

Bible Translations

By

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Bible Translations

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Introduction

The Bible is the most translated Book in history—no other book even comes close. This is because most people do not read the Bible in the ancient languages in which they were written.

Therefore, they have to depend upon a translation to understand the message of the Scripture. This section will discuss some of the main issues relating to Bible translations.

We will consider some of the decisions that have to be made whenever the Bible is translated from the original languages into English. In addition, some guidelines will also be given on how to choose the right translation for you.

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Question 1

What Is A Bible Translation?

The word translation can be defined as “the process of transferring the meaning of a word, phrase, or idea from one language to another.” The usual terminology is from the “donor language” to the “receptor language.”

In other words, biblical translations are made from the donor languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into a receptor language, such as English. Accordingly, a Bible translation is thus the rendering of the text of the Bible, in an understandable way, into a language other than that which it was originally written.

A number of observations need to be made about this important subject.

1. The Bible Was Written In Three Ancient Languages

As we just mentioned, we need to remember that the Bible was originally written in three different languages. The Old Testament was mainly written in Hebrew with a small portion composed in Aramaic, a language similar to Hebrew. The New Testament was originally written in the common Greek of the day.

Whenever the Bible is expressed in a language other than these, it is a translation.

Translations are made in order to help the Bible reader better understand the Word of God. Indeed, not everyone has the time, or capacity, to learn the original languages in which the Scriptures were written. Thus, we have the need for translations.

2. There Is A Long History Of Translation Of The Scripture

The translation of the Scripture has been going on for a long time. In fact, when the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity about 536 B.C., they used the Scripture to help reunite the nation. The Bible says that the scribe Ezra, as well as some others, read the Scripture to the people and then explained it to them. We read:

They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading (Nehemiah 8:8 ESV).

This was necessary because these people no longer understood the form of Hebrew in which the Old Testament books were written. They were speaking Aramaic at that time.

3. The Old Testament Was First Translated Into Greek

Sometime later, about 250 B.C., the Hebrew Scriptures began to be translated into Greek. This version is known as the Septuagint (abbreviated LXX for the traditional belief of the number of translators who were involved, seventy). The reason for this translation was the desire to make the Hebrew Scriptures understandable to the Greek-speaking Jews who had lost much of their ability to understand the original Hebrew.

4. The New Testament Was Translated At An Early Date

Soon after the New Testament was written, it was translated into Latin, Syriac, Coptic and a number of other languages. This practice has continued until the present time.

For example, the Bible has been translated from the original languages into English for the benefit of people in English-speaking nations who wish to know and study God's Word in their own language. Present-day translations into modern English help people accomplish the task of understanding the Word of God.

The New Testament was written in the common, ordinary language of its day so people could understand the gospel and thus believe in Jesus Christ. Paul wrote the following to the Romans:

But how can they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe without hearing about Him? And how can they hear without a preacher? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How welcome are the feet of those who announce the gospel of good things! But all did not obey the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ (Romans 10:14-17 CSB).

To preach the gospel, and to hear the gospel, means the words of Bible must be in the language of those who hear, and those who read. Consequently, there must be translations.

It Is Important That The Bible Be Translated Accurately

It is also very important that the Bible be translated in an accurate manner. For one thing, we rely on it alone to tell us the way that we can be saved from our sins. This question was asked by a jailer who lived in the city of Philippi:

The jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. He escorted them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30,31 CSB).

The question was then clearly answered. Scripture says:

They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved — you and your household" (Acts 16:31 CSB).

We only know this because of what is written in the Bible, the Word of God. Furthermore, the Word of God tells us how we are to live our lives. The psalmist wrote:

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path. (Psalm 119:105 CSB).

Because the Bible tells us how we can have a personal relationship with the living God, and what He expects of us once we trust Him, then it is crucial that it is translated in an accurate manner.

Why This Is So Important

We again want to stress that the Bible is our instruction manual, our guide as to who God is, who we are, and how we are to conduct our lives as believers in Christ. Therefore, we want our translations to bring out, as best as we can, what the Lord had revealed to us.

Often times, this means that we re-word the Hebrew or Greek in ways that it better explains what the Scripture is saying. This is nothing new. All translations must do this because there is not a one-to-one correspondence between words in one language to those another language.

The Art And Challenge Of Translation

One final thing that needs to be mentioned is what has been known as the "art and challenge of translation." In a small book by that title, Raymond V. Schoder succinctly summed up the issues that the translator faces. It is worth quoting him at length:

Translation is a delicate and complicated process. Its high goal is to present in another language (which has its own principles and rules) the precise meaning expressed by the author in his own tongue, as revealed by his choice of words and their effective, artistic sequence and collocation. It seeks to echo the original's true meaning in context, with its significant overtones, distinctive style, special use of words, and perceptible flavor.

Translation must never not slavishly copy a word-order or grammatical structure ... the translated text must convey fully, according to the norms of its own language, the precise thought and personal style of the original. Mere literal transfer is not enough. The thought of the original must be carried over into the translation with exactness, neither altered nor diminished even if necessary to re-cast in order to observe the traditions and usage of the new language. The author's style also has to be mirrored faithfully, with its emotional qualities, distinctive manner and artistic impact. The ultimate success would be to produce a piece in the new language that is so authentic in thought and expression in comparison with the original that readers might think that the original author had written it himself in the new language as though it were his native tongue (Raymond V. Schoder, *The Art and Challenge of Translation*, Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, Oak Park, Illinois, 1987, page vi-vii).

This was very well said. As we will make clear in this book, a mere literal transfer of words from one language to another is indeed not enough. Indeed, it is the meaning that must be carried over. Accordingly, translation is both an art and a science as the following pages will make clear.

Summary To Question 1

What Is A Translation (Version)?

The word translation can be defined as the process of transferring the meaning of a word, phrase, or idea from one language to another.

The Bible was originally written in three languages – Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. In translating the text of Scripture, these are known as the donor languages. The particular language to which it is translated is known as the receptor language. This may be English, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, French, etc.

To the point, a Bible translation is the rendering of the text of the Holy Scriptures into a language other than that which it was originally written.

The purpose of a translation is to make the Word of God understandable to people who do not understand the original languages of Scripture. Indeed, a good translation makes the message of Scripture comprehensible to those who read it or hear it read.

Translation of the Scripture has been going on some 250 years before the time of Christ. For a number of reasons, it is crucial that the Bible be accurately translated.

First, it is from the Scriptures alone that we find out how we can be saved from our sins. Consequently, it is essential that the communication from God to us be accurate.

Furthermore, it is only the Bible which tells us how we are supposed to live our lives. This is a further reason as to why the Bible must be translated in a trustworthy manner.

It is also necessary to emphasize that translating is not slavishly copying word-for-word the text from the donor language to the receptor language. It is the meaning of the donor language that needs to be translated properly which makes translating both an art and a science. All translators recognize this fact.

Question 2

How Should The Bible Be Translated? What Are The Various Theories About How We Should Go About Doing This?

How does one make a good translation of Scripture? In what ways should we approach the question as to how the Bible should be rendered into another language? Is there a best way to do this?

Among Bible believers, there are two major theories about how the Scripture should be translated—“formal equivalence” and “functional equivalence,” sometimes called “dynamic equivalence.”

Formal equivalence can also be described as “modified literal” while functional equivalence can be described as “idiomatic” or “meaning-based.” It is important to understand some of the differences between these two competing theories.

Though many people see a huge difference between these two theories, in reality, we will discover that they both basically operate in the same way. In other words, they are not as far apart as many people think.

Consequently, a study of this subject should unify believers. Paul wrote the following to the Romans:

So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually parts of one another (Romans 12:5 NASB 2020).

As we do a thorough study of this subject, this is something that we should never forget!

Four Different Categories

While there are two major theories about how the Bible should be translated, John Beekman and John Callow, former Wycliffe Bible translators, have categorized translations into four different categories, two which are acceptable, modified literal and idiomatic, as well as two theories which are unacceptable, highly literal, and unduly free. They are as follows:

Option 1 Highly Literal Translations

The first category is called “highly literal.” They explain it as follows.

The highly literal reproduces the ... features of the original language with high consistency. The result is a translation that does not adequately communicate the message to a reader who does not know the original language or who does not have access to commentaries or other reference works to explain it to him.

One type of highly literal translation is an interlinear translation. This is presumably the closest that one can stay to the ... form of the original and still call it a translation. The obligatory grammatical rules of the RL [receptor language] are set aside and the translation follows the order of the original word for word. This type of translation serves best to show the structure of the original but has the lowest communication value to those readers who do not know the original language. It is unacceptable for general use (John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God*, Zondervan, 1974, pp. 21-22)

Option 2 Unduly Free

The second unacceptable option is known as an “unduly free” translation.

... when a translation is classified as too free, this is not a judgment concerning its style but rather concerning the information it communicates.

In this kind of translation there is no intention to reproduce the linguistic form of the language from which the translation is made. The purpose is to make the message as relevant and clear as possible. There are no distortions of the messages arising from literalism, but there are distortions of content, with the translation clearly saying what the original neither says or implies.

Beekman and Callow conclude:

Thus, although the highly literal and unduly free translations are at opposite extremes, they share the same unacceptable characteristics of failing to communicate what the original communicated (Beekman and Callow, p. 23).

We examine a couple of unduly free translations, the *Cotton Patch Version* and *God Is For Real Man* in Question 7, point 5.

Now we will consider the two acceptable types of translation.

Option 3 Modified Literal, Formal Equivalence – A More Word For Word Translation

The third category is called “modified literal,” usually known as “formal equivalence.” This theory is also incorrectly known as “literal translation,” or a “word-for-word translation.” These two titles do not really describe how the theory operates.

The idea behind formal equivalence is to render the text, as much as possible, in the same form as in the donor language, the original. This can also mean using the same word order as found in the original language. With formal equivalence each word of the donor language is represented by a word or phrase in the target, or receptor, language.

Examples of formal equivalence in translations would be the American Standard Version of 1901, the New American Standard Bible, the New King James Bible, and the English Standard Version.

It is claimed that a more literal, or formal translation, is one that will be better suited for Bible study. It allows the person to interpret the Scriptures for themselves. Since care is taken to render the text as close as possible to the original, we are told that it makes it easier to study the Scripture in a formal translation. In fact, we often hear Bible teachers saying, “I only read and teach from a literal translation of the Bible.”

No Translation Is Completely Literal

At the outset, it must be appreciated that no Bible translation gives a literal rendering of the text in every instance. This is why the phrase “modified literal” is used in describing these translations.

Indeed, it is not a simple process of finding one English word for each Greek and Hebrew word. Furthermore, words cannot be translated in isolation. Each language has its own set of idiomatic expressions that do not make sense when translated literally.

Again, Beekman and Callow explain:

This type of translation represents a considerable improvement over the highly literal translation. Even so, the same grammatical forms as those that are found in the original are generally used, many occurrences of a given word are translated consistently without adequate regard to the context, many word combinations found in the original are awkwardly retained in the receptor language, and the original message is only

partially communicated especially when the relevant implicit information is lost... In spite of these disadvantages the modified literal translation is acceptable in some situations... However, for groups just emerging from illiteracy, the disadvantages listed above cannot be overlooked; for these groups, an idiomatic translation is much to be preferred (Beekman and Callow, p. 24).

Some Bible translations that attempt to be as literal as possible end up with a version that is not as readable as one that is more idiomatic or meaning-based. Often times the more formal translations come across in very wooden or stilted English.

We will provide many examples in this book that demonstrate that a strictly formal, or a literal translation, can actually be misleading. If the Scripture were to be translated in a literal, or word-for-word, manner in every passage, then the result would often be something unreadable or non-understandable.

For example, a literal translation of Philippians 2:6 says that Jesus was in the form of God. The more functional translations clarify this phrase—Jesus is God in His very nature, not just in His form. This is the meaning of the text.

In a second example, often, when the New Testament speaks of people who were sick, the literal reading of the Greek text is “having it badly.” Therefore, a word-for-word reading of Matthew 4:24 would be, “And they brought to him all the ones having it badly with various diseases and torments.”

In a third illustration, Matthew 1:18 speaks of Mary being pregnant. A literal reading of the text says she was “having [it] in the stomach.”

These are but three examples of how the words of Scripture need to be translated in such a way as to make their meaning understandable. Indeed, they demonstrate the need for the Bible to be re-worded and not merely translated word-for-word.

Should We Gird Up The Loins Of Our Mind?

One of the most famous examples of a biblical idiom is found in 1 Peter 1:13 where it literally says, “Gird [or girding] up the loins of your mind.”

This literal translation is meaningless because it contains an idiomatic expression that makes no literal sense—our mind does not have loins! The expression basically means “pay attention,” or “prepare for action.”

However, a number of translations render this phrase in a literal manner. These include the King James Version, American Standard Version, Young’s Literal Translation, and the New King James Version.

Those who translate this phrase “literally” seem to believe it is the job for the reader to correctly interpret the meaning of this idiom. In other words, they do not believe it is the job for translators. The various possible meanings are sometimes put in the margin, not in the text. However, this is certainly *not* the best way to render the Scripture into English.

Other modified literal translations do not agree with doing this. The English Standard Version reads as follows:

Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:13 ESV).

In fact, in their preface they single out this particular verse in explaining what a literal translation should and should not be.

Some translations have later revised the way that they had previously translated this verse.

For example, in 1977 the New American Standard Bible translated the phrase literally, “gird your minds for action.” The 1995 update made the text clearer by re-wording it, “prepare your minds for action.”

These examples point out of the impossibility of having a purely literal Bible translation. Indeed, translator Dave Brunn, who has written an excellent book on the subject, makes this important observation:

All versions translate thought for thought rather than word for word in many contexts. Some just do it more consistently than others (Dave Brunn *One Bible, Many Translations, Are All Translations Created Equal?* IVP Academic Press, 2012).

