**Piper on People**

On November 11, 2013 **The Christian Post** published an article written by Anugrah Kumar. The title of the article was **“King James Bible Kept John Piper From Getting 'Peoples'”**

You may view the whole article at:

<http://www.worthynews.com/redirect.php?url=http://www.christianpost.com/news/king-james-bible-kept-john-piper-from-getting-peoples-108486/>

In that article we read these words: “Preacher and author John Piper says he grew up reading the King James Bible, which is one reason why he could not grasp the meaning of the biblical word "peoples" in relation to missions for more than three decades … All I remember hearing for my first three decades was mission 'fields.' Few people spoke of peoples …

One of the reasons for those decades of ignorance was the King James Bible, Piper adds. “I grew up reading the King James Bible. But in the King James Bible there are only two occurrences of the plural word ‘peoples,’ and both of them are in Revelation,” … But not once in the Old Testament does the word ‘peoples’ occur … the ESV [English Standard Version] has 235 instances of the plural peoples. In virtually all those cases the King James translates either as people (singular) or as gentiles.”

May I ask a few questions?

Can it be true that the King James Version (KJV) kept John Piper from understanding that the word **people** was supposed to be plural?

Do the editors at **The Christian Post** really believe their headline? Does Mr. Kumar?

May I take a moment and record for you the meaning of the word **people** as it is defined in Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary? They define the word **people** as “plural**:**  human beings making up a group or assembly or linked by a common interest.”

In fact, dictionary.com, thefreedictionary.com, and wordiq.com, all agree with merriam-webster.com. The word **people** is always used in the plural form.

John Piper is quoted as saying that the word **people** is singular. He said, “In virtually all those cases the King James translates either as people (singular) or as gentiles.”

Most (if not all), who understand the English language, would use the word **people** without any difficulty understanding it to be plural.

For example if I told you I saw a magazine named **People Magazine**; would you think that the editors of that magazine wanted you to understand the word **people** as being singular?

When I use the word **people** in the phrase “the people of India” or “the people of China” would you labor over my use of that word and wonder for thirty years whether I was using it in the singular form?

I think not.

How then did Mr. Piper stay so confused for over 30 years?

Was he not theologically educated? Did he not know how to use the Hebrew and Greek resources so abundantly available in our country? Did he not know how to use the English resources so available in our country?

Is John Piper not educated or does he not know and understand the English language enough to be able, without the help of others, to determine for himself that the word **people** is plural?

Does **The Christian Post** really believe what John Piper said about his ignorance?

Do they really believe that their readers are so ignorant as to believe their article or that any thinking person would be willing to blame the KJV for John Piper’s ignorance?

Am I to believe that the KJV kept a man like John Piper ignorant?

I do not believe it!

I cannot believe it!

In fact, I think I can go as far as to say that if John Piper was ignorant on this subject; he kept himself ignorant. It certainly was not the fault of the KJV.

Below are some biblical examples of the use of the word **people** from the KJV. Read them and see if you can understand them.

Let us begin with the one Mr. Piper quotes in the article:

**Psalm 67:3** – “Let **the people** praise thee, O God; let **all the people** praise thee.”

In this verse the word **people** is further defined by the statement **all the people**. Where is the problem in determining whether or not the translators of the King James Version of the Bible meant for you to understand **people** as being plural?

The context further proves the word **people** is plural as is seen in verse seven – **Psalm 67:7** – “God shall bless us; and **all the ends of the earth** shall fear him.”

What about the use of the word **people** in **Isaiah 53:8** – “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of **my people** was he stricken.”

In this great Messianic prophesy we have the promise of God that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was for His people - a great number of people - as revealed in **Revelation 7:9**.

**Revelation 7:9** – “After this I beheld, and, lo, **a great multitude**, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and **people**, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;”

Obviously, the word **people** in **Isaiah 53:8** must be plural – unless of course you believe that the death of our Lord Jesus Christ was for a single person.

What about the use of the word **people** in **Psalm 2:1** – “Why do the heathen rage, and **the people** imagine a vain thing?”

In **Psalm 2:1** the phrase **the heathen** - further defined in the second statement as **the people –** refer to the same group of individuals. It seems obvious to me that the KJV translators intended us to know that the word **people** is plural in this verse - unless, of course, you believe the phrase the heathen to be singular, too.

Again, in **Psalm 28:9** we read – “Save **thy people**, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever.”

In **Psalm 28:9** the phrase **thy people** is defined as God’s **inheritance**. Is God’s inheritance only one person? Or can we assume that, even though the “**s**” is missing; the word **people** is plural in this verse and God’s inheritance is a great multitude of people saved by the grace of God?

Now consider **Psalm 49:1** – “Hear this, **all ye people**; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:”

In **Psalm 49:1** the phrases **all ye people** and **all the inhabitants of the world** define each other. **People** must therefore be plural!

Even without the defining phrases in each of the text above, anyone should have been able to determine that the use of the word **people** was plural and not singular.

In addition, in every case mentioned, there is no need to translate the word **people** into the word **peoples**. It is not necessary because anyone who has the simplest understanding of English knows that the word **people** is plural and not singular.

Since the English word **people** is understood as being plural then why was it necessary for **The Christian Post** to write such an article? Why was it necessary for Mr. Piper to say such a thing?

I think the real issue here is that this article is a not-so-subtle attack against the King James Version of the Bible – an attempt to cast doubt upon God’s word.

If I do not take that position then I must take the position that **The Christian Post**, Mr. Kumar, and Mr. Piper are ignorant of the English language as well as being ignorant of translating words from Hebrew or Greek into the English language.

The ESV uses the word **peoples** but it is not necessary. It is not more correct. It is not a better translation. It is simply not needed to clarify the plural use of the English word **people**.

What is the issue then? Again, I believe this article casts doubt and dispersion upon the KJV.

I, for one, am not persuaded to lay aside my KJV for the ESV. Are you?