

ews and Current Events :: The Most Popular and Fastest Growing Bible Translation Isn't What You Think

The Most Popular and Fastest Growing Bible Translation Isn't What You Think It Is - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/1

When Americans reach for their Bibles, more than half of them pick up a King James Version (KJV), according to a new study advised by respected historian Mark Noll.

The 55 percent who read the KJV easily outnumber the 19 percent who read the New International Version (NIV). And the percentages drop into the single digits for competitors such as the New Revised Standard Version, New America Bible, and the Living Bible.

So concludes "The Bible in American Life," a lengthy report by the Center for the Study of Religion and American Culture at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI). Funded by the Lilly Foundation, researchers asked questions on what David Briggs of the ARDA, which first reported the results, calls "two of the most highly respected data sources for American religion"—the General Social Survey and the National Congregations Study.

The numbers are surprising, given the strong sales of NIV translations in bookstores. The NIV has topped the CBA's bestselling Bible translation list for decades, and continued to sell robustly in 2013.

The high numbers of KJV readers confirm the findings of last year's American Bible Society (ABS) State of the Bible report. On behalf of ABS, Barna Group found that 52 percent of Americans read the King James or the New King James Version, compared with 11 percent who read the NIV.

The KJV also received almost 45 percent of the Bible translation-related searches on Google, compared with almost 24 percent for the NIV, according to Bible Gateway's Stephen Smith.

In fact, searches for the KJV seem to be rising distinctly since 2005, while most other English translations are staying flat or are declining, according to Smith's Google research.

Smith, whose research on how technology is shaping Bible use is profiled in this month's CT cover story, blended data from Google Trends and the Google Keyword Tool to see how English Bible translations compare in search terms. Bible translation searches may not necessarily be an indicator of Bible translation usage—a Bible Gateway study earlier this year found dramatic differences between the cities most likely to search for Bible verses and the American Bible Society's list of top "Bible-minded" cities.

Nevertheless, other studies also indicate that the KJV remains the translation powerhouse. A 2011 Lifeway study, for example, found that 62 percent of Americans—and 82 percent of Americans who regularly read the Bible—own a copy of the KJV.

"Although the bookstores are now crowded with alternative versions, and although several different translations are now widely used in church services and for preaching, the large presence of the KJV testifies to the extraordinary power of this one classic English text," Noll commented in the IUPUI report. "It also raises most interesting questions about the role of religious and linguistic tradition in the makeup of contemporary American culture."

Noll, a leading evangelical scholar, wrote a cover story for CT on where the world would be without the KJV.

The study from IUPUI in some ways paints a more religious picture of Americans than the ABS/Barna study, recording that 78 percent read their Bibles monthly, compared with the 41 percent found by Barna and the 53 percent found by Lifeway.

But IUPUI also found that fewer Americans read their Bibles every day—just 9 percent, less than the 13 percent recorded by Barna and half of the 18 percent found by Lifeway.

IUPUI also noted several main tells: You're more likely to read the Bible if you're female (56 percent compared with 39 percent of men), African American (70 percent read at least once a year, compared with 46 percent of Hispanics and 44 percent of whites), and older (56 percent of those over 70 years old, compared with 44 percent of those between 18 and

29). You're also more likely to read the Bible if you live in the South (61 percent) rather than the Northeast (36 percent).

While IUPUI found that readers name Psalm 23 as their favorite scripture, followed by John 3:16, Barna found that more people liked John 3:16 the best, followed by Psalm 23. (CT covered the 10 most-searched Bible verses of 2013.)

CT has reported on ABS's State of the Bible reports, including how the Bible gained 6 million new antagonists in 2013.

CT's previous coverage of the KJV includes a history of the translation, its influence, and how the KJV compares to other translations.

CT's previous coverage of the NIV includes the Southern Baptist Convention's rejection of the 2011 version for avoiding male pronouns where both genders are intended and responses from Lifeway and CT.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2014/march/most-popular-and-fastest-growing-bible-translation-niv-kjv.html>

Re: The Most Popular and Fastest Growing Bible Translation Isn't What You Think - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/18 15:50

RE:///The 55 percent who read the KJV easily outnumber the 19 percent who read the New International Version (NIV).//

RE:/// The numbers are surprising, given the strong sales of NIV translations in bookstores. The NIV has topped the CBA's bestselling Bible translation list for decades, and continued to sell robustly in 2013.///

Leland Ryken English professor at Wheaton and literary stylist for ESV in his book "THE Legacy of the King James Bible" on p.230 writes . "...biblical illiteracy has accompanied the decline of the King James Bible. This is widely acknowledged."...

