

Sunday, April 6, 2025—Grace Life School of Theology—*From This Generation For Ever*
 Lesson 261 Assessing the Printed History of the King James Text (KJVO On The Italics)

Introduction

- In [Lesson 260](#) we concluded our look at what F.H.A. Scrivener had to say about the use of italics in the AV. The lesson continued our in-depth examination of Scrivener's analysis of italicized words in the King James Bible. It focused on classes four, five, and six of Scrivener's categorization, exploring the reasons behind italicization and its implications for Bible translation and interpretation. The lesson emphasizes the complexity of translating ancient texts, the transparency of the KJV translators, and the challenges of maintaining consistency across the different editions of the King James text.
- In summation, Lesson 260 covered the following points:
 - Scrivener's fourth class of italics indicates a shift from indirect to direct speech.
 - The fifth class suggests textual uncertainty or doubtful authenticity.
 - The sixth class includes words essential for English sense but not present in the original languages.
 - Inconsistencies exist in the use of italics across different editions of the KJV.
 - The importance of italics for clarity in English translation is highlighted.
 - Challenges in maintaining uniformity in italicization were discussed.
 - The lesson explored the potential reasons for inconsistencies, including printer errors and different translation approaches across the various companies that worked on the AV.
- In this Lesson we want to consider some of the arguments within King James Onlyism regarding the topic of italics.

KJOism On The Italics

- Dr. Samuel C. Gipp's book *The Answers Book: A Helpbook for Christians* (1989) is a very popular resource within King James Version Onlyism. I was given a copy by my high school Sunday School Teacher when I graduated high school in 1996. Written in a question-and-answer format, many have turned to this book over the years to get their questions answered regarding the King James Bible.

- For example, on February 28, 2025, Roy Bell of Old School Bible Baptist Ministries released a YouTube video titled “[WHAT ABOUT THE ITALICIZED WORDS IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE?](#)” in which he reads from Gipps’s book verbatim.
- Question 11 of Gipp’s book addresses the topic of italics in the AV. Please note that any bolding and/or use of all CAPS in the following quotations are the authors’ emphasis not mine. Question 11 reads as follows:
 - “I’ve heard that the italicized words in the King James Bible should be removed because they were added by the translators. Should they be removed?”
- Gipp answers the question as follows:
 - “If we remove **any** of the italicized words we must either remove them ALL or accept them ALL as Scripture.”
- In support of this answer Dr. Gipp begins his explanation as follows:
 - “Following are the problems with removing the italicized words from the Bible:
 1. Anyone who has ever translated from one language to another knows that words **MUST** be added to the finished work to complete the sentence structure of the new language.

All translators do this when translating the Bible. The King James translators were men of integrity so they put the added words in italics.

Example #1

Psalm 23:1 reads “The LORD *is* my shepherd” in the King James Bible. The word “is” was added by the translators to complete the sense of the sentence.

Psalm 23:1 in the New International Version reads, “The LORD **is** my Shepherd.”

So it is plain to see that **both** sets of translators added the same word to complete the sentence. Yet the King James translators put the word in italics to inform the reader that they had added it.

Example #2:

John 1:8 reads, “He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light” in the King James Bible.

John 1:8 reads, “He was not that light, but **was sent** to bear witness of that Light” in the New King James Version.

Again **both** sets of translators have added words to their translation so that it would make sense. In this case it is the phrase “was sent.” Yet again, it is the King James translators who put their addition in italics for clarity.

Thus we see that the translators of our Bible should be commended on their integrity and ethics for their addition of the italicized words instead of castigated for a practice which **all** of our modern “would be” scholars follow routinely.” (Gipp 52-53)

- Point one of Gipp’s “explanation” sets forth the following concepts:
 - Anyone who knows anything about translation knows that “words **MUST** be added to the finished work” in the receptor language to “complete the sentence structure of the new language.” (Gipp, 52)
 - Both the King James & Modern Version translators added words to their respective translations to complete the sense in English (Ps.23:1; John 1:18).
 - The King James translators were men of “integrity and ethics” for placing additional words in italics. Likewise, there is a clear unstated implication that Modern Version translators lack “integrity and ethics” for not using italics when they added words to the text.
 - Nothing is said about the inconsistent nature of the italics in the printed editions of the AV. Moreover, there is no explanation of the conditions under which the King James translators elected to use italics.
- Point two of Dr. Gipp’s “explanation” states:

- “2. Critics of the Bible, fundamental or otherwise, claim that the italics can be removed, but NEVER remove them all. Usually, they are stumped by a passage such as the word “unknown” in I Corinthians 14. Since they cannot explain the passage **with** the italicized word in the passage, they make the thoughtless statement reproduced above and remove the problem word.

But this opens a tremendously large “can of worms”! For if we say that italicized words do not belong in the text, we cannot say that **one** italicized word should be removed from the Bible, but we must say that **ALL** italicized words must be removed from the Bible. Even the casual student of Scripture knows that the Bible will make no sense at all if **ALL** italicized words are removed.

To remove **one** italicized word and leave another in is to claim **Divine Inspiration** is knowing which words should go and which words should stay.

Regardless of how great a preacher, soul-winner, or scholar might be, none of us are going to bow our knees to them with the claim that they are **Divinely inspired** to reject or accept words in the Bible. If we are so foolish as to exalt a man's opinion in such a way, who should we exalt? There are hundreds of Bible critics who would vie for the office of "Official Divinely Inspired Bible Corrector". Who would be the lucky person? How would we choose him? And **WHO** would be so naive as to think that all Christians would follow his decrees? Yet without his decrees we have **NO WAY OF KNOWING** which italicized words belong in the Bible and which ones do not.

So we see that overcoming problem passages will require prayer and Bible reading instead of carelessly removing a troublesome word." (Gipp, 53-54)

- Point two of Gipp's "explanation" presents the following arguments:
 - Bible critics claim that the italics "can be removed" but inconsistently "NEVER remove them all." According to Gipp, critics make this suggestion when faced with a difficult italicized word, like "unknown" in I Corinthians 14:4.
 - For Gipp, if one removes "**one**" italicized word then "**ALL**" italicized words should be removed from the Bible. And this is not a live option for Gipp because everyone knows that "the Bible will make no sense at all if **ALL** italicized words are removed." Gipp is erecting a false dichotomy i.e., an all or nothing scenario to justify his argumentation.
 - In Gipp's mind, removing one italicized word and leaving another equals an act of "Divine Inspiration" thereby creating a conundrum regarding which words should stay in the text.
 - In Gipp's schema, this conundrum could only be solved by the creation of a new office in the body of Christ, that of "Official Divinely Inspired Bible Corrector" (ODIBC) who would rule on the legitimacy of italicized words in the text.
 - If only an "inspired" corrector could remove italicized words from the text, what is the implication for how the italicized words were placed into the text in the first place? If we need inspiration to alter the italics, then the King James translators needed to be directly inspired to place them into the text to begin with. Is Gipp covertly arguing for the double inspiration of the KJB? Moreover, as we have already observed, the italicization is not the same in all editions of the AV. Were the editors of the various editions of the AV inspired as well? What does this do to the doctrine of a closed canon? Wouldn't verbal equivalence be a better solution? All of Gipp's argument is based upon the assumption that *verbatim identity* is necessary for preservation.

- The third portion of Gipp's "explanation" reads:

- "3. One of the classic defenses for leaving the italicized words alone is found in II Samuel 21:19.

"And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaaregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam."

By omitting the italicized words we have the Bible saying that **Elhanan** killed Goliath. Of course everyone knows that I Samuel 17 says that David killed Goliath. So we finally have the Bible that all lost men love to refer to when they say, "The Bible has contradictions in it".

Of course, our "Divinely Inspired Bible Corrector" would probably say the italics in II Samuel 21:19 do not need to be removed. But then who's to know **which** words to remove or which ones to keep in unless God "appeared" to them and told them." (Gipp, 54)

- Gipp's third point dovetails with the second in his use of II Samuel 21:19 as an example.
 - First, note that we already discussed this "classic" example in Lessons [258](#) and [259](#) when we considered Scrivener's first category of italics use.
 - "When words quite or nearly necessary to complete the sense of the sacred writers have been introduced into the text from parallel places of Scripture." (Scrivener, 64)
 - Gipp does not discuss why the phrase "*the brother of*" was italicized and added to the text of the AV in II Samuel 21:19. Moreover, he does not mention the parallel passage in I Chronicles 20:5 that contains the phrase in question.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

II Samuel 21:19

19 And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew *the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.

1769 Oxford Folio (H1194)

I Chronicles 20:5

5 And there was war again with the Philistines; and Elhanan the son of Jair slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, whose spear staff *was* like a weaver's beam.

- Instead, Gipp invokes his hypothetical ODIBC to settle the matter according to the terms of the dichotomy established in point two. If the ODIBC chose to keep the italicized phrase in question, then what would that mean for the rest of the italicized words?
- The reason that words “*the brother of*” are in italics in II Samuel 21:19 is because there are no corresponding Hebrew words in the Masoretic Text, a point Gipp does not discuss.
- Why is none of this content covered by Gipp? Instead, he resorts to leveraging the postulated ODIBC against the false dichotomy established in point two.
- The fourth and final portion of Gipp’s “explanation” reads as follows:
 - “4. Our fourth and best reason for not meddling with God’s choice of words for His Bible comes from none other than the Apostles Peter and Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

First, take a Bible (King James, of course) and read Psalm 16:8. “I have set the LORD always before me: because *he is* at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”

You will notice that the two words “*he is*” are in italics. Yet when we find the Apostle Peter quoting this verse in the New Testament in Acts 2:25 we find it says:

“For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved.”

So here we find the Apostle Peter quoting Psalm 16:8 **italicized words and all!** You would almost believe that God wanted them in there wouldn’t you?

Now it might be pointed out that Peter was an unlearned and ignorant man (Acts 4:13) and so, lacking the “benefits” of a Bible college education, he blindly accepted the Bible (King James?) as every word of God. But let us look at the same phenomena concerning the Apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul, as did other New Testament writers, often quoted from the Old Testament in his writings. In doing so, he quoted as did the others directly from the Hebrew Text. We have several of Paul's quotes which contain words not found in the Hebrew original.

In Romans 10:20 Paul quotes Isaiah 65:1.

Romans 10:20: "But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me."

Isaiah 65:1 "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of *them that* sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name."

Yet we see that the words "them that" which Paul quoted as though they were **in** Isaiah 65:1 exist only in the italics of the King James Bible.

The same is true of I Corinthians 3:20, "And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." which is a quote of Psalm 94:11, "The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they *are* vanity." where we find the word "are" supplied by the translators.

But the most unexplainable is Paul's quote of Deuteronomy 25:4 in I Corinthians 9:9. For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?

Deut 25:4: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out *the corn*."

Here we find Paul quoting the words "the corn" just as if they had been in the Hebrew original even though they are only found in the italics of our Authorized Version!

If one were to argue that Paul was quoting a supposed Greek Septuagint translation of the original Hebrew, our dilemma only worsens. For now, two perplexing questions present themselves to us. First, if such a Greek translation ever existed, (which is not documented in history) by what authority did the translators insert these words? Secondly, if they were added by the translators, does Paul's quoting of them confirm them as inspired?

While you ponder these important questions, we will note that **Jesus** also quoted from what appears to have been a King James Bible.

We find Him quoting a word that wasn't in the "originals". In fact, a word that only exists in the italics found in the pages of the King James Bible.

Read below, please, Deuteronomy 8:3.

“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”

You will note that the word “word” is in italics, meaning of course, that it was not in the Hebrew text. Upon examination of Deuteronomy 8:3 in Hebrew one will find that the word “dabar” which is Hebrew for “word” is not found anywhere in the verse.

Yet in His contest with Satan we find Jesus quoting Deuteronomy 9:3 as follows in Matthew 4:4.

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

While quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 Jesus quotes the entire verse **including the King James italicized word!** Even an amateur “scholar” can locate “ramati”, a form of “rama”, which is Greek for “word”, in any Greek New Testament.

So, just as critics of the Bible like to joke and say, “Well, the King James was good enough for the Apostle Paul so it’s good enough for me.” A true Bible-believer can truly say, “Well, the King James was good enough for the Apostles Peter and Paul and for the Lord Jesus Christ, so it’s good enough for me”.

So we see we have three options on what to do with the italicized words in the Bible.

(1) Remove **All** of them.

