

If the King James Bible is inspired, why does it add *italics*?

At one of the Bible clubs on the internet a Bible critic asks: "If the KJV-only supporters believe fully in the word-for-word inspiration of the KJV, why would italics be necessary?"

First of all, we Bible believers believe in a word for word meaning, not necessarily a strictly literal word for word translation. Sometimes the literal translation would not make sense to us.

ALL translations into another language require the "addition" of certain words for a passage to make proper sense. Why? Because the Hebrew and Greek languages are often elliptical languages. That is, they sometimes omit the Subject or the Verb, or the Direct Object, the Indirect Object or even the word "not" when the text requires it when placed into another language.

The King James Bible translators were honest enough to put most of these "added" words in italics so you could see where they did this. Versions like the NASB, NKJV, ESV, NIV, Holman Standard ALL still "add" those words but they do not always put them in italics so a person reading them is not aware of this.

In fact, there are many places in the Hebrew text where a word is not literally in the text but placed in italics, but when the passage is quoted in the Greek, the word IS there.

Here is one of many examples:

Deuteronomy 8:3.

"And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did they 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 temptation experience in the wilderness with Satan we find Jesus quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 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.

Deuteronomy 25:4, "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out THE CORN." (Geneva, Coverdale, Bishops' bible, Wycliffe, Revised Version, Darby, Douay-Rheims; THE GRAIN - NIV, RSV, ESV, NKJV) The Hebrew word for "corn" or "grain" is not found in the Hebrew text but it is supplied by almost every translation done by man, including the Jewish translations. Yet when this verse is quoted in the New Testament, the apostle Paul "adds" the words "the corn" to the inspired Greek text. - 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?"

Another example found in all bible translations. (And I have MANY of these)

In 1 Samuel 2:3 we read: "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let NOT arrogancy come out of your mouth"

The simple word "not" is not literally in the Hebrew text, yet how different the meaning (the opposite) if not supplied. Check out your bible versions; they all "add" the word "not" to the text.

Here is another one like it. In Proverbs 24:28 we read: "Be not a witness against thy neighbour without cause; and deceive NOT with thy lips." Check out your modern versions like the NIV, NASB, ESV, NKJV, Holman etc. If the word "not" is not "added" then we get the totally opposite meaning from the verse.

In Psalm 9:18 we read: "For the needy shall not alway be forgotten: the expectation of the poor shall NOT perish for ever." Once again the word "not" is not in the Hebrew text and if it were not "added" then the verse would mean the complete opposite - "the expectation of the poor shall perish". So translations like the NIV, NASB, NKJV, ESV and Holman all "add" the word "not" or "nor" to the passage.

In 1 Samuel 16:7 a case is found where the subject and the verb are not found in the Hebrew texts, yet almost every translation in almost every language "adds" these extra words to their texts.

Here we read: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for **THE LORD SEETH** not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."

The words “the LORD seeth” are not found in the Hebrew texts, but they are supplied, and usually not even in italics, with either “for God sees” or “the LORD seeth” by such translations as the Bishops’ bible, the Geneva Bible, the RV, ASV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NASB, NIV, NKJV and NET versions.

Verbs are “added”

Take a look at how many verbs need to be supplied or “added” to the text for the verses to make much sense. In 2 Samuel chapter 9 we read the following verses where ALL the versions (NASB, NIV, ESV, NKJV etc.) “add” the verbs plus other parts of the sentences that are not found in the Hebrew text.

2 Samuel 9:2 “And THERE WAS of the house of Saul a servant...” (NASB, NIV, ESV, NKJV, Holman etc.)

2 Samuel 9:3 “And the king said, IS there not yet any of the house of Saul...? And Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son, WHICH IS lame on HIS (both) feet.”

2 Samuel 9:4 “And the king said, Where IS he? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold he IS in the house of Machir...”

