

BOOK REVIEW

King James Onlyism: A New Sect, by James D. Price. Published by the author, 2006. 658 pp. \$39.95.¹

The author was Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Temple Baptist Seminary in Chattanooga, TN, from 1972 to 2005. In the interest of full disclosure, I should mention that the author was my Hebrew teacher when I was in seminary. Price also served as the Old Testament Executive Editor and Chairman of the Executive Review Committee of the New King James Version of the Bible. He recently served as a translator for the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

There have been several excellent books dealing with the King James-only controversy in recent years, so the question arises as to the need for another volume along this line. Price suggests that his purpose was to “address issues not covered thoroughly in other books” and to provide “extensive details otherwise not available.” I believe the author succeeds and that this is the real value of the book. For those, especially pastors, who are seeking information to help them combat the plague of the King James-only movement, Price provides much helpful and revealing data that one cannot find elsewhere. The King James-only movement came to the forefront in the 1970s, and Price has been a careful observer of it from its earliest days.

The first four chapters trace the history of the English Bible through the publication of the KJV. In chapter five the author explains the revision history of the KJV. Many people are unaware of the numerous modifications that this version has undergone. Price has done much original research in this area and gives many examples of the kind and extent of changes that the KJV has undergone through the years. Chapter six examines the current form of the KJV, showing how, contrary to popular belief, modern editions of the KJV display numerous differences among themselves.

In chapters seven through fourteen, Price traces the history of the Bible from the earliest Hebrew and Greek manuscripts to our modern-day versions. What is helpful, and not generally found in other treatments, is Price’s explanation of how this history relates to and often refutes arguments put forth by proponents of the King James-only

¹The book is available online through Amazon or directly from the author: James D. Price, 2102 Colonial Pkwy. Dr., Chattanooga, TN 37421-3309. E-mail the author at DrJDPrice@aol.com. The cost is \$39.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling. Tennessee customers should add 9.25% sales tax.

position. For instance, when pressed to identify the authoritative versions that preceded the KJV, King James-only advocates will often point to Syriac versions, especially the Peshitta, as examples of the “pure” line of Bibles that have existed from the autographs to the infallible KJV. However, as Price demonstrates, appeals to the Peshitta version are especially problematic since it did not even contain the books of 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Revelation.

Chapter fifteen is an important examination of the question of modern versions and orthodox doctrine. A constant refrain of the King James-only proponents is that modern English Bibles support doctrinal error and heretical views. In an extensive treatment of the issue, Price completely debunks this belief. Finally in chapter sixteen, the author demonstrates that though there are differences among the thousands of extant manuscripts, the real amount of textual uncertainty is insignificant.

What is also important about this book is the series of appendices, ten in all, covering almost 200 pages, that set forth the author’s own research into a number of technical areas surrounding the debate. For instance, Appendix A is a list of over 600 changes in the KJV since 1611. Appendix B catalogues differences between current versions of the KJV. The data that Price has collected in the appendices is exceedingly valuable to those of us who are attempting to refute the errors of the King James-only movement.

Many of us have thought through the years that the King James-only movement would eventually fade and become less influential in our fundamental churches. But, unfortunately, such has not been the case. Pastors, especially, are still having to confront this error on a daily basis. Therefore, we can be thankful for new books like Price’s that make it easier for us to expose the fallacies of the King James-only position.

William W. Combs
Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary