

Sunday, March 2, 2025—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*  
 Lesson 256 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (Blayney & The 1769 Oxford Text)

### **Introduction**

- Lessons [253](#), [254](#), and [255](#) were devoted to covering the editorial work that Benjamin Blayney conducted for Oxford University Press in preparation for the 1769 edition of the AV. All told we have considered the following categories of revision conducted by Blayney.
  - Changes To The Number Of A Noun (Lesson 254)
  - Changes In Verb Tense & Usage (Lesson 254)
  - Restoration Of 1611 Readings (Lesson 254)
  - Correction of Printer’s Errors (Lesson 254)
  - Word Changes, Modern Forms, & Idioms (Lesson 255)
  - Changes In The Use of Definite Articles (Lesson 255)
  - Apostrophes & Possessive Forms (Lesson 255)
- Since teaching Lessons 254 and 255 my friend and fellow researcher Christopher Yetzer has shared additional data regarding some of the revisions ascribed to Blayney by David Norton and Gordon Campbell. As we observed with the work of F.S. Parris in Lessons 250 through 252 there is evidence that many of the changes accredited to Blayney had been made in lesser editions (smaller size) prior to 1769.
- Over the last couple weeks, I have backfilled the notes from Lessons 254 and 255 to include these details provided by Brother Yetzer. In this Lesson I would like to bring the class up to speed regarding this information and offer a brief analysis of the data before commencing a discussion of the use of italics in the AV.
- Therefore, we will be covering the following two points in this Lesson.
  - Additional Information & Data
  - Changes In “You” & “Ye”

### **Additional Information & Data**

- The table below contains all of the examples of revisions ascribed to Benjamin Blayney in 1769 by Gordon Campbell in *Bible: The Story of The King James Version, 1611-2011* and David

Norton in *A Textual History of The King James Bible*. Please note that only those examples discussed by Norton in the main text of his book were discussed in Lesson 254 and 255. While it might be possible to furnish additional examples from Appendix 8 in Norton, for the purposes of this class, I limited myself to only those examples that were discussed in the main body of the text.

- Moreover, I have not included the examples of “Apostrophes & Possessive Forms” discussed in Lesson 255 because this grammatical convention did not come into use in English until the 1700s. Therefore, there was no reason to check the editions of the 1600s for evidence of the use of apostrophes to denote possessive forms in English.
- Lastly, the table lists the verses in question in canonical order, records the revision that was made to the text by Blayney, notes the category or type of change, the Lesson in which each example was originally discussed, and lists known editions before 1769 that made the change before Blayney.

Verse	Revision	Category/Type	Lesson #	Earlier Change
Ex. 23:13	“ <u>names</u> of other gods” to “ <u>name</u> of other gods”	# Of Noun	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1756 Cambridge</a> (Not in Herbert’s <i>Catalog</i> ) <a href="#">1765 Cambridge Octavo RF</a> (H1163) <a href="#">1767 Oxford Octavo RF</a> (H1181) <a href="#">1768 Cambridge Octavo RF</a> (H1191)
Lev. 13:29	“ <u>hath</u> a plague” to “ <u>have</u> a plague”	Verb Tense	<a href="#">254</a>	
Lev. 25:31	“ <u>walls</u> round about” to “ <u>wall</u> round about”	# Of Noun	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1768 Cambridge Octavo RF</a> (H1191)
Num. 1:2	“their <u>polle</u> ” to “their <u>polls</u> ”	# Of Noun	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1764 London printed by Mark Baskett Octavo RF</a> (H1155) <a href="#">1765 London printed by Baskett Octavo RF</a> (H1162) <a href="#">1768 Cambridge Octavo RF</a> (H1191)
Num. 4:40	“by the <u>houses</u> ” to “by the <u>house</u> ”	# Of Noun	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1625 Amsterdam? Octavo RF</a> (H399) 1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)
Deut. 20:7	“die in battle” to “die in <u>the</u> battle”	Definite Article	<a href="#">255</a>	
I Kings 16:23	“ <u>one</u> year” to “ <u>first</u> year”	Word Change/Idiom	<a href="#">255</a>	
II Chron. 16:6	“was <u>a</u> building” to “was building”	Word Change/Idiom	<a href="#">255</a>	<a href="#">1661 London Quarto RF</a> (H672) <a href="#">Barker</a>

				<a href="#">1676 London Quarto RF (H728) Barker</a> It is in several others, as well in 1677, 1700 etc.
II Chron. 34:10	“mend the house” to “amend the house”	Word Change/Idiom	<a href="#">255</a>	
Ps. 99:2	“all people” to “all <i>the</i> people”	Definite Article	<a href="#">255</a>	<a href="#">1635 Cambridge Quarto RF (H497)</a> <a href="#">1679 London Octavo RF (H747)</a> <a href="#">1638 London Duod. RF (H528)</a> <a href="#">1683 London Duod. RF (H785)</a>
Ps. 141:9	“the <u>snare</u> ” to “the <u>snares</u> ”	# Of Noun	<a href="#">254</a>	
Is. 10:34	“the <u>forests</u> ” to “the <u>forest</u> ”	# Of Noun	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1690 London Folio RF (H814)</a> <a href="#">1766 Commentary</a> (Not in Herbert’s <i>Catalog</i> )
Is. 44:13	“with the line” to “with a line”	Definite Article	<a href="#">255</a>	
Eze. 1:17	“ <u>returned</u> not” to “ <u>turned</u> not”	Word Change/Idiom	<a href="#">255</a>	
Mark 6:7	“ <u>calleth</u> unto” to “ <u>called</u> unto”	Verb Tense	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1633 Edinburgh Octavo RF (H476)</a> <a href="#">1740 Dublin Octavo RF (H1046)</a> <a href="#">1745 London Octavo RF (H1070)</a> <a href="#">1746 Oxford Quarto RF (H1073)</a>
John 11:34	“ <u>say</u> unto” to “ <u>said</u> unto”	Verb Tense	<a href="#">254</a>	
Acts 18:5	“in spirit” to “in the spirit”	Definite Article	<a href="#">255</a>	
I Cor. 10:28	“the earth is the Lords” to “ <u>for</u> the earth is the Lord’s”	Definite Article	<a href="#">255</a>	<a href="#">1657 London Octavo RF (H655)</a> <a href="#">1661 Cambridge Octavo RF (H674)</a> <a href="#">1694 London Duod. RF (H835)</a>
II Cor. 3:3	“ <u>fleshly</u> tables” to “ <u>fleshy</u> tables”	1611 Reading	<a href="#">254</a>	<a href="#">1629 London Octavo RF (H426)</a> <a href="#">1631 London Octavo RF (H443)</a> <a href="#">1648 London Quarto RF (H604)</a>

				<a href="#">1658 London Duod. RF (H661)</a>
II Cor. 5:2	“groan earnestly, desiring” to “groan, earnestly desiring”	Printer’s Error	<a href="#">254</a>	
II Cor. 8:7	“ <u>and</u> utterance” to “ <u>in</u> utterance”	1611 Reading	<a href="#">254</a>	
II Tim. 6:16	“ <u>thy</u> doctrine” to “ <u>the</u> doctrine”	1611 Reading	<a href="#">254</a>	

- Careful readers will note that there are 22 verse entries in the table above. Of these 22 entries, ten of them or 45.5% contain evidence of having been revised before the editorial work of Blayney in 1769.
- This proves yet again that the true history of text is not limited to the flagship folios of 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. Important editorial work was occurring in an uneven manner in the lesser editions throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Our conclusions regarding the editorial work of F.S. Parris from [Lesson 250](#) are once again pertinent here.
  - Ascribing the precise date of origin for a given reading in the printed history of the King James text is a cautionary tale unless one has looked at every edition ever printed.
  - The work of Campbell, Norton, and Laurence M. Vance (*The Text Of The King James Bible*, 2025) while extremely helpful and beneficial, are not definitive and need to be checked against other printings.
  - The printed history of the King James text is not as neat and tidy as many would like it to be. The text was never printed with uniformity between 1611 and 1769. Editorial changes were made to the text despite the claims of some to the contrary. This is why demanding *verbatim identicality* of wording as the standard for preservation is an unhelpful standard and logically leads to one having to declare which edition printed everything perfectly to the exclusion of all others.
  - It is not correct to think of the history of the text in terms of four monolithic revisions occurring in 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769. The real story unfolds year by year and printing by printing. Therefore, statements such as the following are grossly incorrect:
    - “The first two revisions of the KJB occurred within 27 years of the original Oxford printing [The original printing occurred in London not Oxford.]. The 1629 and 1638 editions, both printed at Cambridge, focused on the correction of printing errors. Two of the original translators worked on the 1629 edition [No extant historical evidence corroborates this statement.]. The other two revisions of 1762 and 1769 focused more on the standardization of spelling. A case could be made that there were two editions instead of four revisions because the first

two and last two were done close together and were stages of the same process.”  
(O’Steen, 102)