Option 4 Idiomatic Translations, Meaning-Based Translations Functional Equivalence, Dynamic Equivalence, Thought for Thought Translations

There are a number of terms used to describe this theory. They include “idiomatic translations, “meaning based translations,” “thought for thought translations” as well as “functional equivalence” or “dynamic equivalence.”

This theory attempts to render the text in a phrase for phrase or in a meaning-based manner. It is not so much concerned about the grammatical *form* of the original language as it is the meaning, of the original language. While a strictly literal translation is sometimes difficult to read, a functional equivalent translation is usually very understandable. The functional translation wants to bring across the meaning of the original. It does not necessarily concern itself about the grammatical form in which it was written. Beekman and Callow note:

In the idiomatic translation, the translator seeks to convey the meaning of the original by using the natural grammatical and lexical forms of the receptor language. His focus is on the meaning, and he is aware that the grammatical constructions and the lexical choices and combinations used in the original are no more suitable for the communication of the message in the receptor language...The receptor language must be conveyed using the linguistic form of the receptor language (Beekman and Callow, p. 24).

In other words, an English translation must sound like English, not Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek. The grammatical rules in these languages have nothing to do with making an English translation since the grammatical rules are not transferable.

Among other things, the meaning-based translation involves the rewording of expressions and customs that are not understood by modern readers.

For example, in Psalm 23:5 the text literally reads, “anointed my head with oil.” This is replaced in the *Good News Bible* with, “welcomed me as an honored guest.”

These Main Two Theories Are Not As Different As They Seem

Again, we emphasize that all translations render many verses and passages based mainly upon their meaning rather than their form. At the end of the day, these translations have much more in common than what divides them.

In fact, Bible translator, Dave Brunn gives an important warning about simply placing translations into these two categories.

The term “meaning-based” does an excellent job of describing the goal of translators of idiomatic versions. However, we need to be careful in the way we use this term because it could imply that translators of literal versions do not care that much about communicating meaning. That could not be further from the truth.

There are countless examples that prove that the translators of every major version have embraced the principle of giving priority to meaning over form (Dave Brunn *One Bible, Many Translations, Are All Translations Created Equal?* IVP Academic Press, 2012).

We will go into more detail about this issue in our next question.

Summary To Question 2

How Should The Bible Be Translated? What Are The Various Theories About How We Should Go About Doing This?

One obvious question with respect to translating the Bible into languages other than those in which it was originally written, is how do we go about doing this? What should translators do to produce a faithful rendering of the what the Lord has said in His Word?

Basically, there are four different options that Christians have employed. The result is that two of the options are acceptable ways of translating the Scripture while the other two not acceptable. The two categories that are unacceptable are high literal and unduly free.

Simply put, highly literal goes overboard in attempting to reproduce the exact word order as the original. An interlinear Bible would be an example of this. In an interlinear, each Greek or Hebrew word has a corresponding English word or words placed underneath it. It can readily be seen that very often the verse will not make any sense when it is read in an interlinear Bible. We will go into more detail in this in Question 10.

An unduly free translation brings the message of Christ across, but without any historical basis. The *Cotton Patch Version* and *God Is For Real Man* are examples of this sort of unduly free translation that strips the Scripture of any meaningful historical basis.

The acceptable translations are the formal, or modified literal translations, and the idiomatic, the meaning-based translations. While there may be some differences when read side by side, the message of Christ comes across loud and clear in each of these translations.

Formal equivalence attempts to bring out, as much as possible, the same form as is found in the original biblical languages. This may include the same word order of the Hebrew or Greek original. It is claimed that translations which stress formal equivalence are more well-suited for Bible study because of the attempt to literally translate the text. However, as we noted, no translation is completely literal because Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, like all languages, have their idiomatic expressions.

In addition, there is no one-to-one correspondence between the words in the biblical languages and the English language.

Again, as we have emphasized, all translations render words and verses based upon their meaning rather than their form. Therefore, there is no such thing as a strictly literal translation. Indeed, languages do not work that way. This is why some like the term “modified literal” instead of merely saying literal.

Meaning based translations attempt to bring out what the passage would mean to those who originally read it or heard it. It is not concerned about keeping the same word order or grammatical features of the biblical text. Rather it attempts to bring across the same meaning that the original author wanted to convey to his readers.

In Bible translation, as we will document in Question 7, there are many factors to be considered. Consequently, one should not be too quick to criticize those who have honestly struggled with these issues.

Question 3

Are English Versions Of The Bible More Similar Than They Are Different?

The answer to this is an unqualified, “Yes.” Bible translations, especially those done by evangelicals, Bible-believing Christians, all have a common goal, namely, they want to be faithful to the original text and to effectively communicate the truth of God’s Word.

As we mentioned in our previous question, translations are usually put into two categories, the formal or so-called literal translations such as the English Standard Version, New American Standard Bible, and the New King James Version and the functional or more meaning-based translations such as the New Living Translation, the translation God’s Word, The Contemporary English Version and The Voice.

Translations like the New International Version, the New English Translation (the NET Bible), and the Christian Standard Bible are somewhere in-between these two options. They are sometimes called “mediating translations.”

Sadly, problems arise when the issue of translation theory, something on which the Bible is completely silent, is elevated to the level of orthodox Christian teaching. In fact, Scripture gives us no instructions whatsoever as to how to translate a written message from one language to another. Yet this has not stopped many believers from fighting with one another about which translation theory is best.

However, as we shall illustrate, the differences between the two theories are not as far apart as many think they are. This is the point that we want to continually emphasize!

They All Basically Use The Same Process

As has often been noted, modified literal translations as well as idiomatic translations, both use the same process in composing their translations. There are two basic steps.

Step One: Discover The Meaning Of The Source Text Language

The first thing a translator would do is discover the meaning of the donor language. In this case, it would be either Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic. What does the original text actually mean in the context in which it is written?

Step Two Re-express The Meaning In The Target, Or Receptor Language

Once the meaning has been discovered, the translator will re-express the meaning into the language in which they are translating. For our purposes it is English but of course this would be true for any language in which the Scriptures would be translated.

Since direct transfer between two languages is rare, all translators must do this to the best of their ability. While the modified literal translation may concentrate on the form of the original, at the end of the day they must do the exact same thing as those who translate idiomatically.

Result: All Versions Translate The Bible In A Meaning-Based Way In Many Instances

This point is crucial to understand. ALL VERSIONS, whether they admit it or not, translate the Scripture in a meaning-based manner in many contexts. As we have mentioned, there is no such thing as a completely “literal translation” of the Bible. We will give a few examples (we could literally give hundreds).

2 Samuel 20:6.... The Hebrew text literally reads Snatch away our eyes

NASB 2020 escape from our sight

ESV escape from us

KJV escape us

NKJV escape us

NIV escape from us

Judges 17:5 The Hebrew text literally reads... Filled the hand

NASB 2020 consecrated

KJV consecrated

NKJV consecrated

ESV ordained

NIV installed

Psalms 41:3 The Hebrew text literally reads ...Turn all his bed in his illness

NASB 2020 in his illness ...You restore him to health

ESV in his illness ... restore him to health

KJV make all his bed in his sickness

NKJV on his bed of illness ... sustain him on his sickbed

NIV restores them from their bed of illness

Ezekiel 20:5 The Hebrew text literally reads ...I lifted my hand

NASB 2020 I swore

KJV I . . . lifted up mine hand

NKJV I raised My hand

ESV I swore

NIV I swore with uplifted hand

As we can observe, none of these translations render the Hebrew words in a strictly literal, word-for-word manner. Instead, they all correctly bring across the original meaning of the words as used in the context.

Some Non-Literal Translations Are More Literal Than Those Who Claim To Be Literal

Furthermore, some translations that claim to be literal often translate a word, or a phrase, in a more thought-for-thought manner than those translations which do not claim to be literal. We will give a few illustrations.

Job 17:13 The Hebrew text literally reads... I spread out my bed

NIV I spread out my bed

ESV I make my bed

NKJV I make my bed

NASB 2020 I make my bed

In this instance, the NIV, a middle of the road translations, gives a literal translation of the Hebrew while these so-called literal translations are translating the words more thought for thought.

Lamentations 2:3 The Hebrew text literally reads ... every horn of Israel

NIV every horn of Israel

ESV all the might of Israel

NASB all the strength of Israel

Again, the NIV is a literal translation of the original Hebrew while the other so-called literal translations are not literally translating the text.

Colossians 2:16 The Greek text literally reads ...judge you

NIV judge you

ESV pass judgment on you

NASB 2020 act as your judge

As is true in the previous illustrations, the NIV gives a word-for-word translation of these words while the other so-called literal translations are giving us a correct rendering which brings out the meaning.

This sort of thing happens all the time in all translations that claim to be “literal.” As we have emphasized, it is impossible to have a completely literal translation of Scripture. Indeed, in so many instances, it would not make any sense to the English reader.

Some Literal Translations Add Words That Are Not In The Original Text

One more point should be made. There are numerous examples of “literal translations” that add a word, or words, here or there to make the translation clearer. While there are many instances, we will give a few examples. Acts 9:36 reads in Greek... Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas.

CSB	Tabitha, (which is translated Dorcas)
NET	Tabitha (which in translation means Dorcas)
NASB 1995	Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas)

Note that the NASB 1995 adds the words “in Greek” to further explain the meaning of her name. These words are not in the original text, but they do correctly convey what is being said. Interestingly, the NASB 2020, dropped the words “in Greek.”

Therefore, in this instance the NASB 1995 read similar to more thought-for-thought translations such as the NLT and the NIV.

We have another example of the NASB adding words in Matthew:

Matthew 2:22 reads in Greek	having been warned, or being warned, in a dream
NIV	having been warned in a dream
CSB	being warned in a dream
NASB 2020	being warned by God in a dream

The NASB 2020 adds words “by God” that are not found in the original text. Of course, this is precisely what the text means, but it is not what it says word-for-word. By placing these two words in the text the translation is not adding to Scripture but rather further clarifying what it means.

All in all, we conclude that English translations of the Bible are certainly more alike than they are different. Indeed, all of them, from time to time, have to translate a word or passage in a more thought for thought manner than strictly word-for-word. The fact that this consistently happens in these “literal” translations should be appreciated. Dave Brunn makes an appropriate conclusion:

Modified literal versions place a high priority on the ideal of giving a transparent view into the forms of the original text—particularly the original words. Thus, when we read the words in a literal version such as the KJV, ESV or NASB it should be like looking through a “transparent” window, which would presumably give a clear view into the wording of the original. Leland Ryken gives the following threefold description of what it means to be “transparent to the original text:”

“Transparency to that text . . . [includes] making sure that an English reader knows what the words of the original are.” [Transparency also] “requires retaining the images and figurative language of the Bible.” “To be transparent to the original text means preserving all signposts to the ancient world of the biblical writers, as opposed to finding [modern] equivalents.”

It is fine for a team of translators to establish this level of transparency as an ideal to aim for, but the real evidence shows that no translation is consistently transparent in this way. For example, in chapter 1, we saw more than one hundred instances in the NASB and ESV of thought-for-thought renderings which do

not show the English reader “what the words of the original are.” Also, in chapter 2, we saw dozens of places where some of the most literal English versions chose not to retain “the images and figurative language” of the original—even in some verses where they could have if they had wanted to. Later in the book we will examine places in Scripture where literal English versions introduced modern equivalents, rather than “preserving all signposts to the ancient world of the biblical writers” (Dave Brunn *One Bible, Many Translations, Are All Translations Created Equal?* IVP Academic Press, 2012).

It is clear that translations which make the declaration as being literal need to qualify their claims. While they may translate the Scripture more often in a literal manner than some of the other translations, as we have plainly seen, they cannot do it consistently.

Summary To Question 3

Are English Versions Of The Bible More Similar Than They Are Different?

Much controversy has erupted around Bible translations, especially in the manner in which they are rendered. However, at the end of the day, the evidence clearly shows that they are certainly more alike than they are different.

Accordingly, it is sad that more people do not realize this truth. Indeed, the Lord wants His people unified, not divided over subjects like which is the best Bible to use, or what is the best theory about how we should translate the Scripture.

One of the important truths that we must realize is that Bible translations state their ideal that they are going to translate the Scripture literally. However, as we have discovered, in reality, there are many places where they do not do this. Indeed, as Dave Brunn has demonstrated in his book, there are literally hundreds of examples where the “literal” translations translate words and passages as anything but literal. Again, there is nothing wrong with how they translate in these instances, however, it is incorrect to call the translation as literal.

As we have seen, English translations done by Bible-believers all basically do it in the same way to achieve the same goals. While some translations could rightly be called “modified literal” they certainly are not completely literal in their renderings. In fact, it is impossible to do so and have an understandable translation.

Accordingly, to properly communicate what the text means, there are times when literal translation cannot be done. Indeed, the translator must render the Scripture idiomatically or meaning-based. At the end of the day, they have no other option if they wish to correctly communicate God’s Word to the people.

Question 4

Do The Words That Are Found In Scripture Always Have The Same Meanings?

The Bible has been composed of thousands of different words in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Since we want to know the meaning of God's Word, the Bible, many people pursue the study of individual words, or "word studies," for a better understanding of the message of Scripture. While this is a worthy effort, there are a number of issues that we must be aware of.

Words Can Have Many Different Meanings

Simply put, words in Greek, Hebrew, and English can have many different meanings. The key is discovering what a particular word means in its context. For example, if I say the English word "trunk," then what am I talking about? Is it a tree, a part of a body, an elephant, or is it the back compartment of a car, at least in American English? In Australia and other parts of the world, it's called the "boot" not the trunk!

Nobody knows what I'm referring to unless I put it into a sentence or clause. The same holds true with all of the individual words that are found in Holy Scripture.

