of its own.

Despite all this, the translators of the KJV used Erasmus’ text to produce a Bible that has retained its popularity for almost 400 years. Nevertheless, the poor quality of Erasmus’ work introduced errors into the KJV, which were corrected in later translations.

A Few Words From the Translators

This very suggestion—that the King James Version was or is imperfect, that it ever was updated or revised, or that it could call another translation its peer, much less be replaced—is pure anathema to many KJV-only proponents. It's therefore interesting to note that they would be disagreeing with the very translators who produced the Bible they so revere.

In the Epistle Dedicatory of the KJV, its translators, in a letter to King James, mounted a defense and analysis of their new Bible that sounds very much like what defenders of today's modern-language translations have to say:

- **Today's Modern-Language Bible Defenders:** It is wise to add new translations to those we already have—not only in new languages, but also in updated, contemporary language.

- **The KJV Translators:** “Many men's mouths have been open a good while (and yet are not stopped) with speeches about the Translation so long in hand, or rather perusals of Translations made before: and ask what may be the reason, what the necessity of the employment: Hath the Church been deceived, say they, all this while? ...Now what can be more available thereto, than to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they understand?”

- **God's Word is God's Word even in a badly rendered translation.** “The very meanest translation of the Bible in English...containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the King's speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian, and Latin, is still the King's speech, though it be not interpreted by every Translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.”

- **Only the Bible's authors enjoyed perfect transmission of God's Word. Therefore the King James Version, like any other work**

of man, is good, but flawed. If it is good, it should not be dismissed because it is not yet perfect; if it is flawed, there should be no fear of improvements. “No cause therefore why the Word translated should be denied to be the Word, or forbidden to be current, notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it. For whatever was perfect under the sun, where Apostles or apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of God's Spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand? ...Whatsoever is sound already...the same will shine as gold more brightly, being rubbed and polished; also, if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place.”

- **Bible study is most profitable when a variety of translations are compared.** “Therefore as St. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures.”

- **Quibbling over words is foolish; language cannot be set in stone. If a translation's words become archaic, it should be discarded in favor of a fresh, contemporary translation.** “Is the kingdom of God become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them, if we may be free? Use one precisely when we may use another no less fit as commodiously? ... If we should say, as it were, unto certain words, Stand up higher, have a place in the Bible always, and to others of like quality, Get ye hence, be banished for ever, we might be taxed peradventure with St. James's words, namely, To be partial in ourselves, and judges of evil thoughts.”

Talking Points

We've looked at some of the more technical issues underlying the debate over the King James Version. Let's take a look at a few of the more prosaic talking points—remembering that the

King James Version itself would flunk most of the unfair litmus its opponents apply to other translations.

Translation Talking Point No 1: The King James Version Is Most Accurate:

Critics point out revisions, updates and corrections to modern-language Bibles and wonder how they can be the Word of God when they contain errors. The same question can fairly be asked of the King James Version.

The KJV scholars enjoyed an excellent grasp of Greek, but as noted earlier, they struggled with poor manuscripts. Conversely, they had excellent Old Testament manuscripts at their disposal, but a shaky knowledge of Hebrew. These two peculiarities led to some errors in the KJV:

- In 1 John 5:7-8, the KJV adds, “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” This variant reading first appeared in the third edition of Erasmus’ text in 1522; it did not appear in the Byzantine text until the 14th century.

- The KJV translates the Hebrew *re'em* as *unicorn* (Job 39:9-10; Psalm 29:6; 92:10). Most modern versions—including the New King James Version—say “wild ox.” Translators now know the word probably refers to the *auerochs*, an extinct species of ox.

- The KJV also uses the artificial name *Jehovah*, a word that is actually impossible to spell in Hebrew. Translators accidentally invented it when they tried to transliterate the divine name, YHWH, into English with the vowel pointing for the name *Adonai*, which Hebrew scribes placed under YHWH to remind rabbis and readers not to say it out loud. The KJV translators reproduced the mistake—which also was corrected in the New King James Version.

