

In my previous post I pointed out that the King James Version sometimes uses words and phrases that no longer make sense to most speakers/readers of the English language today. That obviously makes it use complicated. Why would you want to use a study Bible that doesn't communicate in common English - or in this case, in English that no longer makes sense? I can understand - and heartily support - those who want to read the King James for its sheer beauty and historical significance. But if you want to study what the Bible actually means, it's not the best place to go. In fact, it's a rather awful place.

An even bigger problem comes from the fact that sometimes the King James uses a word or phrase that does in fact make perfectly good sense in modern English. But the word means something very different now from what it meant in 1611, since the language (and hence the meanings of words) has changed over the past four hundred years. Here are a few examples to illustrate my point.

One of my favorite KJV passages is Revelation 17, where the prophet sees the great whore of Babylon, "the mother of harlots." It is a hideous vision of this terrifying woman full of abominations and drunk with the blood of the martyrs (it is a symbol for the city of Rome, as is made crystal clear in 17:9 and 18). And how does the prophet react to this ghastly sight? In the KJV he looks upon her "with great admiration." Ha! What it means, of course, is that he...

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