

# A Brief Commentary on David Cloud's Article: KING JAMES ONLYISM

Commentary by Pete Heisey  
Timisoara, Romania

There is a lot of debate and confusion surrounding the man-made term "King James Onlyism." It has been popularized in recent years by men who claim they are concerned about a dangerous and cultic view of the King James Bible. Rarely do they carefully define the term, though, and as a result a wide variety of Bible-believing men are labeled with a nebulously-defined term.

The term "King James Only" was invented by those who oppose the defense of the King James Bible and its underlying Hebrew and Greek texts. It was intended to be a term of approbation, and it is usually defined in terms of extremism.

I have been labeled "King James Only" because of my writings on the subject of Bible texts and versions. To set the record straight, let me explain what I believe. I know from decades of experience and extensive travels that this is also what a large number of other King James Bible defenders believe.

*I WILL ACCEPT THE LABEL OF "KING JAMES ONLY" IF IT MEANS THE FOLLOWING:*

If "King James Only" defines one who believes that God has given infallible Scripture in the original Greek and Hebrew writings and that He has preserved that in the Hebrew Masoretic and Greek Received Text and that we have a beautiful translation of it in the English language in the Authorized Version, call me "King James Only."

***What and WHERE is it that He has preserved the "underlying Hebrew and Greek texts" of the KJB? AND/OR, Exactly what is it that David Cloud refers to when he says "the Hebrew Masoretic (there are several) and [the] Greek Received Text"?***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes modern textual criticism is heresy, call me “King James Only.” I have spent hundreds of dollars to obtain the writings of the men who have been at the forefront of developing the theories underlying modern textual criticism, and I have read them. They are not dependable. They refuse to approach the Bible text from a position of faith in divine preservation. Most of them are out-and-out heretics, and I refuse to lean upon their scholarship. I am convinced they do not have the spiritual discernment necessary to know where the inspired, preserved Word of God is located today.

***Does David Cloud know where “the” inspired, preserved Word [sic – word] of God is? If so, WHERE/WHAT is it? It seems likely that David Cloud would NOT say it is the KJB since he remarks below that he rejects that the KJB is or could be given by inspiration of God (though he seems to say later on in his article that one can call it “inspired”). It is also likely that David Cloud would say that the locus of the preserved “Word” of God (as far as Hebrew and Greek are concerned) would be Bomberg 1524 (if not Letteris 1861 [Jay Green Interlinear] or Ginsberg [TBS]) for the MT and Scrivener for the TR. Of course all of those differ from the EXACT texts/readings underlying the KJB. Is David Cloud aware of that and does he know all of the places where those texts differ from the EXACT text/readings underlying the KJB? Has he done an exhaustive collation with the KJB to determine where all of those places of difference might be? Has he done ANY sort of collation? (This author has done a minimal collation of that sort and found over 30 differences between Scrivener’s Greek text and the EXACT text/readings underlying the KJB.) If David Cloud has not done so, his pontificating about “the” Greek and “the” Hebrew texts reminds one of Spurgeon’s description of the Greek-ists/Greek-ites of his day who he called “a horde of little popelings” [Spurgeon] running around.***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that God has preserved the Scripture [*sic – scripture*] in its common use among apostolic churches through the fulfillment of the Great Commission and that He guided the Reformation editors and translators in their choice of the Received Text and that we don’t have to start all over today in an to attempt to find the preserved text of Scripture, call me “King James Only.”

***Correct indeed. But just WHERE is “the Scripture [*sic – scripture*]” which has been preserved? Is not preserved “Scripture”, still scripture? If so, how can it not be “given by inspiration of God” (II Timothy 3:15-17)? It is scripture given by inspiration of God which is profitable for the things listed in II Timothy 3:15-17. If something is not both “scripture” and “given by inspiration of God” it will not fulfill the precise idea of “profitable” in II Timothy 3:15-17. The “upshot” of the foregoing is that if David Cloud considers the KJB to be “preserved ‘Scripture’”, then he is logically and biblically going to have to recognize that it is also inspired and given by inspiration of God. Otherwise it will not be truly profitable in the sense of II Timothy 3:15-17.***

***And where can one get a copy [in English]? Additionally, just what is “the” Received Text (Hebrew and Greek) and where can I obtain a copy. (See also above.)***

The theories of modern textual criticism all revolve around the idea that the pure text of Scripture [*sic – scripture*] was not preserved in the Reformation text but that the Reformation editors, because of their alleged ignorance and or lack of resources, rejected the pure text and chose, instead, an inferior one. In fact, modern textual criticism is predicated upon the theory that the best text of the New Testament (the Egyptian or Alexandrian) was rejected in the earliest centuries and was replaced with a corrupt recension that was created through the conflation of various manuscript readings (the Byzantine or Traditional text) and that the corrupt text became the dominant

text throughout most of church history (for 1,500 years) until the best text was rediscovered in the 19th century. You are free to accept such views if it suits you. I, for one, believe this is absolute nonsense.