The translators of the KJV believed, like today’s translators, that only the originals, or autographs, of Scripture were perfect. Never-

theless, even an imperfect Bible is still the Word of God. Being the Word of God, it should not be discarded just because it is imperfect; since it is imperfect, there should be no fear of improvements or revisions.

Translation Talking Point No. 2: The King James Version Is Most Literal:

Bible translators don’t use words such as “literal” and “paraphrase.” Instead, they choose from a spectrum between *formal equivalence* and *dynamic equivalence*, along with choices about reading level, the Bible’s text basis and many other factors.

Greek and Hebrew are so different from English in grammar, syntax and idiom that a pure, formally equivalent, word-for-word translation into English is nearly impossible. Here, for instance, is John 3:16 rendered in word-by-word formal equivalence:

“Thus for he-loved the God the world that the son the only-born he-gave that every the believing into him not he-might-perish but he-might-have life eternal.”⁴

A “translation” like that is so much like Greek that it would be useless to anyone who didn’t already know Greek!

The KJV translators, like all others, had to search behind idiom, weights, measures and so on to present the meaning *behind* these ancient obstacles to the modern reader:

- In Luke 21:2, the KJV replaces the Greek word *lepta* with *mite*—an English coin. The translators knew their readers wouldn’t know a lepta from a drachma from a denarius, so they used a coin of relative value to let the reader understand the significance of what Jesus was saying. In Matthew 5:26, *kodrantēs* is replaced

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with *farthing* for the same reason. Many modern translations do precisely the same thing.

- Matthew 23:6 says “they love the first couch at the suppers” in Greek—a phrase meaningless in Renaissance England, so the translators replaced it with “they love the uppermost rooms at feasts.”

- The KJV translators inserted the euphemism “cut themselves off” in Galatians 5:12, when the Greek really says “emasculate themselves.”

- Paul’s “God forbid!”, a phrase common in the KJV (Romans 3:4,6,31; 6:2,15, etc.) is the Greek *me genoito*—literally, “May it never be.”

A common misconception about the KJV is that it's the first, and thus the best, English Bible. Not true by a long shot. It is true, however, that the KJV's antiquity lends it some authority other translations don't have.

This was a strong epithet in Paul’s day, so the KJV translators chose words that would have a similar impact on their readers. Yet in doing so, they inserted God’s name where it did not exist in the original text—and taking liberties with God’s name is something KJV opponents loudly complain about other Bibles doing!

These and many other instances demonstrate that the KJV translators set themselves the same task as today’s translators: to bring the message of Scripture out from behind the veil of language and idiom in a way their readers could grasp.

Translation Talking Point No. 3: Older Is Better:

A common misconception about the KJV is that it’s the first, and thus the best, English Bible. Not true by a long shot. It is true, however, that the KJV’s antiquity lends it some authority other translations don’t have. Thus, the King James Version has retained its popularity for almost 400 years.

Nevertheless, following the “older is better” argument to its logical conclusion is highly educational:

If older is better, oldest is best. The very first English Bible translation occurred *circa* 670 A.D., when an unknown translator rendered parts of the Bible into Old English. Here, for example, is The Lord’s Prayer in Old English:

*Foeder ure, thu the eart on heofonum,
si thin nama gehalgod. Tobecume thin rice
Gewurpe jin willa on eorjan
Swa swa on heofonum.
Urne gedoeghwamlican hlaf syle us to doey
And forgyf us ure gyltas
Swa swa we forgyfaj urum gyltendum
And ne geloe the us on rostnunge,
As alys us of yfele. Sothlice.*

You probably can’t read that at all; only a few scholars can read Old English. As pointed out before, although modern English evolved from Old English, Old English is really another language entirely.

