

Thee, Thou, Ye... Not All Bad

The big problem with the King James Version is that it was written 400 years ago, and English has changed since then.

For example, in the 1600's, "charity" meant love. But now "charity" means the act of giving money to the poor. So if I read 1 Corinthians 13 in the KJV I could get completely the wrong idea.

And there are several words like this, whose meanings have changed in modern English.

So, when we read the King James Version it's dangerously easy to misunderstand what it's saying.

And of course, there are all those "art"s and "thou"s. They can make it pretty hard going for modern readers. This is why I would always recommend a more modern translation for English speakers. Basically, old English is not modern English, even though they are related, and we can't afford to get the wrong idea when we read the Bible.

But, one word that we have lost which was actually very important is "ye". "Ye" is plural. "You" is singular. In fact other than the rather southern USA sounding, "you all", or the uneducated ocker Australian, "youse", there is no good way to translate you (plural) into modern English.

And this is a problem for several verses in the New Testament in particular, where the translation of both you (singular) and you (plural), as "you", leads to some loss of communication from the original authors.

For example, in Luke 22 we read Yeshua's words to Shimon Petros, (in the NIV), "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail."

Sounds pretty cool. Satan wanted to sift Petros like wheat, but Yeshua prayed for him, that he would not fail. That must have made Petros feel good.

But that's not what it says.

The first "you" is plural. Satan wanted to sift **all** the disciples like wheat.

The second "you" is singular. Yeshua only prayed for Petros (not the other disciples).

That changes things doesn't it. Especially if you're Peter!

"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you guys as wheat. But I have prayed for you specifically Simon, that your faith may not fail."

That must have made Petros feel very special.

And it makes more sense of what Yeshua says next.

"And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

Yeshua chose him specifically to lead the disciples, and prayed for him, that his faith would not fail.

Wow.

We also see this in Luke 17. Yeshua said, "The kingdom of God is within you." (NIV)

Wow. In me. Cool.

I can sort of get that now, since I'm a Christian. But he was talking to the Pharisees right?

I thought he didn't like them? Now he's saying that the kingdom of God is inside them?

That doesn't seem to make sense.

But this makes more sense once we realise that he said "ye" (plural), not "you" (singular).

Yeshua said, (to the Pharisees), "The kingdom of God is among you."

That makes sense.

Quite different eh.