(2) Exalt one of our fundamental Bible critics to the office of “Official Divinely Inspired Bible Corrector” and then give his decrees all the weight and allegiance that we would give to Jesus Christ.

(3) Leave **all** the words in our divinely inspired Bible alone, and trust that just **maybe** Jesus Christ is correct.

It’s as though we **had** a choice.” (Gipp, 52-57)

- Unpacking Gipp’s fourth point:
 - Christ and the New Testament authors quote italicized words found in the Old Testament in the New Testament where the same words are not italicized. Gipp implies that Paul’s quoting of italicized words in the KJB New Testament confirms that the italics is inspired in the English text.

- The assumption of verbatim identity pervades Gipp's "explanation." When one drops *verbatim identity* of wording as the standard for preservation, at least four or five different possible explanations for the italics present themselves.
 - The Old Testament translators added italics to harmonize the Old Testament reading with a parallel passage in the New Testament. This would be an expansion of Scrivener's first class (See Lessons 258 & 259). Recall from above that Gipp already seems to approve of this practice on account of the insertion of the words "*the brother of*" in II Samuel 21:19.
 - The Holy Spirit is expanding upon the Old Testament cross reference.
 - The Holy Spirit is clarifying the Old Testament reference.
 - The Holy Spirit is supplying additional context or needed information so that New Testament readers can understand what is being said.
 - Some combination of these.
- Confounds the Bible with the KJB. At one point Dr. Gipp stated, that Jesus "quoted from what appears to have been a King James Bible." This is a conflation of terms, that leads to the conclusion that only the KJB is the Bible. Practically, Gipp's view excludes other translations in other time periods from being the Bible because they are not an identical match with the KJB. This would be in tension with Paul's statement in Romans 16:26 regarding the mystery, "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:" The word of God needs to be in the languages of the nations if the mystery is "made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
- Other King James Only authors argue both similarly and, in some cases, more directly than Dr. Gipp for the inspired nature of the italics.
 - Brandon Peterson—*Sealed By The King: Intricate Patterns and Details Pointing to God's Inspiration over the 1611 Holy Bible in English* (2024)
 - "Every word of the King James Bible is placed by inspiration of God, including *the italics*." (131)
 - David Reagan—"The Italicized Words Inspired or Not?" on LearntheBible.org
 - "A number of Old Testament italicized words are quoted in the New Testament without the italics. This demonstrates the confidence that God places in the italicized words. When He quotes Himself in the New Testament, these words are not italicized. If God treats the italicized words as scripture, then so should we."

- “Conclusions concerning italicized words:
 - a. They are absolutely necessary for proper understanding in the English text
 - b. They are divinely placed and are therefore as much a part of the inspired text as the words which are not italicized
 - c. Italicized words are quoted by Christ (Matt.21:42; 22:32; etc.), Peter (Acts 2:25), and Paul (Rom.10:8)
 - d. Italicized words are sometimes critical to the correct doctrinal understanding of the passage (Matt.4:4; 22:32)
 - e. Italicized words demonstrate the following:
 - (1) The absolute honesty of the KJB translators
 - (2) The feel of the original languages
 - f. Italicized words are also the inspired words of God” (Reagan)
- Gene Kim—[“KJV Translators Added Words in the Bible! \(Pt 1\)”](#) YouTube Video (5/31/17)
 - “Now look at the book of Acts, chapter 13, verse 41. Acts 13, verse 41. So, notice right here what the Apostle — what Luke did, what Luke, the author, wrote. Look at Acts chapter 13, verse 41. "Behold, ye despisers and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." "You" is not italicized here. **So, he used italics.** He thought that was part of scripture. These apostles and authors said, "The scripture said it is written." Right? **So they believed this is God-breathed scripture, and you know what they thought was inspired? God-breathed scripture, italics. Like, think about that.**”
- Thomas Carroll—[“Do the Italicized Words Belong in the King James Bible?”](#) on the Against Spiritual Wickedness website:
 - “Because the New Testament writers quote Old Testament italics, this means that those italics were in the original manuscripts. Although the King James translators did not have those words in the Hebrew, they were led by the Holy Spirit to put in the right words that are quoted in the Greek New Testament.
 - The italicized words are inspired.”
- In the next Lesson we will discuss some examples of the different types of examples discussed in this Lesson.

Works Cited

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