Let’s move up to John Wycliffe’s version, then—it was completed more than 700 years later, but still nearly 250 years before the KJV. Here’s the “Parable of the Wheat and Tares” according to Wycliffe:

The kyngdom of heuenes if maad lijk to a man, that sewe good seed in his feld. And whanne men slepten, his enemy cam, and sewe aboue taris in the myddil of whete, and wente awai. But when the herbe was growed, and made fruyt, than the taris apperiden. And the seruautis of the hosebonde man camen, and seiden to him, Lord, whether hast thou not sowun good seed in thi feeld? And he seide to hem, An enemy hath do this thing. And the seruautis seiden to him, Wolt thou that we goon, and gaderen hem? And he seide, Nay, lest peraventure ge in gaderynge taris drawen vp with hem the whete bi the roote. Suffre ge hem bothe to sexe in to

repying tyme; and in the tyme of ripe corn Y shall seie to the reperis, First gadere ge to gidere the taris, and bynde hem to gidere in knytechis to be brent, but gadere ge whete in to my berne.

English is a living language, not a fixed or scholarly language. The KJV uses *meat* when we say *food*, *conversation* when we say *conduct* or *manner of life*, and *meet* when we say *suitable*. Such words as *peradventure*, *avouch*, *bruit*, *collop*, *durst*, *emerods*, *concupiscence*, *greaves*, *wist* and *ustowards*—all in the King James—are now simply archaic.

As the KJV translators themselves pointed out, translations can't set a language in stone. On

the contrary, translations must change as language changes. Another problem with assuming older is better in reference to the King James Version is that very few KJV fans are reading the original 1611 version. As noted before, the Apocrypha, which used to be included, has been removed, and the

As the KJV translators themselves pointed out, translations can't set a language in stone. On the contrary, translations must change as language changes.

KJV has been through more than a dozen revisions and updates. Most Americans who use the KJV are actually using the American Standard Version, a revision completed in 1901; most Europeans are using 1885's English Revised Version.

Finally, the King James Version's age has begun to lend it some of the legendary mysticism that surrounds the Septuagint. Completed in about 200 B.C., the Septuagint, a translation of the Old Testament into Greek, was created by a team of about 70 scholars—hence the name and abbreviation (LXX).

Before long, legend had it that 70 scholars went into 70 rooms and emerged with 70 identical translations—proof that the translation was God-infused in a unique way.

Similar legends have grown around the KJV, especially that God was uniquely involved in the translation, somehow making the KJV the only inspired English translation—a contention that, as we have seen, the KJV translators themselves scoffed at.

As mentioned earlier, the KJV's quality shows in that it is still popular, while other Bibles from the same era are now no more than intellectual curiosities. This does not give the King James Version immunity against obsolescence, though. If the Lord tarries long enough, someday the KJV will be like the Septuagint or Latin Vulgate: an excellent translation with great historical value, but written in a language very few people can actually understand.

Why All This Nitpicking?

Good question. Why do King James Version fans expend so much energy finding fault with other Bibles? Furthermore, why are we in turn pointing out problems with the KJV?

We certainly don't intend to return *tit for tat* to those who find fault with modern-language translations—the KJV is a great Bible, but it's important to remember that it's no better or worse than any other Bible. It is not the work of the translators that makes a Bible so important; it is the God who inspired His Word in the first place.

Consider the unconscious arrogance in many of these arguments—and not just the casual dismissal of the translators' work by people who are rarely qualified to comment authoritatively. Consider also the unspoken contention that translation errors hinder our understanding of the Word—as if we are saying, “My understanding of the Word would be flawless if these translators would just do their job right!”

As Edward Goodrick put it, when God's Word flows into us, we ourselves introduce the most pollution into the pipeline—not the translators:

“The autographs are inspired with no pollution,” Goodrick says, “the printed Greek and

Hebrew texts are inspired with very little pollution, the translation is inspired with very little pollution—and your interpretation of the Bible is inspired with *massive* pollution!”⁵ We do well to remember that we are the weakest link, not the translators, and to be thankful for their hard work.

We ought to be embarrassed at the amount of arguing over English translations. How do we sound to others, when we have hundreds of English translations to choose from and so many other people in the world do not have a single word of Scripture in their native tongue? We sound like a wealthy person complaining to a homeless person about how hard it is to find good servants these days.