### Changes In “You” & “Ye”

- In [Lesson 252](#) we talked extensively about the you/ye changes implemented by F.S. Parris in his editions. In that Lesson we covered:
  - The grammatical rules governing the use of “you” and “ye” in English and how they changed over the centuries.
  - Statements from the pens of Gordon Campbell and David Norton regarding the changes made to “you” and “ye” by Parris and Blayney.
  - A statistical analysis of the findings cataloged in Chapter 3 of Lawrence M. Vance’s book *The Text Of The King James Bible* titled “Editions Of The Authorized Version.”
  - Three case Studies of you/ye changes (Gen. 18:5, 9:4; Deut. 1:13)
- Regarding Blayney’s changes to the use of “you” and “ye” Campbell writes the following in *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611-2011*:
  - “On ‘you’ and ‘ye’, Blayney fully implemented the principle that Parris had started to implement.” (Campbell, 14)
- As usual, Norton offers a more exhaustive treatment of the topic. What follows is a lengthy citation from Norton regarding the changes made to the use of “you” and “ye” by Parris and Blayney. While I have included the entire quotation, we will focus primarily on what Dr. Norton says about Blayney, seeing that we have already discussed his comments about Parris in Lesson 252. Please note that I have annotated the citation by inserting screenshots of the examples discussed by Norton as well as a few explanatory statements in brackets.
  - “The largest single grammatical problem tackled by these editors [Parris & Blaney] is ‘you’ and ‘ye’, a problem made more complicated by a disjunction between linguistic practice and grammatical prescription. ‘Ye’ was originally the nominative and vocative form [The vocative case is a grammatical case used to directly address a person or thing in a sentence. It’s often used with nouns or pronouns and can be identified by punctuation and context.” (Google)], with ‘you’ used for other cases, but this distinction was breaking down in late medieval times. OED notes of ‘you’ that ‘between 1300 and 1400 it began to be used also for the nominative ye, which it had replaced in general use by about 1600’; and of ‘ye’, that ‘when *you* had usurped the place of *ye* as a nom., *ye* came to be used (in the 15th c.), vice versa, as an objective sing. and pl. (= “thee” and “you”)’. The first edition of the KJB reflects the confusion between the two by using ‘you’ as a nominative 289 times, and ‘ye’ for the accusative or dative 12 times. Statistically, this is

little more than 4% of the 7,251 occurrences of ‘ye’ and ‘you’, which suggests that the general use of ‘you’ for ‘ye’ by 1600 is only weakly reflected in the KJB. Nevertheless, there are places in the KJB where the two words or forms are mixed so freely that it is clear that fixed practice has broken down, and possible that the two were not given distinct pronunciations. A couple of verses provide a particularly useful example:

Ye shall obserue to doe therefore as the Lord your God hath commanded you: you shall not turne aside to the right hand, or to the left. You shall walke in all the wayes which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that ye may liue, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your dayes in the land which ye shall possesse. (Deut. 5:32–3)

‘Ye shall’ at the beginning is obviously inconsistent with ‘you shall’ later in the sentence and at the beginning of the second verse, and the later uses of ‘ye’ as subject.

In the time of Blayney and Parris, the mid-eighteenth century, the replacement of ‘ye’ by ‘you’ was still more a matter of usage than grammatical prescription. So Johnson as a grammarian gives ‘ye’ as the nominative and ‘you’ as the ‘oblique’ form, but, as a lexicographer, he notes that ‘you’ ‘is used in the nominative; and though first introduced by corruption, is now established’. Robert Lowth, in his *Short Introduction to English Grammar* (1762), is less old-fashioned: he gives ‘Ye or You’ for the nominative, but dismisses instances of ‘ye’ in other cases as improper or ungrammatical, even as manifest solecisms (p. 22). In these circumstances Parris and Blayney had three choices:

1. they could, following the standards articulated by Lowth, keep all the original usages of ‘you’ and correct the dozen wrong uses of ‘ye’ to ‘you’;
2. they could make the text consistent according to the translators’ predominant usage, using ‘ye’ for the nominative and ‘you’ for the other cases;
3. or they could follow the now-established usage and give ‘you’ throughout.