Therefore, be wary if you hear someone say that a certain word used in the Bible means such and such. It does not. In fact, those who are learned in the subject of linguistics and Bible translations would never speak in that manner!

Instead, they would say something like "this word can mean such and such in this particular context." In other words, their comments will always be couched in general terms.

Bless God Or Curse God?

Furthermore, the usual meaning of a word is not always the correct meaning in some instances. We find an example of this in the Book of Job. There is an interesting twist of a Hebrew term which all translators of the Bible are aware of.

The wife of Job uses the Hebrew word "*barak*" when telling her husband how to respond to God for the problems that have come upon him. This word is used some 300 times in Scripture and is almost always translated with the English word "bless." However, in this context, it has been recognized to have a different meaning.

Indeed, instead of saying "bless God and die" she was telling him rather to "curse God and die." Every major English version translates her words in this manner.

Again, the surrounding context must always be the determining factor as to the meaning of any biblical word.

Sentences Also Must Have A Context

There is something else we must also appreciate, namely, even a complete sentence needs a context.

For example, I say, "he sold a lot of stock." Well, what am I referring to? Is it someone in the cattle business, Wall Street, or someone who owns his own hardware store? Again, we do not know unless we have a wider context to understand the meaning of the sentence.

Another example of an ambiguous sentence is, “He ran into a bank.” Is this talking about a person hurrying to a place to withdraw money, or is it referring to the person running into the snow that had piled up on their street? It also could be someone speaking of what happened when losing control of their car! Again, we need a wider context.

These examples should be sufficient to cause us to be aware about how we understand individual words or even a complete sentence. They are actually meaningless unless there is some type of context to put them in.

The Lag Time, An Example Of Translating After Hearing Everything

A good example, as to why we must read or listen to an entire sentence in its context before translating it, can be found in the illustration of simultaneous translation. The person known as the simultaneous translator at the United Nations does not really translate the moment that he or she hears the words that are spoken. Indeed, there is always a lag. This lag is extremely important if we are going to understand what translation from one language to another is about.

The lag does not occur so as to give the translator time to think about what they just heard before translating it. Instead, it is because they have to wait until the person speaking has completed a thought. At the very moment the thought is registered in the mind of the translator, then automatically, words that are appropriate to express what they just heard into the new language begin to flow out.

A Dictionary Does NOT Give The Meaning Of A Word!

Why is this so? Simply put, a single word does not carry a meaning. Indeed, the definition following a word in the dictionary, called a “gloss,” is *not* what that word means. Rather it describes what meanings the word is capable of bringing to a sentence when the words surrounding it are of the proper sort. Only a sentence or a clause has meaning. A single word, by itself, needs a context before a meaning can be attributed to it. Otherwise, we might end up with a nonsensical interpretation of what word truly means.

Hence, the lag time is necessary for the translator to hear the complete thought of the speaker before they can put what was just said into another language.

A Common Misconception: Each Greek Word Has One Corresponding English Word To Translate It

Add to this, there are a couple of popular misconceptions that need to be cleared up with respect to biblical words.

Greek words, like English, can have a variety of meanings. For example, if someone asks what the Greek word “logos” means, most people will say it means “word.” Yet, this is not really correct.

In fact, the King James Version uses 24 different English words to translate this one Greek word! This includes such terms as account, doctrine, fame, rumor, say, speech, thing, and talk. It all depends upon the context.

When we look at the way the New American Standard Bible and the English Standard Version translates logos in the New Testament, we discover 30 additional words that the King James translators did not use to render this one Greek word. This includes such terms as answer, book, complaint, news, message and story.

Consequently, when we put these three translations together, we find over 50 different English words that are used to translate this one Greek word, logos.

The point is clear. There are a number of different ways to express the various meanings of this particular Greek word, it is always must be determined by the context.

The Same Is True Of Words In Hebrew

Another example is the Hebrew word *tor*, which is translated “good” in Genesis 1:31. While it is often defined as meaning “good,” it is translated in the King James Version in forty-one different ways.

The Same English Word Does Not Always Translate The Same Hebrew Or Greek Word

We can also look at this another way. We should not assume that a particular English word in our Bibles is always used to translate the same Hebrew or Greek word each time we find it.

For example, the English word “destroy” in the King James Version does not merely translate the same Hebrew word over and over again. In fact, when you come across the word destroy in the KJV Old Testament, it represents only one of forty different Hebrew words that this English word translates!

Another Misconception: Only One English Word Is Needed To Translate Each Greek Word

There is also the misconception that for every Greek word that we find in the New Testament there is only one English word needed to translate it.

Well, in Matthew 1:19, six words, “to put to an open shame” translates only one Greek word, the infinitive form of the verb *paradeigmatizo*. There is not a single English word that can correctly translate this Greek term.

Some Words Need To Be Replaced With Entire Phrases

Add to this, there are other words in Scripture where a one-word rendering will not work. Instead, the word must be translated with an entire phrase to make it understandable.

A well-known example of this is found in Mark 14:52 where the writer uses the Greek word “prosabbaton.” There is no single word in English that can translate this individual Greek word. Basically, it means “the day before the Sabbath.” Obviously, to translate it properly, more than one word is needed.

Lydia The Seller Of Purple Cloth

Another popular example is found in Acts 16:14 where Luke describes the woman, Lydia. The Greek word he uses is *porphyropolis*. It means a “female seller of purple cloth.” It is self-evident that there is no single English word that conveys this meaning. Hence an entire phrase must be used.

Beekman and Callow give another example as well as making an appropriate comment:

If divinely inspired concepts are to be rendered accurately and faithfully, a direct word-for-word equivalence would be impossible because of the differences between languages. In 1 Peter 1:18 for example, the KJV refers to your vain conversation *received by tradition from your fathers.*” These last six words are the translation of one Greek word *patroparadotu*. English has no one word equivalent for this particular Greek word. This rendering of the KJV is not an unjustifiable paraphrase, nor is it unjustifiable when translators do the same thing (Beekman and Callow, p. 177).

Again, we cannot emphasize this truth enough! There will be a number of times in Scripture where one word will not do. Indeed, sometimes it will take several words to properly render a Greek or Hebrew word into English.

Words Do Have Their Limitations

Even though the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words used in the Bible usually have a number of meanings, there are limitations as to what they can mean. In other words, they certainly cannot mean anything and everything! To the point, while there are a certain range of meanings for each word, they do have are limits.

In sum, we must remember when we hear someone say that this particular Greek or Hebrew word really means such and such, it is evidence that the person does not truly understand how languages operate. As we have emphasized, a single word can have a range of meanings.

Better to say, this particular word “can mean” or “likely has the “idea of” such and such. In other words, blanket or dogmatic statements about the meaning of biblical words should always be ignored.

Summary To Question 4

Do The Words That Are Found In Scripture Always Have The Same Meaning?

Many people have the misconception that each word found in the Bible only has one corresponding meaning in English. However, nothing could be further from the truth. As we observed, Hebrew and Greek words can have many different meanings. It always depends upon the context.

In fact, there are some fifty English words, used in three different translations, to render the Greek Word *logos* and over forty English words to translate the Hebrew word *tov*.

Consequently, there are many English words that we read in the New Testament that are actually a translation of *logos*. However, merely reading the English translation does not tell us what Greek word is being translated. The same holds true for the various words used to translate the Hebrew *tov*.

On the other hand, English words used to translate the Scriptures are not always translating the same Greek or Hebrew word when we read the word in our text. We gave the example that the English word “destroy” is used to translate over forty words in the Hebrew text. Therefore, when we see destroy in our English translations, we have no idea which of the forty Hebrew words is being translated.

We also emphasized the need to read complete sentences. Indeed, we need a complete sentence, in context, to understand the authors’ thoughts. Therefore, we should always be careful about making blanket statements such as “always” and “precisely” when it comes to explaining the meaning of words and phrases in Scripture. Languages do not work that way. In fact, the words must always be translated from the donor languages on a case-by-case basis.

Indeed, it seems that the main misconception, that so many have, is that the dictionary gives the meaning of a particular word. As we have emphasized, it does not.

What it does give are known as “glosses.” Basically, the glosses list what the word can mean in a sentence if the other words in the sentence call for that particular meaning. In other words, there are options that must be considered every time one searches for the desired meaning of the word.

We gave an example of this sort of thing with the English word “trunk.” As we illustrated, the word has a number of meaning that a dictionary would list. The correct meaning can only be found when the word is used in a certain context. Indeed, if one merely looks at a dictionary and picks out one particular meaning for the word the result could be nonsensical if it is not used that way in the particular context.

Sadly, too many people who read the Bible do not understand this simple concept. It is important that it is to be understood.

Question 5

Can Some Phrases In Hebrew And Greek Give Out The Wrong Meaning If They Are Literally Translated?

Indeed, they can. In fact, if someone is not careful, idiomatic expressions can cause a real problem when translated from one language to the next. This includes idioms found in the Bible.

For example, when one reads the phrase “in my autumn days,” most English speakers will conjure up an image of an elderly individual who is in the final season of their life.

We read of such a phrase in Job 29:4 where the Hebrew text reads, “in my autumn days.” It seems obvious that Job is talking about being well past the prime of his life.

However, the phrase means just the opposite! The New English Translation translates it as follows:

Oh, for the days when I was in my prime (Job 29:4 NET).

In this Hebrew metaphor, the autumn days refers to the time in one’s life of their greatest effectiveness. In fact, the King James Version translated the phrase “in the days of my youth.”

Therefore, this phrase means the complete opposite of the image that comes to our mind when we hear it in English. Consequently, every major English version recognizes the meaning of this Hebrew idiom and translates it accordingly. If in fact, someone would translate this metaphor into English in a literal, word-for-word manner, then it would actually distort the meaning of God’s Word.

So, to communicate the precise meaning of this phrase, a literal translation of the Hebrew text should never be used. In sum, the choice must be made with respect to what the phrase actually means rather than what it literally says.

Gird Up The Loins Of Your Mind

We mentioned this one earlier. There is an admonition in First Peter that makes no sense to the modern reader when literally translated. Sadly, the New King James Version does just that:

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind ... (1 Peter 1:13 NKJV).

While this is a literal translation of the Greek text, it is incomprehensible to the modern-day English speaker.

Indeed, modern English hardly ever uses the word “loins.” Furthermore, our mind does not have loins that can somehow be girded up!

Hence, a literal translation of the Greek text would completely baffle anyone reading the text in English. Whatever caused the translators of the New King James Bible to render the verse in this manner in modern times makes no sense whatsoever. As we have mentioned, in translating a text, meaning must always come before form. The goal in translating a text should be to bring across the meaning of what is written.

Accordingly, this idiomatic expression from first century Greek does not communicate God’s truth if we merely translate it word-for-word. Fortunately, other modern translations make it comprehensible.

Therefore, with minds that are alert (1 Peter 1:13 NIV).

Therefore, get your minds ready for action (1 Peter 1:13 NET).

These translations bring across the right idea. Basically, it means, “pay attention!”

Do People Actually “Taste Death?”

Another example of problems when a so-called literal translation is used can be found in the words of the religious leaders in the Gospel of John. Jesus claimed that anyone who obeyed His teaching would not “see” death.

Amen, amen I tell you, if anyone keeps My word, he will never see death (John 8:52 TLV).

When the religious leaders reported His words back to Him, the Gospel of John uses a Greek word that can have the meaning of “taste.” In fact, many English translations render it as such:

And yet You say, ‘If anyone follows My word, he will never taste of death (NASB 2020)

If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death (NKJV)

If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death (KJV)

Whoever obeys your word will never taste death. (NIV)

If anyone keeps my word, he will never taste death (ESV)

But you say, ‘Whoever does what I say will never taste death’ (God’s Word)

Yet you say, ‘Whoever keeps my word will never taste death’ (NRSV UE)

Yet You say, ‘If anyone keeps My word, he will never taste death (TLV)

Interestingly, some non-English translations also render it in this manner. For example, the Latin reads:

et tu dicis si quis sermonem meum servaverit non gustabit mortem

In Latin, the word *gustabit* means “taste.” In German, we find the same thing:

und du sprichst: Wer mein Wort hält, der wird den Tod nicht schmecken in Ewigkeit.

The German word *schmecken* also has the meaning of taste.

Not every translation renders the word in this manner in this context:

But you say, ‘Whoever obeys my teaching will never die’ (NCV)

Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!’ (NLT)

How can you say that no one who obeys your words will ever die? (CEV)

If anyone obeys my teaching, he will never experience death (NET)

The NET Bible contains the following note:

Grk “will never taste.” Here the Greek verb does not mean “sample a small amount” (as a typical English reader might infer from the word “taste”), but “experience something cognitively or emotionally; come to know something.” (NET Bible note in John 8:52).

A Handbook to the Greek New Text translates the passage as follows:

Truly, truly I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never experience death.” Then the Jews said to him, “Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham and the prophets died, and you say, ‘If anyone keeps my word, he will never experience death.’ (John 8:52-53 author’s translation) Lidija Novakovic, *John 1-10, A Handbook of the Greek Text*, Waco, Texas, Baylor University Press, 2020, p. 2).

The author then makes this point:

The literal meaning of [goo o mai] ... (“taste, partake of”) is here extended figuratively: “to experience someth[ing] cognitively or emotionally. (Lidija Novakovic, *John 1-10*, p. 309).

We should also note that in both verses the word “experience” was used. Instead of “see” in verse 52 and “taste” in verse 53.

While the usual meaning that comes to mind when someone says “taste” is to take a small portion of something in the mouth, obviously, this is not what is meant here. In fact, in many languages using the words “taste death” would not bring across what Jesus is actually saying.

Therefore, the translation “experience” is much better. The main idea behind death in the Bible is “separation.” The point the Lord is making is that those who die physically, will not experience any separation between themselves and God. In fact, the Gospel of John had earlier emphasized this truth. Jesus said:

I tell you the solemn truth, the one who hears my message and believes the one who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned, but has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24 NET).