Let’s put these foolish controversies behind us and redirect our energy toward seeing that no one ever has to face life without God’s Word in his or her own language.

1 There’s actually a grain of truth to this—but only a grain: One Virginia Mollenkott consulted with the committee on contemporary English idiom and usage in the late 1960s, very early in the process. Years later her own writings made her homosexuality public knowledge. Dr. Kenneth Barker, executive director of the NIV Translation Center, publicly stated that the committee would not have consulted her had they known she was gay; nevertheless, as her contribution took place long before translation even began, it did not affect the translators. This is not good enough for the NIV’s detractors—although none of them has shown any evidence or examples of corruption caused by Mollenkott.

2 Ray Comfort. *Springboards for Powerful Preaching* (Bellflower, Calif: Living Waters, 1993), pp. 38-39.

3 Edward W. Goodrick. *Is My Bible The Inspired Word of God?* (Portland, Ore: Multnomah Press, 1988), p. 77.

4 Ibid, p. 71.

5 Ibid, pp. 29, 47, 67, 85.

Appendix 1: Great and Not-so-Great Moments in Bible History

circa 1406 B.C.: Moses finishes the Pentateuch and places it beside the “Ark of the Covenant” (Deuteronomy 31:24-26).

circa 622 B.C.: During the reign of Josiah, Hilkiah the high priest finds the Law lying neglected in the Temple (2 Kings 22:8).

circa 400 B.C.: Ezra completes Chronicles; the Old Testament is complete.

300 B.C. - 70 A.D.: Apocrypha completed.

circa 200 B.C.: Septuagint, the first-ever translation of Scripture into another language (Hebrew to Greek).

circa 48 A.D.: Paul writes Galatians, his first epistle and possibly the first New Testament book.

circa 95 A.D.: John writes Revelation, completing the New Testament canon.

circa 100 A.D.: The Council of Jamnia ratifies the Old Testament canon.

170: Tatian’s Diatessaron (Syriac)

200: Papyrus Bodmer (Greek manuscript)

200: The Sahidic (Coptic)

circa 240: Origen’s Hexapla

circa 3rd century: Chester Beatty Papyrus (Greek manuscript)

circa 380: Ulfilas translates parts of the Bible into Goth, an early Germanic language.

397: The Third Council of Carthage ratifies the New Testament canon.

circa 4th century: Codex Sinaiticus (Greek manuscript)

circa 4th century: Vatican Mss 1209 (Greek manuscript)

405: Jerome’s Latin Vulgate

circa 5th century: Codex Alexandrinus (Greek manuscript)

circa 5th century: Syriac Peshitta (Aramaic)

circa 5th century: Curetonian Syriac (Old Syriac)

circa 5th century: Codex Ephraemi (Greek manuscript)

6th - 11th century: Masoretic Text (Hebrew manuscript)

circa 8th century: Book of Kells (Celtic)

895: Cairo Codex (Hebrew manuscript)

930 : Aleppo Codex (Hebrew manuscript)

950 : Lindisfarne Gospels (Latin)
circa 9th century: Clementine's Latin Vulgate
circa 9th century: Cyril and Methodius' Slavonic Bible
circa 9th century: King Alfred's translation (partial; Old English)
circa 10th century: Aelfric translates Genesis—Judges into Old English
1008: Leningrad Codex (Hebrew manuscript)
circa 1000 - 1100: West Saxon Gospels
circa 1180: Waldenses Ancient Vaudois Version
1380-82: Wycliffe's Bible (Latin Vulgate to Middle English)
1385: Shem Tob's Hebrew Gospel of Matthew
1454: Gutenberg Bible (Latin)
1514-17: Polyglot Bible
1516: Erasmus' Greek New Testament
1518: Erasmus' Greek New Testament: 2nd Edition
1522: Erasmus' Greek New Testament: 3rd Edition
1522-34: Martin Luther's Bible (German)
1525: Tyndale's Version
1527: Erasmus' Greek New Testament: 4th Edition
1537: Coverdale's Version
1539: The Great Bible
1539: Taverner's Bible
1550: Stephanus' Greek Text
1557: Geneva Bible
1565-1604: Theodore Beza's Greek New Testament
1568-1606: The Bishop's Bible
1575-79: Tremellio and Junio's Latin Bible
1609: Rheims-Douay Bible
1611: King James Version
1633: Elzevir's Textus Receptus
1653: John Milton's Psalms
1661: Eliot's Indian Bible (in the Algonquin language)
1729: David Mace's Interlinear Greek/English New Testament
1745-90: John Wesley's New Testament
1764: Richard Wynne's New Testament collated with Greek

