

***The Evidence Bible* is NOT What it Claims To Be**

Critical Comment by John A. Bonin (5-24-2004)

My wife and I have watched Kirk Cameron and Ray Comfort's weekly 30 minute TV program several times. (They have some interesting and innovative ideas on witnessing. Excellent program.) When they mentioned they had an "Evidence Bible" that had many pages devoted to dialogue that would be helpful in witnessing, I decided to order one.

Searching the internet I found that it was advertised as a *King James Bible*. When I took delivery I found (sure enough) that on the front cover it says "King James Version." (I wondered why they would use such an old translation, but thought perhaps they wanted to avoid controversy with the "King James Only" crowd.)

The cover is plastered with well-known names like Josh McDowell, Dr. D. James Kennedy and Franklin Graham who endorse the work. Inside he quotes voluminously from scholarly sources like Dr. Bob Morey, Dr. Kent Hovand, Dr. RC Sproul and many others. Very impressive.

However, as I started reading that Bible I soon discovered that there were no old English words, like "thou", "thy", "needeth," etc. What?! They said it was King James! I headed for the copyright page.

There I found where it says:

"...The text used in this Bible is a "Comfort-able KJV"—a sensitively revised King James Version, in which archaic words have been simplified to make God's Word more understandable..."

In the Preface, where it says (in part):

"...To help *The Evidence Bible* to be easily accessible, we have translated into contemporary English some archaic words from the King James Version, such as "concupiscence," "decketh," "enchew," "feigned," "hawn," "heretofore," "howbeit," "intreaty," "waxeth."

There may be concerns that in removing such archaic words from the King James Version we are somehow altering God's Word. But translating such words into contemporary English is not unlike

translating the King James Version into Chinese in order to publish the Bible in a Chinese-speaking country. Would I publish a Bible in the King James English for the Chinese? No, they don't speak that language. Will God's wrath come upon us because we translated the words of the Bible into Chinese so that the Bible could be easily read by the Chinese? I don't think so. Obviously, the Bible should be translated into the language spoken in each country, otherwise it won't make sense to readers there.

I'm sure God rejoiced when the first English version of the Bible gave light to those whom the Roman Catholic church had kept in the dark by keeping the Word of God in Latin. I'm sure "in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram" makes more sense to you when you read it as "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Let's now go forward to this day and age. The King James English Bible was written for the English (another country) when they spoke another language (what we commonly call King James English). Satan didn't say "Yea, Hath God said?" (unless you think that Satan and Adam and Eve spoke English). The verse was originally written in Hebrew, but was translated into English by some kind folks so that the English in the 1700's could understand the Word of God.

We are doing exactly the same thing today. We are taking words that people don't understand and giving the contemporary equivalent. We would never think of dropping verses about the Blood of Christ, repentance, or the deity of Christ; nor would we change the meaning of any verse nor drop one jot or tittle from God's Word..."

Red flags started waving in my mind! While all of this makes sense to the *rational mind*, this is Holy Scripture we are talking about here! While Ray Comfort has preached for many years, reportedly spoken in over 700 churches, produced videos, and written more than 35 books, there are no "initials" after his name! Where has he studied and become expert in Biblical Greek or Hebrew? Where is the list of scholars who were on his "committee" to produce this modified King James text? There is no reference to any committee or group who were held responsible for keeping the integrity of God's Word in this process. While he says they would not drop verses about the Blood of Christ, repentance, the deity of Christ, or change the meaning of any verse, once they start changing words (based on their own judgment, without benefit of the original Hebrew

and Greek text, and without scholarly representation in those areas) how are we to know if the end result properly represents scripture? We cannot. Not unless we are ourselves scholars, and examine the entire book, verse-by-verse.

If Mr. Comfort wanted modern English vernacular, why didn't he use an established translation like the NKJV? (It would seem that is what he was trying to accomplish with his modified text.) If he could not obtain permission from Thomas Nelson, there are other established modern translations that were constructed by "scholars." Did he use the King James because it is no longer protected by copyright?

Going to the website of the publisher – Bridge-Logos Publishers, at www.bridgelogos.com, at the time of this writing, the Evidence Bible is featured on the home page. It represents the Bible as a King James Version – with no other comments about the translation in the *details* section.

Is it possible the publisher felt that if the *Evidence Bible* was labeled on the front cover (and on their web site) as "Modified King James Version," most of the copies would sit on the shelves at the book sellers? (I'm just asking.)

Were the "big names" mentioned on the cover, like Josh McDowell, Franklin Graham and D. James Kennedy, told in advance that it is not really a KJV Bible they are recommending, but one that was modified without scholarly representation? (Again, I'm just asking.)

While Ray Comfort is certainly talented and has obviously accomplished much in his life for the "cause of Christ" (and I do not wish to diminish that because he has obviously helped thousands of people), it would seem to me that this Bible would be more correctly called a "Modification of the King James Version," or put his "Comfort-able KJV" statement right on the front cover – rather than an obscure line on the copyright page, or in the preface that many will never see and realize. To represent it as they (Comfort and the publishers) have, almost appears like they are hiding the truth under a rock (preface and copyright pages), where the reader must look to discover this is not really the KJV, as is represented on the front cover.

In conclusion, history shows that when Desiderius Erasmus published his Greek NT in the 16th century, it was received with much criticism by those

who were using the Latin Vulgate. When the original King James was released in 1611, it was harshly criticized initially, but gradually became the translation *en vogue* by the English-speaking world.

The purpose of this writing is not to affirm the original King James as a superior translation – which, in light of several other modern English translations available today, it is certainly not and is the subject of some controversy. The purpose is not to criticize the *Evidence Bible* because it is new. It would seem to me that while the book is replete with excellent support information to use while witnessing, in my opinion the underlying Biblical text is questionable, and mis-represented on the front cover where it says “King James Version,” when it is not. Am I being a “stickler for detail”? I hope so!