... "Claims by modern translators and bible scholars that the Christian public is fortunate to have been delivered from the archaisms and occasional inaccuracies of the KJV turn out to be hollow. If Bible knowledge in our day has declined across the board, where is the alleged gain from modern translations? The very proliferation of translations has discouraged the Christian public from seeking to know what the Bible actually says.

p. 231 "...dynamic equivalent and colloquial translations do not come close to the King James standard, and modern readers of those translations have no reason to gloat; they have exchanged a birthright of excellence for something manifestly inferior."

p.188 the context is Bunyan of what C.H. Spurgeon wrote : "... our Authorized Version, which will never be bettered, as I judge, till Christ shall come;..."

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/18 15:50

Quote:

"Leland Ryken English professor at Wheaton and literary stylist for ESV in his book "THE Legacy of the King James Bible" on p.230 writes . "...biblical illiteracy has accompanied the decline of the King James Bible. This is widely acknowledged."..."

This statement is an example of the "fallacy of the single cause" which takes the form: "x occurred after y. Therefore, y caused x (although a,b,c& d also caused x)

I would argue rather strenuously that it is NOT the decline of the KJV that had caused the increase in bible illiteracy but rather the increase in TV, video games, smart phones, social media etc etc.

The author of that quote is trying to suggest that if we lived in a KJV only world then bible illiteracy would not have decreased. And to that I say "poppycock."

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/18 17:07

Hi TMK,

TMK wrote : ///This statement is an example of the "fallacy of the single cause"///

I can agree that the introduction of the modern versions/text was not the single nor the root cause of bible illiteracy and the great falling away from truth. But they are products of those philosophies that started influencing the culture and Christendom in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this is when methods of studying the bible such as the historical - critical method was introduced.

I am of the opinion that rather we realize it or not we have in some way succumbed to the acceptance of the historical - critical method by embracing modern versions that have been based on the modern critical text.

I think the original thread article also bears witness to the realization that there is a correlation with biblical illiteracy and the declined usage of the King James Bible.

The NIV is what is selling but statistically a very small percentage of those buyers are reading it.

It would seem to me that Statistics are revealing that those whom are holding to the KJV are the ones most likely to read it.

My opinion is that this is not coincidental but that those whom hold to the KJV are more likely to feel that God in his Sovereignty has in some way Anointed even our english translation, Whereas those whom use translations based on the critical text have succumbed to the view that only the non-existing originals were inspired and therefore bible reading often becomes purely academic and quickly becomes a bore.

TMK wrote : ///The author of that quote is trying to suggest that if we lived in a KJV only world then bible illiteracy would not have decreased. And to that I say "poppycock."///

Leland Ryken is not KJV only, my personal opinion is that the underlining message of his book is to embrace the ESV of which he was a literary stylist for.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/18 18:19

You are correct PP- i do see that he is not KJV only. My bad.

I think there is an alternative reason why people who buy KJVs read them more- its because they are generally of an older school of believers who have always read their bibles more. I don't think it is because a person who starts reading the KJV is entranced by its obvious superiority. Most people who read the KJV for the first time likely have an opposite reaction- particularly young people. Now I know I am speaking in generalities.

In other words, I suspect the majority of persons buying KJVs are older believers who have worn their old KJVs out. I doubt that many young persons are buying KJVs but of course I could be wrong and would like to see some demographics on that.

Please understand that I am not anti- KJV. I personally love the language and it is easier to memorize. I have fond memories of my grandma reading from her KJV and of course Linus's recitation of the nativity story from Luke in Charlie Brown's Christmas is classic- in KJV of course.

But I simply have a very hard time understanding the idea that the KJV and only the KJV is the inspired word of God. Any good translation of the Bible, if approached with a teachable heart and a desire to hear from the Lord will have its intended effect. God could care less if a person is reading the KJV, NIV, ESV, or NLT. I suspect even a naive but sincere searcher of the word reading The Message (horrors) could be blessed by God.

Can you honestly imagine Jesus telling an honest searcher of the scripture-- "Sorry I cannot honor your searching after Me because you are not reading the KJV."

Re: , on: 2014/3/18 18:37

Quote:
-----Can you honestly imagine Jesus telling an honest searcher of the scripture-- "Sorry I cannot honor your searching after Me because you are not reading the KJV."

I suspect He would still say, "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But, I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." (John 5:40-42.

I am KJV Preferred but will read other versions if that is all I had.

I believe the KJV improved my children's literacy as they excel in english, spoken and written and are voracious readers. Much of it is also credited to the fact that they have a "love for learning". But, they appreciate the accuracy of the KJV and if it is their choice, prefer the most accurate version of the Bible.

I have heard that the reason for today's many versions is to keep up with an "ever changing language". But, the language of the Bible is what matters and it (greek and hebrew) never changed. Besides that, it messes up all the cross-references and word associations (for me at least). I am very happy that the KJV is public domain and has been preserved. And the new versions messed up the KJV built in thesaurus. That is how kids learned the multiple meanings of words.

Re: - posted by dolfan (), on: 2014/3/18 18:47

IMO it is not the language of the KJV that makes it as hard to read as the stilted format---columns with numbered verse in a ladder as opposed to paragraphs. The flow of the text just robs its clarity.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/18 19:05

TMK wrote : ///Can you honestly imagine Jesus telling an honest searcher of the scripture-- "Sorry I cannot honor your searching after Me because you are not reading the KJV."///

God can and undoubtedly does illuminate truth to the honest seeker even when it is mingled with a mixture of error. As a young child I sought God with what was available at my disposal which included watchtower and awake material put out by the JW's, Christian Science children bible stories from the followers of Mary eddy Baker, what I could find about and by Edgar Casey, (even though most of it was beyond my comprehension at the time.) a very paraphrased children's bible story book. but that does not mean that such material was inspired nor anointed, and easily could have and often has led to error

- posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/18 19:55

I believe that the literary superiority of the KJV is one of the manifestations of its Special Anointing.

Professor of historical theology at Oxford University and Principle of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and general editor of the NIV Thematic study bible. Alister McGarh in his book "In the Beginning" on p.254 writes : "...there is no evidence that the translators of the King James Bible had any great interest in matters of literature or linguistic development. Their concern was primarily to provide an accurate translation of the Bible, on the assumption that accuracy was itself the most aesthetic of qualities to be desired. Paradoxically, the king's translators achieved literary distinction precisely because they were not deliberately pursuing it. Aiming at truth, they achieved what latter generations recognized as beauty and elegance. Where later translations deliberately and self-consciously sought after literary merit, the king's translators achieved it unintentionally, by focusing on what, to them, was a greater goal. Paradoxically, elegance was achieved by accident, rather than design."

The only disagreement that I have with McGarh on what he has written here, is that I believe the superior elegance was not achieved by accident but I believe it was achieved by Divine design

Re: , on: 2014/3/18 20:51

If you read about the lives of the translators of the KJV you will see that they were born-again and true believers filled with fear regarding the manipulating and changing of the Scriptures.

I love how they were intent on keeping even the smallest, seemingly unimportant thing. This demonstrated a sensitivity to the Spirit. When I understood the difference between the usage of ensample or example, it helped me with the context of several passages. Even "Thee, thou, and ye" have purpose that I did not know for awhile.

"Example" deals with exterior (ex) and ensample deals with interior (en).

ensample comes (from within) you (from Christ but could be Satan, too) and is actively passed on to others.

2Pe_2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

What is being brought to our attention in 2 Pet 2:6 by ensample is not their outward acts so much as their inward wickedness (which is producing the outward acts). EN = IN, EX = OUT.

Php_3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

2Th_3:9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Here the emphasis is not so much on what they do, but who they are in relation to their inward life, their attitude, fruit of the Spirit, etc. We are not to copy or pattern ourselves after each others outward examples. We are to take note of each other's ensample (inward example) and follow others as they follow Christ.

"example" is your (outward) life which is (outwardly seen) or could be a copy or a pattern.

In the following, the outward acts of suffering and wickedness is actually being drawn to our attention.

Jas_5:10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

Jud_1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

This is why I really, really like the KJV translation. And there are so many more things like this. It truly is good english, with much meaning and the best translation from the greek and hebrew that there is.

Just my own testimony, I don't care what anyone else reads.

It is also easier for me to memorize because of it's natural rythmn and syncopation. I don't really even memorize to memorize, it just sticks in me as I read it. It has a rhyiming to it and that is why there are so many scripture songs from the KJV and virtually none from any other version.

Re: , on: 2014/3/18 21:03

Fred Phelps is dying and you all want to have a Bible Translation dust-up?

