
Translations of the Bible



Week 4: Selecting an English Bible

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Bibles We will Consider



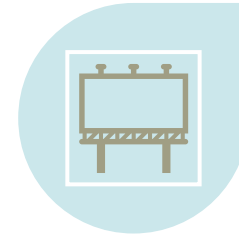
NEW KING JAMES
VERSION



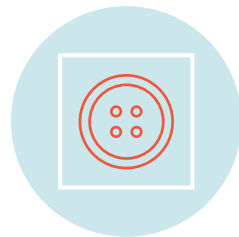
NEW
INTERNATIONAL
VERSION



KING JAMES
VERSION



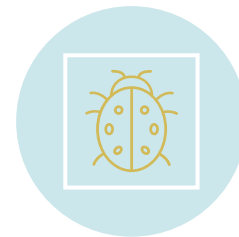
ENGLISH STANDARD
VERSION



NEW AMERICAN
STANDARD VERSION
1995, 2020



LEGACY STANDARD
BIBLE



NEW REVISED
STANDARD VERSION

Comparison Points

- Readability, reading level
- Consistency of key terms
- Naturalness
- Accuracy
- Clarity
- Literalness
- Underlying Manuscripts

Terminology to Know

- Literal
- Formal equivalent
- Functional or dynamic equivalent
- Paraphrase

Check Isaiah 7:14

NRSV

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

ESV

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Matthew 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us).

NIV More “Literal” at 2 Timothy 3:16

NIV

All Scripture is **God-breathed** (θεόπνευστος) and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...

NKJV

All Scripture *is given by inspiration of God* (θεόπνευστος), and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness...

What is “Literal” Anyway?

Exodus 11:7 – Young’s Literal Translation

And against all the sons of Israel a dog sharpeneth not its tongue, from man even unto beast...

- But the idiom “sharpen its tongue” means to growl or bark!

NKJV

But against none of the children of Israel shall a dog move its tongue, against man or beast...

LSB

But for any of the sons of Israel a dog will not even bark, whether against man or beast...

NIV Occasionally Omits Key Conjunctions

NIV

2 Tim. 2:21 **Those who cleanse themselves** from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

NASB 1995

2 Tim. 2:21 **Therefore, if** a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.

Conjunctions carry a lot of “meaning weight” by connecting ideas.

KJV Language Tough to Understand

KJV

Philippians 1:22 But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose **I wot not**.

1 Tim. 2:9 In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with **broided hair**, or gold, or pearls, or costly array...

NKJV

Philippians 1:22 But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose **I cannot tell**.

1 Tim. 2:9 In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with **braided hair** or gold or pearls or costly clothing...

Other Examples of Archaic Words

KJV

- anon
- assay
- attendance
- bewray
- divers
- ensample

Modern English

- immediately (Mark 1:30)
- attempt, try (Acts 16:7)
- attention (1 Timothy 4:13)
- betray, expose (Mat. 26:73)
- diverse, various (Hebrews 1:1)
- example (2 Thessalonians 3:9)

There are Many More Archaic KJV Words

KJV

- to us-ward
- ensue
- ere
- flux (not the kind used in soldering)
- halt
- haply

Modern English

- toward us (2 Peter 3:9)
- pursue (1 Peter 3:11)
- before (John 4:49)
- dysentery (Acts 28:8)
- lame (Mark 9:45)
- perhaps (2 Cor. 9:4)

KJV Incorrect Translation

KJV

- Matthew 23:24 Ye blind guides, which **strain at a gnat**, and swallow a camel.

ESV

Matthew 23:24 You blind guides, **straining out a gnat** and swallowing a camel!

- The verb means to “filter” or “strain out” not strain *at*.

NIV “Smooths” the Translation, Matt. 19:13

NIV

Then **people brought little children** to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.

- Note that the word *people* is not in the original Greek, and the verb is expressed in the passive voice there. Here the subject is made explicit and the verb changed to active voice.

NKJV

Then **little children were brought** to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them.

- Who brought the children? Likely their parents, not just *people* in general.

Comparing John 3:16

ESV

For God so loved the world, that he gave his **only Son**, that whoever believes in him **should** not perish but have eternal life.

NKJV

For God so loved the world that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him **should** not perish but have **everlasting** life.

NIV

God so loved the world that he gave his **one and only Son**, that whoever believes in him **shall** not perish but have eternal life.

LSB LEGACY STANDARD BIBLE

For God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him **shall** not perish, but have eternal life.

The Name of God in Exodus 6:3

LSB

And I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name, **Yahweh**, I was not known to them.

NKJV

I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name **LORD** I was not known to them.

KJV

And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, *by the name of* God Almighty, but by my name **JEHOVAH** was I not known to them.

ESV

I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name **the LORD** I did not make myself known to them.

The Word *Jehovah*

- ❑ Despite the big deal made by the Jehovah's Witnesses about this being God's personal name, it is only used in the KJV four times: Exodus 6:3, Psalm 83:18, Isaiah 12:2, and Isaiah 26:4.
- ❑ It is used three other times as part of a compound name for God:
 - ❑ Jehovah-Jireh (Gen. 22:14), the Lord will provide.
 - ❑ Jehovah-Nissi (Exodus 17:15), the Lord my banner.
 - ❑ Jehovah-Shalom (Judges 6:24), the Lord is peace.
- ❑ Incidentally, the second part of each compound name is not understandable in English, and I believe it should be translated—not transliterated—so the English reader can understand it.
- ❑ Yahweh is a better translation, despite superstition surrounding the use of His name.
- ❑ We should remain sensitive to those who are hesitant to use that pronunciation.