2 Samuel 9:8 “And he bowed himself, and said, What IS thy servant...”

2 Samuel 9:10 “Thou therefore, and thy sons shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in THE FRUITS...(NKJV - the harvest; ESV, NASB - the produce; NIV - the crops)

2 Samuel 9:11 “...As for Mephibosheth, SAID THE KING (NKJV), he shall eat at my table (NASB, NIV, ESV change the Hebrew “my” to DAVID’S table), as one of the king’s sons.”

2 Samuel 9:12 “And all the house of Ziba WERE servants unto Mephibosheth.” (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman etc.)

Psalms 19 - Let’s look for a moment at a more familiar passage of Scripture and see what all the translations “add” to the text.

Psalms 19:5 “Which IS as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber...” (NIV, NASB, NKJV, ESV, Holman etc.)

Psalm 19: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 - "The law of the LORD **IS** perfect...testimony of the LORD **IS** sure...statutes of the LORD **ARE** right...commandment...**IS** pure...fear of the LORD **IS** clean...judgments...**ARE** true... **THERE IS** great reward." (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman etc.)

Psalm 19:12 "Who can understand **HIS** errors? cleanse thou me from secret **FAULTS**." (NIV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, Holman etc.)

There are literally hundreds of such examples found in all Bible translations in both English and foreign languages. It is due in large part to the elliptical nature of the Hebrew and Greek languages.

Personal Names are "added"

There are several examples found in both the Old Testament and the New Testament where a certain name must be "added" to the text in order to have it make sense and avoid complete confusion as to who is saying what. Let's look at a couple examples.

In 1 Kings 20:34 we read a section that would be very confusing if the proper names of the men speaking were not "added". Here we read: "And BENHADAD said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then SAID AHAB, I will send thee away with this covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away." Try reading this verse without the names and see how confusing it is.

So to clear up the ambiguity translations like the following have all "added" the proper names of Benhadad and Ahab: the Geneva Bible, the Jewish translation (JPS) 1917, the RV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NET, NIV, NKJV and Holman.

Again, in the New Testament we read in John 19:5 "Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And PILATE saith unto them, Behold the man!" Imagine how confusing this verse would be if we omit the proper name of Pilate. It would then have Jesus coming forth wearing the crown of thorns and saying "Behold the man!". So, to clear up this possible confusion, the following Bible translations "add" the word Pilate: the Geneva Bible, the RV, ASV, NASB, RSV, NRSV, ESV, NET, NIV, NKJV and Holman Standard, to name but a few.

Here are a few examples from the N.T.

The Elliptical Greek language.

The Greek language used in the New Testament is often elliptical and so also is the Hebrew in the Old. That is, certain parts of speech, including everything from the subject, the verb or the direct and indirect objects are frequently omitted in the literal sense but are implied in the context.

ALL Bible translations OFTEN “add” words like “him, them and you” to their English or foreign language translation. The KJB is honest about this in that it places these “added” words in italics, whereas most modern versions still “add” the extra words but put them in regular print so you can’t see where they did it.

Here are just a FEW of the literally hundreds of examples that could be given. The Bold faced CAPITALIZED words are “added” to the Greek texts.

John 1:18 - “No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared HIM.” (NASB, NIV, NKJV, ESV, Holman)

John 4:26 - “Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am HE.” (NIV, NASB, NKJV, ESV)

John 5:21 - “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth THEM; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman)

John 6:5 - “When Jesus then lifted up HIS eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?” (NKJV, NASB, ESV)

John 6:52 - “The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us HIS flesh to eat?” (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman)

John 8:44 - “Ye are of YOUR father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.” (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman)

John 8:47 - “He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear THEM not, because ye are not of God.” (NIV, NASB, RV, ASV, RSV)

John 9:9 - “Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am HE.” (RV, ASV, NKJV, - NIV, ESV “THE MAN”, NASB “THE ONE”)

John 10:29 - “My Father, which gave THEM me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” (RV, ASV, NASB, NIV, ESV, NKJV, Holman)

John 12:42 - “Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess HIM, lest they should be put out of the synagogue” (NASB, NKJV, Holman; NIV THEIR FAITH; ESV, RSV - IT)