Yay!!! been a long time.....gotta get somebody to take the bait though.

Re: - posted by KPYee, on: 2014/3/18 21:25

Bill Schnoebelen said in his book "Blood at the Doorpost" that he has great success in deliverance ministry because he uses KJV. When he quotes from modern translation the demons are not troubled. He cites missionaries who have similar experiences. So they sent back the modern translations to their sponsors with the request they be replaced by the KJV. Perhaps there is something more in the KJV that's not in the modern translations

Re: , on: 2014/3/18 21:47

Quote:

-----by HezWelling on 2014/3/18 21:03:33

Fred Phelps is dying and you all want to have a Bible Translation dust-up?

Yay!!! been a long time.....gotta get somebody to take the bait though.

I'm sorry, Neil, I don't know him and don't want to be insensitive. Am I supposed to know him.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/18 21:52

Fred Phelps is the pastor who headed Westboro Baptist.

Re: , on: 2014/3/18 22:44

Oh, how sad. This is the first time a Christian has ever associated me with Westboro.

Or, are you linking the KJV to people like Phelps? That is even sadder as you are indicting a lot of people past and present that you love.

Re: , on: 2014/3/18 23:23

Neil, this has been a good thread and there is nothing wrong with people giving personal testimonies of how their particular translation has blessed them. I said before that I don't care what anyone reads and I will add that I have no desire to debate about the KJV and won't. That is dead man's land. I do, however enjoy testimonies especially from you regarding the ESV. And no, I am not offended by your remark concerning Phelps. You are always quick to be contrite and I am sure you are praying for his soul.

Re: - posted by a-servant, on: 2014/3/19 21:49

by KPYee on 2014/3/18 18:25:17

Bill Schnoebelen said in his book "Blood at the Doorpost" that he has great success in deliverance ministry because he uses KJV. When he quotes from modern translation the demons are not troubled. He cites missionaries who have similar experiences. So they sent back the modern translations to their sponsors with the request they be replaced by the KJV. Perhaps there is something more in the KJV that's not in the modern translations

Yes you cannot fool demons, they are in fact spiritual in a sense that they understand what the word of God is. It is written!

Everyone that wants to rationalize that: Please be so kind to yourself and put it to the test.

Regardless what you think about it, and what you thought previously about it: Put it to the test. I like to remind you, and we will not laugh, except for joy once you drive out your first demon. Praise Jesus.

Re: , on: 2014/3/19 21:53

They are also very technical as exemplified in how they altered God's Word to Adam. And, when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Satan just seems to leave out the good stuff, all the time. Well, he is probably just using his own version.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/19 22:08

come on guys- your reasoning about demons responding better to KJ english is just plain silly. But I admire your relentlessness.

what if the person confronting a demon does not speak english? Is a spanish language bible written in old king james english? even if a KJV bible is translated into spanish things will be lost in the translation. does this mean that a spanish or chinese or hindi speaking person is doomed unless he first learns english and reads the KJV? gee whiz.

I didn't realize that a demon's first language was english. how in the world did they understand Jesus?

Re: , on: 2014/3/19 22:27

Letters and numbers photographed on the wings of butterflies. (it's not the japanese alphabet and its not hebrew or greek)

<http://www.butterflyalphabet.com/main/index.php>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kjell_Bloch_Sandved

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/19 22:38

Just-in--

I can't tell if you are being serious-- I hope not!

It is hilarious though. But if you are trying to make a point and not just being silly I am not sure what it is.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/19 23:17

Hi just-in,

just-in wrote : /// They are also very technical as exemplified in how they altered God's Word to Adam. And, when Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. Satan just seems to leave out the good stuff, all the time. Well, he is probably just using his own version. ///

psalms 91 from the satans translation

11 He shall give his angels charge concerning thee:

12 and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

psalms 91 from the Bible

11 For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

12 They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

do you notice any difference between the two versions ?

If so is the difference significant ?

Re: , on: 2014/3/20 1:43

Quote:

-----by TMK on 2014/3/19 22:38:34

Just-in--

I can't tell if you are being serious-- I hope not!

It is hilarious though. But if you are trying to make a point and not just being silly I am not sure what it is.

Nope, just trying to bring a little levity to the convo. Glad you laughed.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/20 7:30

whew- thanks goodness just-in!

Papa-- you have made this point before about Jesus' temptation and I just can't quite grasp it.

First of all, Satan was not speaking KJV English when he tempted Jesus. Obviously there was no KJV bible to quote. Heck there wasn't even a King James yet.