Names of God

- El Shaddai – the Almighty
- El Elyon – God most high
- El Roi – The God who sees
- El Olam – The everlasting God
- Jehovah-Jireh – the Lord will provide
- Jehovah-Rafa – the Lord that heals
- Jehova-Nissi – the Lord is my banner
- Jehovah-Shalom – The lord is peace
- Jehovah-M’Kaddes – the Lord who sanctifies/makes holy
- Jehovah-Tsidkenu – the Lord our righteousness

KJV Uses a Sub-Optimal Greek Text, esp. in Revelation

KJV, similar to NKJV

- Rev. 22:19 And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of **the book of life**, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.
- βίβλου τῆς ζωῆς – Textus Receptus

ESV

- Rev. 22:19 And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in **the tree of life** and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
- τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς – Majority and critical texts

NIV More Clear at Acts 20:28

NIV

- Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **Be shepherds** of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

KJV

- Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, **to feed** the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

KJV Adds Words, Ephesians 2:1

KJV, similar to NKJV

- And you ***hath he quickened***, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
- These words are in italics, indicating they were supplied by translators for clarity. “Quickened” is also archaic.

ESV

- And you were dead in the trespasses and sins...
- The verb “to be made alive” does not appear until verse 5.

KJV Translation Too Restrictive in Meaning

KJV

2 Tim. 2:15 **Study** to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing** the word of truth.

- Also archaic: **shew** and **dividing**.
- NKJV better with “Be diligent;” same with “rightly dividing.”

NKJV

2 Tim. 2:15 **Be diligent** to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **handling accurately** the word of truth.

- The NIV is too weak with “do your best.” Sometimes you simply have to do better than your best—and you *can*, with God’s help.

KJV Incorrect

KJV

Mark 6:20 For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and **observed him**; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Acts 5:30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye **slew and hanged** on a tree.

- There were not two separate acts.

NKJV

Mark 6:20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he **protected him**. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Acts 5:30 "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you **murdered by hanging** on a tree.

- **Hanging** is not a main verb; it is an instrumental participle of means.

KJV Imprecise and Inconsistent

KJV

Exod. 20:13 Thou shalt not **kill**.

- Kill is too broad.

Matt. 19:18 Thou shalt do no **murder**...

- Inconsistent, but better.

Rom. 13:9 Thou shalt not **kill**...

- Inconsistent.

NKJV

Exod. 20:13 You shall not **murder**.

- Murder is correct.

Matthew 19:18 You shall not **murder**...

- Consistent

Rom 13:9 You shall not **murder**...

- Consistent.

KJV Does not Handle Names Consistently

KJV

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of **Isaiah** the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem...

Matthew 3:3 For this is he that was spoken of by the **prophet Esaias**, saying...

- The name Isaiah is used in the Old Testament, but Esaias in the New Testament.

NKJV

Isaiah 1:1 The vision of **Isaiah** the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem...

Matthew 3:3 For this is he who was spoken of by the **prophet Isaiah**, saying...

- The name Isaiah is used consistently in both testaments.

The NKJV Capitalizes too Much

NKJV, NAS similar

- Psalm 1:2-3 **But** his delight is in the law of the LORD, **And** in His law he meditates day and night. 3 He shall be like a tree **Planted** by the rivers of water, **That** brings forth its fruit in its season, **Whose** leaf also shall not wither; **And** whatever he does shall prosper.
- They like capitals in their poetry formatting.

NIV, ESV, KJV similar

- Psalm 1:2-3 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, **and** who meditates on his law day and night. 3 That person is like a tree **planted** by streams of water, **which** yields its fruit in season and **whose** leaf does not wither-- whatever they do prospers.

Another Strange Word in the KJV: Leasing

KJV

Ps. 4:2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after **leasing**? Selah.

Psalm 5:6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak **leasing**: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

- **Leasing** is lying.

NKJV

Psalm 4:2 How long, O you sons of men, *Will you turn* my glory to shame? *How long* will you love worthlessness *And* seek **falsehood**? Selah.

Psalm 5:6 You shall destroy those who speak **falsehood**; The LORD abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

How does this help?

- My intention in going over this material is to cause you to read your Bible more carefully and with deeper understanding. You will hopefully observe more about:
 - The meaning of words
 - How your Bible-illiterate friends might read a portion and misunderstand it
 - Whether something could be more clear
 - If the translation of a particular passage is exceptional in how it conveys the truth
 - How italicized words may help understanding or may mislead
 - How “literal” is not always “literal”
- My intention is not to sow doubt or be super critical of one or other translations.

Conclusions

1. We can find what we believe to be problems in most translations.
2. I do not prefer to use the KJV because of the many inaccuracies in it with respect to modern English and its sub-optimal Greek text. The fact is that since 1611, we have had 400 years more to find more manuscripts, understand Greek better, and develop tools to make better translations. And meanwhile, English has changed. We should not force new readers back 250 years in English to get them into the Bible (1769 Blayney revision).
3. As English changes over the years, translations need to keep up with the changes.
4. I prefer a translation that follows the Greek text more closely and which translates participles in a fitting manner.
5. NASB, ESV, LSB, NKJV, NIV are all good translations. The NRSV fails to make the top grade.

Homework Due Week 5

- **Analyze a passage:** Follow the pattern in my sample based on John 5:3-4. You can find it in Canvas in Files. It is called JohnCh5Vv3to4TranslationComparison.pdf.
- Select a passage from the following list, or another passage approved by the instructor, and explain why the text is translated differently in the various translations. Do you prefer one over the other and why?
- Use one of the following passages: Mal 2:16, Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 6:13, Acts 8:37, 1 John 5:7-8, Romans 16:7, Matthew 17:21.
- Submit your analysis in Canvas.

Homework Due Week 5

- You have selected the person you will do your final project on, gathered resources, and taken notes on those resources.
- **Now, organize your notes and write an outline for your final. Submit the outline in Canvas.**