Similarly, if “King James Only” defines one who rejects the theory that the “preserved” Word of God was hidden away in the Pope’s library and in a weird Greek Orthodox monastery at the foot of Mt. Sinai (a monastery which has a room full of the skulls of dead monks) for hundreds of years, call me “King James Only.”

***It seems that David Cloud is implicitly, if not explicitly, limiting (or at least referring to) “the preserved Word of God” as being only the Greek [and Hebrew] language[s]. Yet he fudges a little on that one below in saying that the KJB is the preserved “Word” (does he mean all the very words, inerrant, etc.??) of God because it is an “accurate” translation. Does David Cloud believe that the KJB is 100% accurate (errorless, inerrant, etc.)?***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes it is important to have one biblical standard in a language as important as English and who believes that the multiplicity of competing versions has created confusion and has weakened the authority of the Word of God, call me “King James Only.”

***ON THE OTHER HAND, I WILL NOT ACCEPT THE LABEL OF “KING JAMES ONLY” IF IT MEANS THE FOLLOWING:***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that the KJV was *given by* inspiration, I am *not* “King James Only.” The authority of the King James Bible is the product of preservation, not inspiration. The term “inspiration” refers to the original giving of the Scripture through holy men of old (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). At the same time, I agree with the *Pulpit Commentary* when it says, “We must guard against such narrow, mechanical views of inspiration as would confine it to

the Hebrew and Greek words in which it was written, so that one who reads a good translation would not have “the words of the Lord.” To say that the King James Bible is the inspired Word of God in the English language because it is an accurate translation of the preserved Hebrew and Greek is not the same as saying that it was *given by inspiration*.

***But is not the result the same: preserved inspired scripture. Also, doesn't “given by inspiration of God” DESCRIBE scripture here [originals, exact copies of the originals, or God-preserved translations (into English in the KJB for example)], rather than stating the method by which it came about? Furthermore, is it not the case that something “given by inspiration of God” is “inspired of God”? Conversely, how can something “inspired of God” (David Cloud seems to say that this phrase is acceptable to use of the KJB), but not be “given by inspiration of God”. David Cloud nowhere explains this.***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes the English KJV is superior to the Hebrew and Greek texts upon which it was based, I am *not* “King James Only.”

***I know of no one who says this (except in a practical sense in that English is the universal language of the day). Most who say this are referring to the KJB's superiority to any and every published text. The truth is that the KJB exactly and correctly matches the exact texts/readings which underlie it. Nevertheless it is superior (among a myriad of reasons) because, 1. N.T. Greek is a dead language, 2.) English is the universal language of the day [See Rev. 3:8].***

In fact, I believe such an idea is pure nonsense, as it would mean the preserved Word of God did not exist before 1611.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that the King James Bible is advanced revelation over the Hebrew and Greek texts that God gave through inspiration to holy men of old, I am *not* “King James Only.”

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that we do not need to study Greek and Hebrew today or that it is not proper to use lexicons and dictionaries, I am *not* “King James Only.”

***If, as David Cloud intimates, we “need” to study Greek and Hebrew, then he denies the priesthood of those believers (as well as the power of the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit in them) who do not know Hebrew AND Greek and/or who would have no possibility of learning them. Furthermore, his nebulous approach here does not indicate how much one needs to study/learn them.***

God’s people should learn Greek and Hebrew, if possible, and use (with much caution and wisdom) study tools.

***“Should”? As in “must”? A blatant denial of the priesthood of the believer. This is also a backhanded slap at the sufficiency and inerrancy of the KJB in that a non-Greek, non-Hebrew speaker cannot REALLY understand God’s word [or Word for that matter] (according to Cloud’s way of thinking here).***

When the Bible says that “holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” we know that the words they spake were Hebrew and Greek words.

***This is only partially correct. One MIGHT say “wrote” using Hebrew and Greek words, but numerous individuals have pointed out that the original “speaking” may have been in a language other than Greek or Hebrew or Aramaic.***

But foundational to the study of the biblical languages is a thorough understanding of the textual issue. We must study the *right* Greek and Hebrew,

***An understanding of the textual issues is important. But more importantly, just WHERE can “the” *right* Greek and “the” *right* Hebrew be obtained? And just WHAT constitutes “the” *right* Greek and Hebrew (according to Cloud, anyway)? Is it the EXACT readings underlying the***

## **KJB (as distinct from any published text in either Hebrew or Greek)?**

and we must also be careful of the original language study tools, because many of them were produced from a rationalistic perspective and with great bias against the God-blessed Received Text.

***Then what, really, is the point? I am not against the correct and very limited use of such tools, and particularly for translators, but I am against saying that one “needs” them or “should” use them. The KJB is sufficient enough.***

***An additional question here is just HOW and ON WHAT BASIS does one discern the meat from the bones in the “original language study tools”? If the answer to this second question is to use the KJB, then why not use the KJB completely!***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes the preserved Word of God is available only perfectly in English, I am not “King James Only.” The Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and Greek Received New Testament translated correctly into any language is the preserved Word of God in that language, whether it is German ***[precisely WHERE?]***, Spanish ***[precisely WHERE?]***, French ***[precisely WHERE?]***, Korean, or Nepali.

***These statements [typically] beg the questions of just what and where is “the” Masoretic Hebrew Old Testament and [“the”] Greek Received New Testament, and how and where can they be obtained.***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that translations in other languages should be based on English ***[I assume he means the KJB here]*** rather than (when possible) Greek and Hebrew, I am *not* “King James Only.” (I do believe that a good translation can be made directly from the King James Bible when necessary if it is done by men who are capable in the use

of dictionaries so that they understand the somewhat antiquated language of the KJV properly.)

***The “kicker” in this is that if/since the KJB got it right, why go back 2000 or more years to languages where non-authoritative dictionaries and lexicons are used to “understand” terms. A second “kicker” is just WHAT Greek and Hebrew will be used to translate from. There are NO published texts to date [2011] which match the EXACT readings/texts underlying the KJB. Thus if any published text is used, there will be differences (and errors!) compared to the KJB.***

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that a person can only be saved through the King James Bible, I am *not* “King James Only.” It is the gospel of Jesus Christ that is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), and even a Bible that is textually corrupt contains the gospel.

If “King James Only” defines one who believes that the King James Bible’s antiquated language is holy or who believes the KJV could never again be updated, I am *not* “King James Only.”

***Well it is interesting that David Cloud leaves “updated” undefined. The additional problem is that any changes to the TEXT of the KJB will result in changing the preserved words of God and thus damaging the precision, distinctions, and consistency of the KJB translation. Also, the issue is not “could” never be updated. Numerous attempts have been made and perhaps done. But GOD’S word(s) in English is still the text of the AV1611 KJB.***

I doubt the KJV will ever be replaced in this apostate age, but to say that it is wrong to update the language again after the fashion of the several updates it has undergone since 1611 is not reasonable, in my estimation.

***Those were essentially orthographic in nature and did nothing to change the TEXT of the AV1611 KJB. This is a***



***big smokescreen on David Cloud's part. He's mixing apples and oranges here.***

Having dealt constantly with people who speak English as a second or third language, I am very sympathetic to the very real antiquation problem in the King James Bible. At the same time, I am not going to trade an excellent Bible with a few problems due to old language for a Bible filled with error due to a corrupt text and/or a corrupt translation methodology (e.g., dynamic equivalency).

***If David Cloud is so convinced of the above, then he really should be kind enough to give some specifics here. Or better yet (from his perspective), do the updating work necessary for his non-native English speakers so as to eliminate the "very real antiquation problem".***

***As one who also has dealt constantly with people who speak English as a second or third language, this author is also sympathetic to certain so-called "problems" [David Cloud's term, not this author's] in the English. However, the "very real antiquation problem" is only a SEEMING problem. ANY and EVERY problem that can be solved this side of Heaven, including "problems of 'antiquated' English" and the definition of English words and the understanding of passages in English, can and will be solved by comparing scripture with scripture. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit in a believer clearly understands the very words He has preserved in the language in the KJB and He will teach ANY AND EVERY studious, Christ-controlled believer.***

If "King James Only" defines one who believes he has the authority to call those who disagree with him silly asses, morons, and jacklegs, and to treat them as if they were fools because they refuse to follow his (or her) peculiar views, or if it defines one who threatens to sue those who challenge him (or her), I am *not* "King James Only."

1. *This author has examined said “suing” issue and there is NOWHERE any threat to sue (Waite and Stringer declined to answer or respond when this author asked them to show where Mrs. Riplinger threatened to sue them. This author also contacted her personally about this and she indicated that she nowhere said she was going to “sue” anybody).*
2. *David Cloud engages in his own set of ad hominem arguments, mudslinging, and name calling, even though he may not use Ruckman’s terms (“jackleg” is the only one this author couldn’t find in the Bible. He included “moron” as being in the Bible because there is enough Greek evidence to find mwroi[n] in the Greek NT. – and just for the record, “the” Greek NT means the EXACT text/readings underlying and thus matching the KJB; not Scrivener’s text or any other published [to date – 2011] text.).*
3. *This author has also noted the “guilt by association” implications of David Cloud’s affirmation here, i.e., don’t wrestle with the issues, start calling names. As Phil Stringer says, “A Ruckmanite [or Riplingerite, or whatever – POH] is what they call you when you’re losing the argument.”*