John 13:9 - “Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also MY hands and MY head.” (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman)

John 13:10 - “Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash HIS feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. “ (NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, Holman)

John 13:19 - “Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am HE.” (NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, Holman)

John 15:6 - “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather THEM, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” (RV, ASV, NKJV, NASB, Holman; - NIV SUCH BRANCHES; ESV THE BRANCHES)

John 19:1 - “Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged HIM. “ (NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, Holman)

John 19:15 - “But they cried out, Away WITH HIM, away WITH HIM, crucify him. “ (NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, Holman)

John 20:22 - “And when he had said this, he breathed ON THEM, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” (NKJV, NASB, NIV, ESV, Holman)

John 21:18 - “...but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry THEE whither thou wouldest not.” (NKJV, NIV, NASB, ESV, Holman)

Will Kinney

Here is another little study I recently came across at one of our Bible clubs. This fellow Bible believer put it together and he has some good examples. Here is what he wrote:

The italicized words in the King James Bible are words that were added by the translators to help

the reader. This is usually necessary when translating from one language to another because word meanings and idioms change. So, to produce a more readable translation, the King James translators (1604- 1611) added certain words to the Bible text. However, to make sure that everyone understood that these words were not in the available manuscripts they set them in italics.

Imagine the confusion which would arise if the translators had not used the italicized words:

"Salvation unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah."

This is Psalm 3:8 with one italicized word omitted. As you can see, the reading implies that the Lord needs to be saved! The correct reading is:

"Salvation *belongeth* unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah."

Here is Psalm 7:11 with three italicized words omitted:

"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry every day."

Is God angry with the righteous every day? No, the correct reading is as the King "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."

Consider Psalm 12:5 without the italics:

"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set in safety puffeth at him."

The verse makes no sense without the italics:

"For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise, saith the LORD; I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him."

If we subtract the italics from Psalm 18:3, we have God commanding men to call upon Him to be praised:

"I will call upon the LORD, to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

Yet, if we leave the italics in place, the verse makes perfect sense and gives the praise to God:

"I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies."

Note Psalm 34:16-17 without the italicized words:

"The face of the LORD against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. Cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

This reading allows those that do evil to be delivered from all their troubles, but the italics give a whole new meaning:

"The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

Just from these few examples in Psalms alone, it is clear that the italics are essential. Hundreds of such examples could be presented.

Someone might suggest that some of the italics could be omitted, which may be true, but who makes that choice, and where do we draw the line? The moment we agree to changing any italicized words, we open the door for Satan. This we cannot do, so the best option is to leave the Authorized Version as it stands.

Not only does confusion arise when the italicized words are omitted, contradictions can also arise. For example, omitting the italicized words from II Samuel 21:19 would give Elhanan credit for slaying Goliath, yet everyone knows that it was David who slew Goliath. II Samuel 21:19 says:

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

If we omit the words "the brother of" then we make II Samuel 21:19 contradict I Chronicles 20:5:

"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." (No italics!)

Another important point is that New Testament writers QUOTE from the italicized words in the Old Testament. Note the following:

Psalm 16:8 says: "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."

The words "he is" are in italics. When Peter quotes this verse in Acts 2:25 he also quotes the italicized words, but Luke doesn't write them in italics:

"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."

Why did Peter quote these words and why did Luke write these words if they weren't in the original manuscripts? Should we omit the italics? Not according to Peter and Luke!

In Deuteronomy 25:4, the word of God says:

"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn."

The words "the corn" are in italics, which the skeptics claim should be omitted. However, we find Paul quoting these words 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?"

If these words do not belong in Deuteronomy 25:4, why did Paul quote them?

These translators were honest enough to provide Italics in the final version to show what exactly they added, no modern perversions that I know of do this.

It is easy to claim that the italicized words do not belong in the King James Bible, but proving it is altogether a different story. May God help me to spend more time reading and believing our King James Bible and no time to speaking critically of it. (End of article by other Bible believer)