

Do We Need

Thee and Thou?

Thy and Thine?

“So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.”

Nehemiah 8:8

“Every word of God is pure ... Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.”

Proverbs 30:5-6

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.”

Luke 4:4

If you love the words of the living God, please take a few minutes to delight in His precision and accuracy in giving you the Holy Scriptures in the English language. The blessed God promised to preserve His words (Ps 12:6-7). If the Lord Jesus Christ was concerned about every jot (smallest Hebrew letter) and tittle (small Hebrew mark), then surely He was concerned about the pronouns He chose for the Bible (Matt 5:18). There is a Bible version far more accurate than the others, and it requires *thee's* and *thou's*! Yet it is these “archaic” words that are the most popular reason for modern Bible versions.

When buying a new Bible, many Christians ask for a new version without *thee's* and *thou's*. They are tired of old words that they no longer use in everyday speech. Many of them want to read the Bible like a novel, in the street language of modern America. They prefer the Readers' Digest condensed versions of books, including the Bible! And they can easily find a Christian bookstore that will criticize the out-of-date language of the King James Version to sell them a modern Bible reading like a newspaper.

What most Christians do not know is that the *thee's* and *thou's* in the King James Version reflect a form of English far superior to that of modern English in two ways. First, these older pronouns are necessary to show whether the second person personal pronoun is singular or plural. And second, they are far more reverent and conducive to prayer and worship than the gender-neutral, street-talk of the modern versions that refer to the great and dreadful God of heaven as the reader's buddy or copilot.

The King James Version was published in High English in 1611. Other than spelling changes, it remains in High English today. This form of the English language had not been spoken in England since around 1300. In fact, the translators themselves did not use it, as shown by their Epistle Dedicatory to King James. But the translators chose to use it for the Bible translation for the two reasons given above: it is far more precise, and it is far more reverent. Read their dedication to King James and realize they were very learned and respectful men, and the Bible version they produced was a product of both these traits by the providence of God Himself.

High English has two ways of expressing the second person pronoun, while modern English has only one. This difference is significant. When addressing one person, High English uses *thou*, *thee*, *thy*, or *thine*, for the subjective, objective, or possessive cases of the second person pronoun. When addressing two or more people, High English uses *ye*, *you*, *your*, or *yours*. Modern English has only *you*, *your*, and *yours* to cover either a single person or a group of people. You cannot tell if one or more is being addressed.

Modern scholarship is inferior to the scholarship of the King James Bible, and it is fraudulently deceitful. They claim to “update” and “improve” the Bible by getting rid of *thee* and *thou*, but they do not tell you they have degraded its accuracy and neutered its reverence! This is not honest scholarship or book selling! Linguists will tell you that these changes have compromised the Bible's accuracy and reverence. The information revealed by second person pronouns has been lost to this and future generations.

In the King James Version, all second person pronouns beginning with *t* are singular, and all second person pronouns beginning with *y* are plural. *Thee, thou, thy,* and *thine* are always singular – always! *Ye, you, your,* and *yours* are always plural – always! Hebrew and Greek also distinguish between the two, but only the superior English of the King James Version distinguishes the precise pronouns of the Hebrew and Greek. Though modern versions claim to be honest to the “originals,” they give away the precise pronouns of the “originals.” Do not allow yourself to be deceived further on this subject.

Compare the King James Version with the New King James Version of Thomas Nelson Publishers. This publishing house stole the name of a great Bible version, copyrighted the name and content of their Bible version to avoid it being done to them, altered the text from the work of the original translators without saying so, and have recorded large profits every year off their venture to make the Bible easier to understand. But you have lost the accuracy and value of the second person pronouns that were used in the King James Version, which they claim to have “improved.”

Here is John 3:7 in both versions:

John 3:7

King James *Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.*

New King James *"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'*

Some preach this text from a Calvinistic perspective with the sense, “Do not be shocked Nicodemus, but you personally are already born again.” But the verse does not read, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Thou* must be born again.” Our Lord’s words about the new birth were not about the single man in front of Him, for He used a plural pronoun.

Some preach this text from an Arminian perspective with the sense, “Do not be shocked Nicodemus, but you personally need to be born again.” But the verse does not read, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, *Thou* must be born again.” Our Lord’s words about the new birth were not about the single man in front of Him, for He used a plural pronoun.