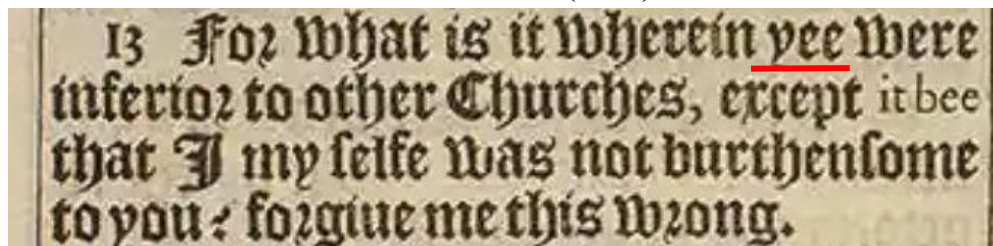
Each choice was grammatically defensible. The first would allow inconsistent usage and be largely true to the original. The second would be unimpeachable but old-fashioned. The third would begin to change the general linguistic character of the text: might not ‘thee’ and ‘thou’ be replaced with ‘you’; and, if that change is made, might not the old-fashioned endings (‘-eth’ etc.) be eliminated? By this time the language of the KJB had become what Johnson calls ‘solemn language’: it was the accepted language of the Bible and religion, distinguished from ordinary language, so such changes would probably have been unacceptable.

Parris seems to have chosen the second option but then to have had doubts (or become careless); after Genesis, where he made fourteen of the seventeen necessary changes, he usually but not always left what he found as he found it. It was Blayney who carried out the second option with admirable thoroughness. That this was a conscious move towards

making the KJB speak uniformly ‘solemn language’ fits with his replacement of the modern with archaic verb forms in the Apocrypha.

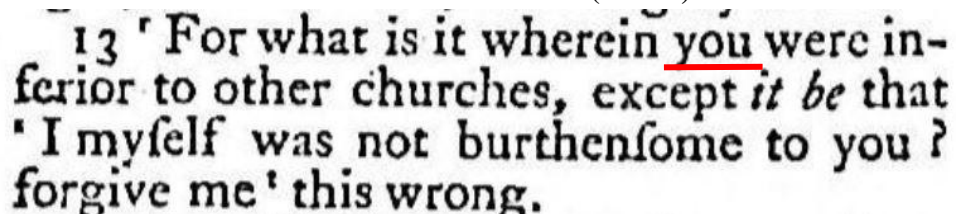
Very occasionally Blayney misses an example or makes a mistake. ‘You were inferior’ for ‘yee were inferior’ (2 Cor. 12:13) looks like a plain mistake.

1611 London Folio (H309)



13 For what is it wherein yee were inferior to other Churches, except it be that I my selfe was not burthensome to you: forgive me this wrong.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

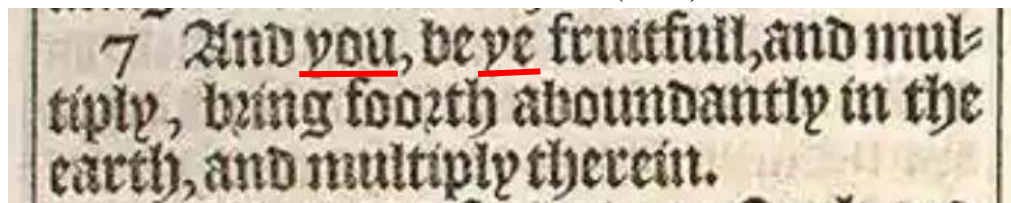


13 For what is it wherein you were inferior to other churches, except *it be* that I myself was not burthensome to you? forgive me this wrong.

[In the case of II Cor. 12:13 Norton is saying that Blayney made a mistake in the implementation of his editorial principle.]

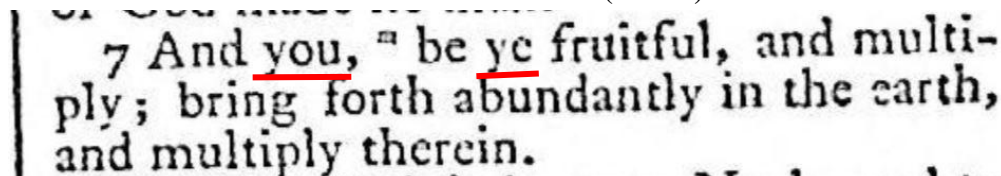
‘And you, be ye fruitfull’ (Gen. 9:7) escapes him,

1611 London Folio (H309)



7 And you, be ye fruitfull, and multiply, bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)



7 And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

though he does change the one other example of this construction ‘and you, in any wise keepe your selues’ (Josh. 6:18) to ‘and ye . . .’.