Therefore, it is NOT being faithful to God’s Word by translating a phrase in such a way that is meaningless to the person reading it, no matter what the text word-for-word says. It is always the meaning of the phrase that must be translated correctly.

One Last Matter, How Do We Translate Things That Might Not Be Culturally Appropriate?

There is also the matter of customs that were practiced in biblical times but are not the same in many cultures in our modern world. Don Carson writes:

It has long been recognized that the precise form of a biblical mandate may be so cloaked in a cultural peculiarity that it is not to be obeyed *in that form* (italics his). “Greet one another with a holy kiss” does not mean the apostle is providing us with a theology of kissing: the form of greeting may be highly diverse, but the apostle’s point in any case has to do with the warmth of the fellowship of believers and the way they are to receive and welcome and forbear with one another. In that case, one must articulate principles that enable you to distinguish when a biblical mandate is to be obeyed in the precisely the form in which it is cast or in the cultural equivalent (Don Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate*, Baker, 1998, pp. 27-28)

Therefore, are translators supposed to render this command in a literal manner? Is God commanding all believers to give a “holy kiss” to one another every time they greet?

This is one of the many issues that translators wrestle with (we will have more to say about that in Question 7, What are some of the key decisions that have to be made when translating the Bible). As we shall see, questions like this have no easy answer, certainly no answer that will satisfy everyone.

In sum, there are indeed phrases in both Hebrew and Greek would give out the wrong meaning if someone translated them word for word. In this last instance, even a meaning-based translation would not have an easy time with this passage.

Summary To Question 5

Can Some Phrases In Hebrew And Greek Give Out The Wrong Meaning If They Are Literally Translated?

There are a number of times in Scripture where it is necessary to not literally translate word for word what the text says. As strange as that may sound, a literal translation may bring about the opposite idea of what the Scripture is saying or give an incomprehensible rendering of the text.

We gave three illustrations. The phrases “in my autumn days,” “gird up the loins of your mind,” and “taste death.” None of these makes sense to the modern English reader when translated literally. Instead, one must bring out the meaning of each phrase in the translation to do it justice.

We also mentioned the problem of literally translation something that is not appropriate in some cultures, namely greeting people with a holy kiss, whatever that specifically means.

Again, the goal of translation should be to communicate, in the best way possible, what the meaning of what the Scripture is saying to us. Therefore, claims that we have “literally translated” a certain word or phrase are hollow unless the result is understandable and communicates what God truly had in mind.

Question 6

Why Have Translators Often Substituted Different Body Parts In Their Translations?

One of the interesting things about reading the Scripture has to do with the way our innermost feelings are described. While in English, we usually speak of the “heart” as the center of our human emotions, this is not true in every language. Consider the following:

Job 19:27

NASB 2020	my heart faints within me!
NKJV	how my heart yearns within me!
ESV	my heart faints within me
Another Language	my kidneys faint within me!

Psalms 16:7

NASB	my mind instructs me.
NKJV	my heart also instructs me
ESV	my heart instructs me
Another Language	my kidneys instruct me.

Psalms 73:21

NASB	I was pierced within.
NKJV	and I was vexed in my mind
ESV	my soul was embittered
Another Language	I was pierced in my kidneys

Psalms 139:13

NASB	You formed my inward parts
NKJV	for You formed my inward parts
ESV	for you formed my inward parts
Another Language	You formed my kidneys

When we compare how the NASB, NKJV and ESV translates these verses we ask ourselves why would any other language use the word “kidneys” to illustrate our deepest feelings? What were these translators thinking?

Well, the surprising thing is that the word *kidney* is not a translation of the Hebrew text in these illustrations. No. Kidney *is* the Hebrew term that we find in Scripture!

Of course, it is used in these passages in a figurative sense.

The Old Testament also uses this same term in a nonfigurative sense when the offering animal sacrifices is in view. For example, we read:

On the altar he burned the fat, the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering, as the LORD commanded Moses (Leviticus 9:10 NIV).

Interestingly, when this Hebrew word occurs in a figurative sense in Scripture, English translators have usually chosen not to translate it literally. Instead, they do something that is perfectly fine, namely, they use a substitute that is appropriate in our culture. This, of course, is translating the meaning that is behind the literal term.

The NASB 2020, for example, has translated the figurative sense of this Hebrew word in six different ways, depending upon the context. Therefore, instead of “kidneys” we find such words as mind, feelings, inward parts, inmost being, and heart being used.

A More Literal Alternative

Fascinatingly, the translators of the King James Version found a unique way to deal with this term when it was used in a figurative manner. Dave Brunn explains:

They translated the figurative sense of this Hebrew word as “reins,” which is an archaic English word for “kidneys.” It comes from the Latin word *renes* (“kidneys”), from which we get the present-day medical term renal, defined as “relating to . . . the kidneys.” For example, renal function equals kidney function, renal failure equals kidney failure, and renal transplant equals kidney transplant. The KJV’s strategy for translating this Hebrew word was quite innovative, but it created a problem that the translators did not foresee.

In English, the little-known term reins (“kidneys”) has sometimes been confused with the unrelated reins, which is “a strap . . . by which a rider or driver controls an animal (from Latin *retinere* to restrain).”

The phonetic correspondence between reins (kidneys) and reins (for controlling animals) is purely coincidental. The words have completely separate origins...

The KJV rendering reins is not wrong. This word carries exactly the same meaning as the Hebrew and Greek words it represents. The problem is that most English readers are not familiar with this meaning of the word reins. The meaning-based (or dynamic equivalence) terms used by the NASB and ESV (“heart,” “mind,” “inmost being,” “feelings”) do a better job of communicating the true sense of the Hebrew word *kilyāh* (“kidneys”) (Dave Brunn *One Bible, Many Translations, Are All Translations Created Equal?* IVP Academic Press, 2012).

This illustration gives further evidence that literal translating does not always provide the proper understanding of the intent of the biblical author. Again, we stress that the goal of Bible translation is to give the proper meaning to what was written.

Archaic Expressions Of Body Parts Should Also Be Avoided

There is also the possible change in a particular language that must be appreciated. Indeed, languages change over time and expressions do not always mean today what they once stood for. A good illustration of this can be found in the rendering of a verse in the King James Version in the Song of Songs:

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him (1 Kings 5:4 KJV).

Obviously, nobody would use this exact metaphorical expression today in the same context! In Elizabethan English it obviously spoke of the innermost feelings of a person, not a literally body part.

This same expression could also cause confusion when used of the compassion of the Lord as translated in the King James Version:

For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:8 KJV)

In sum, when a translator uses body parts to explain certain feelings it must always be the current usage of the word that is employed. Otherwise, it may cause all sorts of problems.

Summary To Question 6

Why Have Translators Substituted Different Body Parts In Their Translations?

