



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on December 2, 2010

400 Years Later, KJV Bible Still Going Strong

As the Protestant Christian world gears up to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible, which many historians call the “single most important publication in whole of history,” the BBC reports that the United Kingdom is going “Bible bananas” for the anniversary, with perpetual readings, services, and commemorations in churches and cathedrals, a flurry of YouTube postings, and even a party hosted by the Duke of Edinburgh at the Banqueting House at Whitehall, “even though there are 162 days to go before the anniversary of its publication.”



While the British have every reason to celebrate their momentous cultural, literary, and spiritual contribution to the world, they should also take a step back in reflection at how significantly they have neglected the spiritual training of their own children (a trend that, unfortunately, has also dramatically impacted America). A poll conducted by the [King James Bible Trust](#), an organization established to lead the 400th anniversary celebration, has found that over half of adults under age 35 in the U.K. have never even heard of the King James Version of the Bible. That compares to 28 percent of U.K. residents over 55 who were unaware of the KJV.

A spokesman for the Trust noted that while the historic volume “was far more influential than Shakespeare in the development and spread of English,” there has been a “dramatic drop in knowledge” about the work in just one generation.

Commissioned in 1604 by King James I, and known officially as the Authorized Version, the KJV Bible was the work of a team of nearly 50 of the best Bible scholars of the day, and following its first publication in May 1611 quickly spread across the English-speaking world, remaining the dominant Protestant scriptural reference up until the very end of the 20th century. Even in today’s churches across the world, the KJV continues to be the standard by which many Protestant believers judge all other versions of Scripture.

In reality, the King James Version published today is not the same text as that of the original 1611 version, with hundreds of changes in spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation creeping in over the past 400 years. Most KJV Bibles published today are based on the version revised in 1769 by Benjamin Blayney, an Oxford educated scholar who was retained by the printer commissioned by the Crown to produce the Bible.

To demonstrate the influence the KJV Bible has had across the globe, the BBC in its coverage of the 400th anniversary noted that while the latest installment of the “Harry Potter” series has sold some 44 million worldwide, estimates of the number of the KJV in print range from 2.5 billion to six billion, and it is widely considered to be the best-selling volume in history.

While in the United States updated versions of Scripture, such as the New International Version (which



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has comes under intense criticism with its most recent update) and the New King James Version (an updating of the original into modern English), have replaced the KJV in a majority of Christian circles, a solid core of conservative Evangelical Christians continue to embrace the ancient volume as pre-eminent. Websites devoted to the KJV have proliferated across the Internet, and a popular Canadian website even offers a [free downloadable audio version of the Bible in the King James Version](#).

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