## 1611 London Folio (H309)

18 And you, in any wise keepe your selues from the accursed thing, lest yee make your selues accursed, When yee take of the accursed thing, and make the campe of Israel a curse, and trouble it.

## 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

18 And ye,<sup>b</sup> in any wise keep *yourselfes* from the accursed thing, lest ye make *yourselfes* accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse,<sup>1</sup> and trouble it.

Erroneously, he changes 'I speake with tongues more then you all' (1 Cor. 14:18) to '... more than ye all', as if 'ye all speak' was implied; the Greek is genitive.

## 1611 London Folio (H309)

18 I thanke my God, I speake with tongues more then you all.

## 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues |  
more than ye all :

Sometimes his work seems to produce problems where imperatives are used. 'Goe ye, get you straw where you can find it' (Exod. 5:11) looks as if it should have 'ye' each time, but Blayney only changes 'you can', leaving the apparently inconsistent 'go ye, get you'. He is right: both verbs are imperative, but the second, קָוּ, is followed by לָכֶם, literally 'get to you'.



## 1611 London Folio (H309)

II Goe ye, get you straw where you  
can find it: yet not ought of your worke  
shall be diminished.

## 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

II Go ye, get you straw where ye can  
find it: yet not ought of your work shall  
be diminished.

Representative of larger apparent inconsistencies, the first edition has ‘prepare you’ three times and ‘prepare ye’ six.<sup>22</sup>

[<sup>22</sup> ‘Prepare you’: Josh. 1:11; Isa. 62:10; 1 Esdras 1:4; ‘prepare ye’: Isa. 40:3; Jer. 6:4; Baruch 1:10; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4.]

Blayney leaves ‘prepare you victuals’ (Josh. 1:11) untouched because the Hebrew has לָקַח,

## 1611 London Folio (H309)

II Passe through the hoste, and com-  
mand the people, saying, Prepare you  
victuals: for within three dayes ye shal  
passe ouer this Jordan, to goe in to pos-  
sesse the land which the LORD your  
God giueth you, to possesse it.

## 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

II Pass through the hoist, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.

but changes ‘prepare you the way of the people’ (Isa. 62:10) to ‘prepare ye . . .’ because the verb is imperative without לָךְ.

## 1611 London Folio (H309)

IO ¶ Goe through, goe through the gates: prepare you the way of the people: cast up, cast up the high way, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people.

## 1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

IO ¶ Go through, go through the gates; <sup>m</sup> prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; <sup>a</sup> lift up a standard for the people.

Like many an editor (and translator), he nods in the Apocrypha, leaving ‘prepare you after your families’ at 1 Esdras 1:4. The instances of ‘prepare ye’ are unproblematic. This, therefore, is what has happened: the first edition’s normal practice was to use ‘ye’ with the imperative except where something in the original, usually לָךְ, dictates using ‘you’ as the indirect object. Blayney has changed this practice into a rule, with the result that the text still looks inconsistent but is fully defensible in the light of the originals (it is very rare to find a slip such as 1 Esdras 1:4).” (Norton, 111-113)

- Chapter 3 of Lawrence M. Vance’s book *The Text of The King James Bible* (2025) is titled “Editions Of The Authorized Version.” In this chapter, Dr. Vance catalogues changes made to the AV across all the major folio editions (1629, 1638, 1762, & 1769). Spanning pages 181 to 199, Vance notes 204 total changes to the use of “you” and “ye” in the canonical text of the KJB. Consider the following breakdown of these changes by year and number.

- 1629—7 changes, 3.4% (Gen. 18:27; Ex. 16:23; Jud. 21:22; Is. 30:11; John 9:27; II Cor. 2:8; Gal. 1:6)
- 1638—4 changes, 1.9% (Deut. 1:43; Mark 11:26; Col. 4:6; I John 2:13)
- 1762—132 changes, 64.7%
- 1769—61 changes, 29.9 %
- Total—204 changes
  - “ye” to “you”—6 changes, 2.9% (Deut. 1:13, 40; Is. 30:11; 32:11; Zech. 6:7; 9:12)
  - “you” to “ye”—198 changes, 97.0%
- These numbers gleaned from Vance reflect changes catalogued in the flagship folio editions and do not reflect any changes that might have occurred in the lesser, smaller sized editions. Note also that the vast majority did not occur until the 18<sup>th</sup> century under the editorship of Parris (1762) and Blaney (1769).
- Before concluding this Lesson, I would like to revisit our 2<sup>nd</sup> case study of you/ye changes from Lesson 252, regarding Genesis 9:4.

*Case Study #2—Genesis 9:4*

- In the case of Genesis 9:4, Dr. Vance records a change from “you” to “ye” occurring in the 1762 Cambridge folio edition (H1142). Unfortunately, this is yet another example of oversight being made by only consulting the flagship folio editions. Please consider the following evidence.

Genesis 9:4

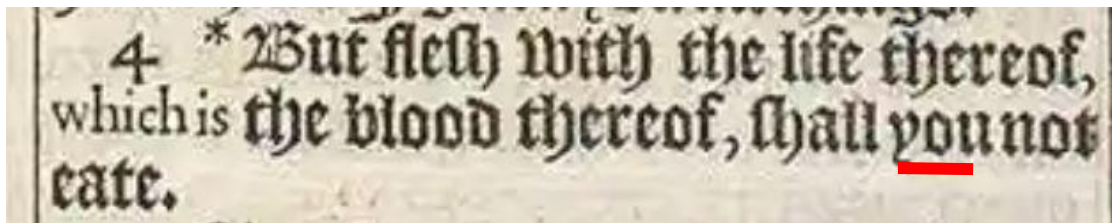
1602 Bishops



- The base text of the Bishops Bible reads “shall ye not eat” in 1602.

## Genesis 9:4

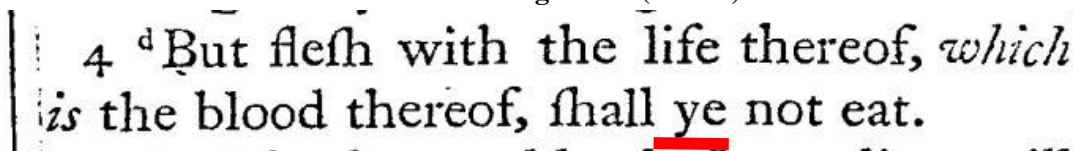
1611



- The translators of 1611 made two changes to Genesis 9:4:
  - 1602—“But flesh in the life thereof” became “but flesh with the life thereof” in the 1611.
  - 1602— “shall ye not eat” was changed to read “shall **you** not eat” in the 1611.
    - “ye” was changed to “you” by the King James translators i.e., “you” was their preferred reading.

## Genesis 9:4

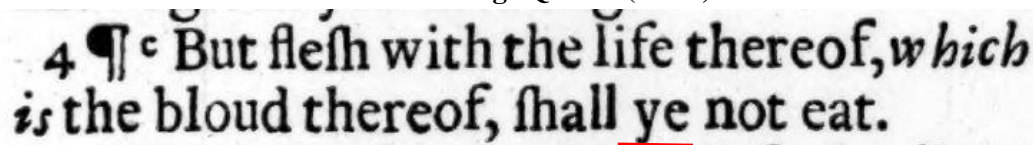
1762 Cambridge Folio (H1142)



- According to Dr. Vance, the original Bishops reading of “ye” was reinstated by F.S. Parris in 1762. Unfortunately, this is not correct since the 1683 Cambridge Quarto edition (H780) had already changed “you” to “ye” in Genesis 9:4 nearly eighty years earlier.

## Genesis 9:4

1683 Cambridge Quarto (H780)



- Recall from above that 193 or 94.6% of the 204 “you/ye” changes catalogued by Vance in Chapter 3, were ascribed to the 1762 and 1769 folio editions of Cambridge and Oxford respectively. Of these 193 changes, my research uncovered that 132 or 68.3% of them had already been made in the 1683 Cambridge Quarto edition (H780). This is a staggeringly high number of edits that were not supposed to have been made until nearly eighty years later.
- This underscores a point we have been making for a while now (since [Lesson 250](#)); the true printed history of the text is not limited to the flagship folio editions as has been assumed by

Norton, Campbell, and Vance; the real story unfolds year by year and printing by printing. Moreover, the 1683 Cambridge Quarto edition (H780) is a pivotal and massively undervalued edition in discerning the printed history of the text.

- For our purposes, the bottom line is this: the text that the readers of the AV use in the 21<sup>st</sup> century i.e., the standard 1769 text is not an identical match to the AV of 1611. While these changes in the use of “you/ye” are not substantive, they indicate an edited text, nonetheless.

### **Work Cited**

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Vance, Lawrence M. *The Text Of The King James Bible*. Vance Publications, 2025.