1775-77: Griesbach's Greek New Testament Text
1798: Nathaniel Scarlett's New Testament
1831: Lachmann's Greek New Testament
1833: Webster's Bible
1841-72: Count Tischendorf's Greek Text
1851: Brenton's Interlinear Greek/English Septuagint with the Apocrypha
1857-72: Tregelles' Greek Text
1862-98: Young's Literal Translation
1864: Emphatic Diaglott
1867: Joseph Smith's Inspired Version (Mormon Bible)
1871-90: J.N. Darby Translation
1878-1902: The Emphasized Bible
1881: Westcott and Hort's Greek Text
1881-85: English Revised Version: Another revision of the KJV—the Bible most Europeans think of when they think of the KJV.
1894: F.H.A. Scrivener's Textus Receptus
1901: American Standard Version: Yet another revision of the King James Version—the Bible most Americans think of when they think of the KJV.
1910: Alexander Souter's Greek New Testament
1912: Weymouth's New Testament
1922: James Moffatt Bible
1941: Confraternity Bible
1941: Bible in Basic English
1942: Nestle's Greek Text
1945: Modern Language Bible/New Berkeley Version
1945: Nag Hammadi Library discovered
1946-51: Revised Standard Version
1947: Dead Sea Scrolls discovered
1948: Letchworth Version
1950-61: New World Translation (Jehovah's Witnesses Bible)
1951-55: Kittel's Biblia Hebraica (Hebrew text)
1960: New Testament in Modern English: J.B. Phillips
1960-71: New American Standard Version
1961: Dartmouth Bible
1965: The Amplified Bible
1966: Good News Bible/Today's English Version
1966: The Jerusalem Bible
1969: Barclay New Testament

- 1970:** The New American Bible
- 1970:** New English Bible
- 1972:** The Living Bible
- 1972:** The Bible in Living English
- 1977:** Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
(Hebrew text)
- 1978:** New International Version
- 1978:** Simple English Bible
- 1979:** King James Version II Greek/English
Version
- 1979:** New King James Version
- 1979:** Nestle-Aland Greek Text
- 1980:** Versified Rendering of the Gospels
- 1980-96:** The Literal Translation of the Holy
Bible
- 1982:** Hodges-Farstad Greek Majority Text
- 1983-88:** New Century Version
- 1982:** Inclusive Language New Testament
- 1985:** New Jerusalem Bible
- 1987-99:** World Bible Translation
- 1989:** Revised English Bible
- 1989:** Heinz Cassirer New Testament
- 1989:** McCord's New Testament
- 1989:** New Revised Standard Version
- 1990:** New Evangelical Translation
- 1991:** Unvarnished New Testament
- 1992:** Contemporary English Version
- 1993:** Worldwide English Bible
- 1993:** The Message: New Testament
- 1994:** 21st Century King James Version
- 1995:** An Inclusive Version
- 1995:** Robinson-Pierpont Greek Majority Text
- 1995-98:** New International Reader's Version
- 1996:** Schocken Study Bible
- 1996:** God's Word Bible
- 1996:** New Living Translation
- 1999:** 21st Century New Testament
- 1999:** Modern King James Version
- 1999:** New Millennium Bible
- 1999:** World English Bible
- 2000:** International English Bible
- 2001:** English Standard Version