Second, there are several OT quotations in the NT that are not exact quotations. Paul does this sometimes.

If you could elucidate the point you are trying to make about the language Satan is quoted as using when he tempted Jesus it might be helpful. I hope you are not suggesting that if Satan had quoted the scripture exactly then Jesus would have succumbed.

Also- Jesus did not tell Satan he was misquoting scripture.

Re: - posted by proudpapa, on: 2014/3/20 8:10

What you should know about Inerrancy by Charles C. Ryrie moody press 1981
p77

"The second temptation also illustrates the importance of plenary inspiration. Satan tried to entice the Lord to throw Himself off the pinnacle of the Temple by assuring Him that he could claim the promise of psalms 91:11-12 that God's angels would guard Him. But in quoting those verses Satan omitted part of verse 11: "to guard you in all your ways." The omission distorts the meaning of the promise, which is that God will keep the righteous on their journeys, not that He will preserve them when they take needless risks. A needless risk was exactly what Satan had proposed to Christ. The Lord replied that to bank on part of a verse would be to tempt God. Instead He would rely on every word that came from God, including every word of Psalms 91:11-12."

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2014/3/20 9:11

Ok I get it now. Any other version than the KJV is the devil's version. False premise but I get where you are coming from.

Query: CS Lewis used the Greek texts when studying the NT, that is he didn't use any translation except his own because he was smart enough to do so. Was he in error by doing this?? And what did all the poor souls do for a bible prior to 1611?

Justin , on: 2014/3/20 9:23

Quote:

-----Oh, how sad. This is the first time a Christian has ever associated me with Westboro.

Or, are you linking the KJV to people like Phelps? That is even sadder as you are indicting a lot of people past and present that you love.

no no no, nothing of the kind, its just that I've seen SO MANY Bible translation dust-ups on this forum, it boggles the soul ...and they all end bad....most of them. Same thing with all the other familiar dust ups on this forum, which I don't even want to list.

as far as Phelps...God knows. I don't. sometimes God does NOT want you to pray for something, which I've seen in Scripture....the thing I pray is this; that the whole brood in Westboro (Topeka) doesn't end up in some nightmare "jim jones" mass fiery suicide, because there are too many children and babies trapped in that hellish nightmare.

nothing against you....I think this world is on fire, and we spend a lot of time quibbling about vapors...but that's just me. LORD bless you, neil

Re: , on: 2014/3/20 9:31

The Spanish have had the same exact problem with their Bibles.

<http://www.reinavalera.com/en/node/3>

The Reina Valera seems to be the best one (using the Received Text or Majority Text).

Many don't understand that people are only trying to show the KJV as the most accurate English bible, not the most accurate Bible, because there are many foreign language translations that also rely on the Majority Text.

The RVG 2010 is one of those.

Re: - posted by Heydave (), on: 2014/3/20 12:08

Just-in,

Just to correct you a bit if that's OK.

The Received text is not the same as the majority text. The Received text (or TR) compiled by Erasmus used only a few Greek manuscripts, the majority became known later.

Also you said, quote: "Many don't understand that people are only trying to show the KJV as the most accurate English bible, not the most accurate Bible, because there are many foreign language translations that also rely on the Majority Text." ext."

Yes there are some that take that view and maybe you do. However the school of KJ only say it is the English KJV that is inspired and I have even heard people say that you need to translate from the English KJV into other languages and not from the Greek texts (Majority or otherwise).

Re: , on: 2014/3/20 12:36

Yeah, I don't take that view. And I have said many times, I am KJV Preferred, but will read other versions if I am put in that circumstance. And, no I don't mind being corrected. The bulk of my personal learning and education has come from correction.

Textus Receptus (Received Text) is based on the vast majority (90%) of the 5000+ Greek manuscripts in existence. That is why it is also called the Majority Text.

The Traditional Received Text (Textus Receptus), is also called the Byzantine Text or the Majority Text because it is based

ed on the vast majority of manuscripts still in existence. These extant manuscripts (MSS) were brought together by various editors such as Lucian (AD 250-312), Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza and the Elzevir brothers to form the text known as Textus Receptus, the name given to the Majority Text in the 17th century. The most notable editor of all was Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536) one of the greatest scholars the world has ever known. When the early Protestant Reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries decided to translate the Scriptures directly from Greek into the languages of Europe, they selected Textus Receptus as their foundation Greek document.