

The King James Only Controversy

Claim # 1: The King James Version is based on the on the Textus Receptus (TR), the best Greek text available.

Fact 1: The TR (1633) actually postdates the original KJV (1611) by 22 years, and so the latter cannot have been based on the former. The original KJV was based on a later revision of Erasmus' Greek text.

Claim # 2: The KJV is God's inspired version for mankind, and can even be used to correct the Greek and Hebrew.

Fact 1: The KJV itself has changed over the course of its many revisions. Which revision is the inspired one? If the original 1611 is, then why did it have to be corrected, and why are KJV-Only proponents using the 1769 revision instead of the 1611?

Fact 2: People spoke English before the KJV was published in 1611. Were they without an inspired Bible all those centuries?

Fact 3: What about all the non-English speakers before and after the publication of the KJV in 1611 (including the Protestant Reformers)? Were they without an inspired version of the Bible? Must non-English speakers today learn English before they can read God's word?

Claim # 3a: The majority of Greek manuscripts are of the Byzantine text-type. The KJV is based on the Byzantine text-type. Since the majority of manuscripts most likely preserved the original text, the KJV is to be preferred over modern versions that are based on other text-types.

Claim # 3b: Modern versions, on the other hand, are based on only *two* Greek manuscripts. These two manuscripts are Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (Ⲛ), and both are dated in the fourth century.

Fact 1: It is true that the majority of manuscripts that we possess are from the Byzantine text-type. But of those manuscript, the earliest dates no earlier than the mid-fourth century, and the vast majority (95%) date *after* the seventh century.

Fact 2: The two best-attested manuscripts are Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, but that's only because we can verify that fact based on our oldest Greek manuscript fragments and quotations from early church writers, many of which date back to the first and early-second centuries. All of these support the readings found in Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

Claim # 4: The majority of believers since the printing of the KJV have used the KJV; and whatever the majority of believers believe must be true.

Fact 1: The majority of believers used the Latin Vulgate for one-thousand years before the Reformation, including John Wycliffe and his 1384 translation from the Vulgate. On this basis we'd have to conclude the truthfulness of a special priesthood, the papacy, devotion to Mary, transubstantiation, and many other beliefs most of us would outright reject.

Fact 2: The majority of Bible readers that use the NIV today now far exceeds the majority of Bible readers that have *ever* used the KJV, from 1611 to the present day. Does this prove that the NIV is God's inspired version?

Fact # 3: This argument *assumes* that we in the 21st century are either *at or near* the end of church history. But what if Christ continues waits another two-thousand years before returning? In that case, the usage of the KJV will have proven to be a mere blip in the entire radar screen of church history.

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Claim # 5: Modern versions cannot be the word of God because they differ at so many points from the KJV.

Fact 1: This argument is circular in that it merely assumes the accuracy of the KJV to prove the accuracy of the KJV.

Claim # 6: Modern versions remove the clearest reference to the Trinity found in the Bible—1 John 5:7!

Fact 1: The reference to the Trinity that occurs in the KJV is not found in any Greek manuscript until *after* the publication of Erasmus' first Greek edition in 1516. The reference was included in the Latin Vulgate in the ninth century, but is not found in Jerome's original Latin Vulgate of 382. When the Roman Catholic authorities confronted Erasmus and asked him why he did not include it in his Greek text, Erasmus told them that none of the Greek manuscripts he had been working with included it. When they insisted it be included, Erasmus agreed to include it in his next edition if they could find just one Greek manuscript that included it. The Roman Catholic authorities promptly went out and had a Greek manuscript custom made. The ink on the page had not yet dried when they presented it to Erasmus, who in turn reluctantly included it in a subsequent edition of his Greek text to make good on his word (Erasmus indicates as much in a lengthy footnote in that edition of his Greek text). That manuscript is now dated at 1520 and is thought to have been authored at Oxford University by a Franciscan monk named Froy.

Claim # 7: Modern versions remove references to the deity of Christ in many passages.

Fact 1: Modern translations like the NIV actually contain more references to Christ's deity than the KJV. Note in the chart below, there is a checkmark (✓) in those cases where the version affirms the deity of Christ, and an x in those cases where it does not:

	John 1:1	John 1:18	Acts 20:28	Rom 9:5	2 Thess 1:12	Titus 2:13	Heb 1:8	2 Pet 1:1
KJV	✓	x	✓	x	x	x	✓	x
NKJV	✓	x	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
NIV	✓	✓	✓	✓	x	✓	✓	✓
NIV mg.					✓			
NASB	✓	✓	✓	x	x	✓	✓	✓

Based on these passages, the KJV affirms the deity of Christ in only three of eight verses, whereas the NIV affirms the deity of Christ in seven of eight, and includes a margin note that indicates the eighth instance (2 Thess 1:12) *could* be translated in such a way that affirms Christ's deity.