Others preach this text with the sense, "Do not be shocked Nicodemus, but men must be born again in my religion." And this is the correct sense. Our Lord declared to Nicodemus, by the singular pronoun *thee*, the necessity in His religion of all men being born again, by the plural pronoun *ye*. This process for interpretation is reading the words of God distinctly and giving the correct sense by rightly dividing the word of truth according to the meaning of words, each of which is important (Neh 8:8; II Tim 2:15).

While Nicodemus was clearly born again already by virtue of John 3:1-3, the Calvinist has no authority to teach what he does from the text, for the pronouns deny his argument. But neither does the Arminian have any right to his interpretation, for the grammar does not support his point either. The third position that Jesus was simply declaring to one man an absolute requirement of His religion that applied to all men is the true interpretation.

You can easily prove and verify that this is the correct interpretation by the High English of the King James Version. Jesus addressed Nicodemus alone with the second-person pronoun **thee**, which is always singular, meaning Nicodemus only. But Jesus spoke of a general rule about the new birth applying to all men by using the plural pronoun, **ye**.

The New King James Version corrupted the sentence by removing any singular-plural distinction. The precision is lost. The point Jesus made is clouded. The accuracy is forfeited. Correct interpretation becomes impossible. Their “updating” of the text has removed its accuracy until a man cannot be sure of the sense. But godly men demand the more sure word of prophecy that Peter wrote about (II Pet 1:19-21).

For another illustration, consider our Lord’s warning to Peter after the Last Supper (Luke 22:31-32). Jesus told Peter, as indicated by the use of his name, that Satan had desired to have and sift all of the disciples, which you can detect by the plural pronoun **you**. But He had prayed for Peter individually to survive and be able to help the others, which you can detect by the singular pronouns, **thee**, **thy**, **thou**, and **thy**! The shift in pronouns from plural to singular shows the Lord’s individual care for His own when they are facing danger affecting them all. Glory! This precious distinction is lost in the New King James.

For another illustration, consider our Lord’s response to Caiaphas during His trial (Matt 26:62-64). Jesus had refused to answer this wicked man, for the charges were false. Jesus finally answered Caiaphas, when He was sworn in the name of God to answer. He answered Caiaphas directly, as indicated by the singular pronoun **thou**. But He then made a prophecy that some of the other chief priests and elders present would see Him coming in judgment on Jerusalem, which He did just forty years later in 70AD. This can be seen by the plural pronouns **you** and **ye**. Again, the distinction is lost in the New King James.

For another illustration, consider God’s instruction to Moses regarding Aaron in Exodus 4:15. Moses was to speak to Aaron and tell him what needed to be said to Pharaoh and or the Israelites. Moses would be to Aaron as God (Ex 4:16). God promised to be with the mouths of both Moses and Aaron. And He promised to teach both Moses and Aaron what to do by the use of the plural pronoun, **you**. Modern translations, which use “you” for both the singular and plural, indicate that God would only teach Moses.

Similar examples can be found throughout the Bible to show the importance of the second person pronoun. If you are a careful and wise Bible reader, you will get a King James Bible and remember this distinction to make sure you are getting all that God intended for you to understand in His word. Every word of God is pure, including the different second person pronouns necessary to understand whether one or more persons is being addressed (Pr 30:5; Luke 4:4).

Do not get rid of **thee** and **thou**. Demand **thee** and **thou**! Reject the NKJV and other versions that change them, for they are corrupting the accuracy of God’s word. Modern scholarship is inferior to older scholarship, as this simple lesson shows. While they cry loud and long about their adoration of and commitment to the “original languages,” they

sell copyrighted Bibles for a profit that defraud the reader of the pronoun precision of the “original languages.” Honest men will smell the problem! Read the KJV!

And while you are it, you might even grow in the fear of the Lord, which is the whole duty of man and the conclusion of considering life (Eccl 12:13-14). You see, God is not your “parent” in the sky. He is neither your buddy nor your copilot. He is the great and dreadful God of heaven, and the High English described above will help you think, pray, and speak about the Lord as considerably more than a sugar daddy in your pocket.

Sources:

[Bible pronouns discussed further.](#)

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[Definition of “High English.”](#)