

Sunday, March 17, 2024—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
Lesson 229 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (Review)

Introduction/Review

- In [Lesson 228](#) we finished our discussion of the final acclamation of the AV by considering the following points:
 - Restoration: The Final Acceptance of the King James Bible
 - Literary Acclaim: The King James Bible As Literature
- The next topic that we need to discuss is the printed history of the text. This is an important topic because it surfaces continually in discussions related to text and translation. Modern Versions advocates will often ask King James Onlyists which edition of the KJB is the inerrant one? The 1611 or the 1769? This question is driven by the fact that the 1611 and 1769 editions do not possess verbatim identity with each other. Regarding this subject we need to consider the following points:
 - Charge made against the King James Only position by CT/Modern Version advocates.
 - King James Onlyism response to the charge.
 - Historical facts regarding the printed history of the text.
- We have already touched on subjects related to the printed history of the text in the following Lessons:
 - The Pre-1611 Evidence for The Text: MS 98 Impact on King James Readings, Part 3 ([Lesson 169](#))
 - The AV 1611: Confronting the Copyright Myth & Early 17th Century Printing ([Lesson 187](#))
 - The AV 1611: The First Edition & The “He/She” Bible Controversy ([Lesson 189](#))
 - The AV 1611: Errors of The Press ([Lesson 211](#))
- Before covering new ground on this topic, I would like to review what we have already considered in past Lessons regarding the printed history of the text. We will do this by considering the following points.
 - Sizes, Printings, & Editions
 - Printing Errors: The Irksome Subject

Sizes, Printings, & Editions

- In Lessons 187, 189, and 211 we studied the printed history of the first folio editions of the AV as well as noted that quarto and octavo sized editions were printed as early as 1612.
- When it was first printed in 1611, the Authorized Version (AV) was published exclusively in a large folio edition. Gordon Campbell comments on this in *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011*:
 - “A folio is a large book, and the first edition of the KJV was large even by the unusual standard of folios; its thick pages measure approximately 11 inches by 16 inches. It was a heavy volume designed to sit on a lectern in a church; as the title pages explain, it was ‘appointed to be read in churches’.” (Campbell, 87-88)
- Donald L. Brake records that five different folio editions were published over the years.
 - “There were five folio editions all with nearly interchangeable leaves word for word—1611, 1613, 1617, 1634, 1639/40. A smaller folio edition printed in 1613 had seventy-two lines per page instead of fifty-nine-lines of the other folio editions. The smaller edition reduced the total pages from 738 to 508. The print of each page of the fifty-nine-line editions used the same number of lines word for word, line for line. This enabled the printer to substitute reprinted pages when errors surfaced. However, careful comparison reveals many leaves have differences, mostly minor. If the printer needed additional copies, he used leaves left over from a previous printing. This no doubt led to missed copies as Fry has pointed out.” (Brake, *AMMT*, 29)
- In Lesson 189 we discussed the great he/she Bible controversy and how it relates to the first edition of the AV in some detail. Interested parties are encouraged to revisit Lesson 189 to get those details as we will not be repeating them here.
- Lesson 211 discussed typographical errors as well as potential hidden errors in the printing of the 1611.
- Meanwhile Lesson 187 chronicled the early publication of quarto and octavo sized editions as early as 1612.
 - “Beginning in 1612, Barker printed complete KJBs in three basic formats: black letter quartos, roman type quartos and roman type octavos.” (Norton, 73) A.S. Herbert records these editions as follows in his *Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of The English Bible 1526-1961*.
 - Roman type quartos: 1612, H313, H314 (Herbert, 134-135)

- Roman type octavos: 1612, H315, H316, H318 NT (Herbert 135)
- Meanwhile, 1613 saw the publication of the first black letter quarto edition. (Herbert, 139) So, by 1613, only two years after the text was first published, there were three different size editions of the King James Bible in print: large folios, quartos, and octavos in two different fonts, black letter and roman type. These editions introduced their own unique printer errors and variants.

Printing Errors: The Irsome Subject

- In Lesson 169 we discussed the primary source work-in-progress document MS 98 in relation to Colossians 2:12 and Romans 1:11 and its impact on the printed history of the text.

Colossians 2:12

1602 Bishops	MS 98	AV (1611)	AV (1769)	Comments
Buried with him in baptism, in whom ye are also risen again through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.	q	Buried with him in Baptism, <u>wherein also you are risen with <i>him</i></u> through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.	Buried with him in baptism, wherein also <u>ye</u> are risen with <i>him</i> through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.	Blank in MS 98. At some point it was marked with a “q” for query. Bishops’ clause “in whom ye are also risen again” is revised in the AV to read “wherein also you are risen with <i>him</i> ”. 1769 AV reads “ye are risen” as opposed to “you are risen” in the 1611 AV. Change was made as early as 1748 .

- The same phenomenon also occurs in Romans 1:11, a verse that was discussed in detail in [Lesson 168](#). Our focus below is on the words “ye” and “you” in the printed history of the text.

Romans 1:11

1602 Bishops	MS 98	AV (1611)	AV (1769)	Comments
For I long to see you, that I might bestow among you some spiritual gift, that <u>ye</u> might be established,	For I long to see you that I might impart unto ^r you some spiritual gift to the end <u>you</u> may ^o be established.	For I long to see you, that I <u>may</u> ^r impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end <u>you</u> may be established,	For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end <u>ye</u> may be established;	<p>The 1602 Bishops read “ye might be.”</p> <p>MS 98 revised it “you may be.”</p> <p>The 1611 accepted MS 98’s revision “you may be.”</p> <p>Standard 1769 text reads “ye may be.” It was changed in 1762, according to Lawrence Vance. (196)</p>

- In Paul’s Epistles alone there are 42 verses where more recent printings of the AV, such as the 1762 and/or 1769, read “ye” where the 1611 originally read “you,” see pages 196-198 in Vance. Furthermore, in all 42 cases, there is evidence when comparing MS 98 against a 1602 Bishops and a 1611 AV, that the choice of “you” was the intentional choice of the translators. In many of these 42 cases, the 1602 Bishops Bible read “ye” in instances where the translators amended the text to read “you” in MS 98 and/or the AV. On other occasions, the AV moved the Bishops reading of “you” forward into both MS 98 and the 1611 without alteration. In either case, the outcome is the same, the King James translators chose “you” as the correct reading.
 - Romans—1:11; 13:6; 14:1
 - I Corinthians—4:15; 6:8; 7:5,35; 9:1; 10:13; 11:2,17; 14:9,18; 15:1,58; 16:3
 - II Corinthians—1:7,11,13,14,15; 2:4,8; 5:12; 7:3,15; 8:11,13; 9:4; 11:1,7; 12:19
 - Galatians—1:6; 3:1; 4:15,17; 5:10
 - Ephesians—2:2
 - Colossians—2:12; 3:8; 4:6
 - I Thessalonians—2:11
- So how should we view these 42 verses in the face of the evidence furnished by MS 98? Were they all printer errors or later editorial changes? While inconvenient for some, the following fact

is inescapable, readers of the standard 1769 text in the 21st century are not reading the original translational choices of the translators in at least 42 verses in Paul's epistles.

- Expanding beyond MS 98, which only covers the New Testament epistles, there are additional instances of where later editors changed “you” to “ye” or vice versa. Dr. Laurence M. Vance chronicles this Chapter 3 of his book *The Text of the King James Bible*:
 - 196 times “you” is changed to “ye” by the editors of the 1762 and 1769 editions.
 - Six times “ye” is changed to “you” by the editors of the 1762 and 1769 editions. (Vance, 181-199)
- This of course is an irksome subject for some because it stands in direct opposition to standard King James Only talking points. It is commonly repeated by King James advocates that the only differences between a 1611 and 1769 edition are 1) spelling, 2) punctuation, and 3) correction of printer errors.
- A prime example of this kind of reasoning is Dr. Peter S. Ruckman's 1983 publication, *Differences in the King James Version Editions*. In this short 25-page booklet Dr. Ruckman takes critics of the pro-King James position to task over their insistence that “genuine updating and the genuine revision work done on different editions of the AV should justify the replacing of its Greek text.” (Ruckman, 1) The following statements from the pen of Dr. Ruckman are indicative of the common thinking on the matter within the King James Only movement.
 - “The variations are divided into three classes: manifest errors of the typesetter in the copy of 1611, manifest typesetting problems in the 1613 edition, and other variants from 1611.

In the first class, there are such things as a capital “L” put into *Lord* in Exodus 14:10. “Shall burnt them” has been corrected to “shall burn them” in Leviticus 4:35. A woman that “travelleth” has been altered to a “woman that travaileth” in Isaiah 13:8 and 21:3; “Sons nor daughter” has been altered to “sons nor daughters” in Ezekiel 14:18; “shwed them by the prophets” has been corrected to “hewed them by the prophets” in Hosea 6:5; “And if ye offer” has been omitted in Malachi 1:8 and has been reinserted in the 1613 edition.. “That you remember me” has been altered to “that ye remember me” in I Corinthians 11:2.

. . . You are to think that since typographical errors in one text were corrected, and better spelling were set up for that one text, that gives some apostate fool the liberty to get rid of the right Greek text (the Receptus) and then get rid of the right English text (the AV of 1611). . .

The typographical errors of the 1611 edition were brought right back into line with the 1613. . . . Thus, there was not only no departure in writing from the text of 1611, but there was a return to it if any signs of departure showed up in the printing press.” (Ruckman, 7-9)

- “The results of God-honored, God-blessed revision of the original 1611 text are as follows: “That the edition of 1611, although prepared with very great care, was not free from typographical errors; and that, while most of these were corrected in the edition of 1613, others in much greater number were nevertheless then introduced, which have since been removed. That the revision of Dr. Blaney made by collating the then current editions of Oxford and Cambridge with those of 1611 and 1701 had for its main object to restore the text of the English Bible to its original purity; and that this was successfully accomplished.” (Ruckman, 14)
- “As we have seen, any and all revisions were corrections of press errors, where the typesetter had not followed the text of 1611. These were revised back into subsequent editions, and then printer’s errors were corrected until a pure text was arrived at in 1613, which conformed to the original intent of the AV translators.” (Ruckman, 16)
- “We have learned that of some 20,000 supposed “changes” in the AV text between 1611 and now, at least 19,000 of them had to do with the spelling of English words that were already in the text and correcting the mistakes of the lithographers and linotype operators; not the translators of 1611.” (Ruckman, 21)
- Ruckman’s thinking is correct in the following manner. The revision work that occurred on the AV text between 1611 and 1769 is not even remotely the same thing that occurred between 1870 and 1881 with the Revision Committee and their release of the Revised Version and the publication of the Westcott and Hort Greek text. The Modern Critical Text and its resultant Modern Versions differ substantively in their doctrinal content from the Received Text and its principal English translation the AV.
- That said, it is certainly not true that the only differences between a 1611 AV and the now standard 1769 text are 1) spelling, 2) punctuation, and 3) correction of printer errors. MS 98 and other primary work-in-progress documents such as Bod 1602 illuminate this reality in ways that Ruckman was unaware of in the early 1980s. Once again, Ruckman and other leading lights in the King James Only movement were largely unaware of these primary source documents when they enunciated their position.
- Further study of the printed history of the text is in order so that we can arrive at good factual conclusions as to the truth of this matter.

Works Cited

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