While it may seem strange that a number of English translations use different body parts to describe the internal feelings of humans, it actually shouldn't surprise us at all. Indeed, different cultures explain our innermost feelings by using different body parts.

As we noted, the Old Testament, in the original Hebrew, uses the word "kidneys" is a symbolic way to describe the innermost feelings of a person. We certainly would not use that expression in modern English.

While we use the term heart to denote our innermost being, not all cultures use this metaphor. This is why any translation, to be understandable, must fit with the culture for those who are reading or hearing it.

However, as languages do change over time, a translation must make certain that they use the current symbolic expression for the deep feelings that we have.

As we illustrated, the expression used in 1611 of someone's deepest feelings, their inner yearnings, or compassion, is certainly not the same as we employ in modern English. Indeed, if someone used the archaic expression today it would be incomprehensible to almost everyone who heard it.

Question 7

What Are Some Of The Key Decisions That Have To Be Made When Translating The Bible?

Translating the Bible is not something that is easy to do. It must be appreciated that there are a number of issues that have to be decided as one goes about rendering the Word of God into a language different from that which it was originally written. The following decisions have to be made for any translation of the Bible.

1. Who Is Going To Do The Translating?

The first issue that has to be addressed concerns the translator or the translators. Who is going to be the person, or persons, that will actually do the translating of the biblical text? Will it be one person? Will it be a committee? Will the translators come from one denomination or from a number of denominations? Should all the translators be from the same country or should there be an international group doing the work?

These are just a few of the many questions that have to be answered before a translation can begin. There are so many other issues that have to be settled.

For example, if the translators differ on how a particular verse is to be translated, then who will make the final decision as to how the text reads? This first step is crucial and must be determined before any type of translating the Scripture can begin.

2. Which Books Should Make Up The Translation?

Once the translators have been chosen, the next step is to decide which books should be included in the translation of the Bible?

While this may seem to be an obvious question to many, it certainly is not an obvious question to everyone. Should it be limited to the sixty-six books that make up the Protestant canon? What about the books the Protestants call the Old Testament Apocrypha and the Roman Catholics call the deuterocanonical books? Should they be part of the translation of Scripture? If so, should they be included as part of the Old Testament or should they be placed in a separate section? These questions need answering.

Furthermore, the Eastern Orthodox Church includes three other books as part of their Old Testament—3rd and 4th Maccabees as well as Psalm 151. What should be done with these books?

Should they be translated with the rest of Scripture? If so, should they be placed in a separate section between the testaments or in an appendix?

The New Revised Standard Version was the first major English translation that actually incorporated the books that all three major branches of Christianity, Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Greek Orthodox, have accepted as Scripture.

Therefore, before any work of translation can begin, it must be agreed upon exactly what books are to be translated.

3. From What Text Should The Translation Be Made?

Once the exact extent of the books that will be in the translation has been determined, then the next important issue concerns the text from which it is to be made. The decision has to be made by the translators as to which

individual reading from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts is the original reading and which readings are secondary. This must be done for each verse of the Bible.

Almost all modern translations use the latest edition of BHS (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*) as the text from which they translate the Old Testament. The translators also compare the BHS text with readings from other ancient Hebrew manuscripts, the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient translations of Scripture.

In the New Testament, it is often the latest edition of Nestle-Aland *Novum Testamentum Graece* that is usually used as the basis for the translation. This is the same Greek text that is contained in the latest edition of the New Testament of the United Bible Society. The only difference between these two Greek texts is the way they are punctuated and the manner in which the variant readings are listed.

BHS and the Nestle-Aland text are the standard Hebrew and Greek printed texts. While most modern translations use these printed texts as a basis for their translation, at times they will prefer a reading that is not found in these texts but rather is listed among the variant readings in these printed text.

These printed editions list a number of secondary or variant readings, at the bottom of each page. At times, the translators will conclude that the reading in the printed text is not the original but actually a secondary reading.

Indeed, the New Revised Standard Version adds four sentences in First Samuel 10 that are not found in other English translations. They read as follows:

Now Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had been grievously oppressing the Gadites and the Reubenites. He would gouge out the right eye of each of them and would not grant Israel a deliverer. No one was left of the Israelites across the Jordan whose right eye Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had not gouged out. But there were seven thousand men who had escaped from the Ammonites and had entered Jabesh-gilead (1 Samuel 10:27 NRSV UE).

This addition is based upon manuscript evidence that was found among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

In the New Testament, there are a few modern translations that still use some form of the *Textus Receptus* as their Greek text. This is basically the text that was behind the King James Version of 1611.

Some will use a standard edition of the *Textus Receptus* while others will use what is known as the Majority Text. The Majority text differs from the *Textus Receptus* in about 2,000 places.

Among other things, translations based upon this Greek text will add the following phrase in First John:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one (1 John 5:7 KJV).

Almost all modern translations reject this reading as being original.

The fact that translators of one version will use a slightly different text than the translators of another version accounts for the differences in the English text.

4. What Do The Translators Do With Words That Have An Uncertain Meaning?

Once the text has been decided another problem arises—how to translate rare words. What does the translator do when the meaning of a particular word or phrase is uncertain?

It seems obvious that some type of marginal note is necessary. But there are some translations which do not have marginal notes. What is to be done in that case? How do they let the reader know that the meaning is uncertain?

With respect to the New Testament there are relatively few rare words where the meaning is unknown. However, one example of a rare word can be found in the Lord's Prayer as recorded in Matthew 6:11 and Luke 11:3 in which the meaning is uncertain. It is usually translated as "daily bread."

However, some believe it means "bread for tomorrow." The word has never been found anywhere else in Greek literature. What this is the translator to do when there are two equally possible readings? Basically there is no choice but to put one in the text and the other in a footnote.

Some Old Testament Issues

In the Old Testament there are a number of words that occur only once in the Hebrew Bible and are not found in other Hebrew literature. What is to be done in cases like this? Obviously the translator has to make some choice with respect to the meaning of the word. However, the translator should also let the reader know that the translation of the word or phrase is uncertain.

There is also the issue of translating terms with which there is no English equivalent. A case in point is the long undergarment that was worn in the time of Christ – the *chiton*.

This garment was worn next to the skin and covered the person from the neck to the feet. There is really no word in modern English that describes it. It was not a shirt for a shirt covers only the upper body. It would be wrong to translate it as underwear because modern underwear only covers the lower body.

While tunic is a word that properly explains this garment most people do not know what a tunic is. Therefore, some type of explanation must be necessary.

5. What Theory Of Translation Is To Be Used?

There is also the issue of which theory of Bible translation is to be used. Should the translation be more on the literal side? Should the work be more of a meaning-based translation?

What makes a faithful translation? As we have already mentioned, with respect to translations, there are basically two competing theories, formal equivalence and functional, equivalence.

Formal equivalence attempts to be more of a word-for-word translation. It endeavors to express as exactly as possible the full force and meaning of every word and phrase in the original. As much as possible, there is an attempt to keep the same word order as the original. However, some translations have been so literal that they cannot be understood without referring to the original Hebrew and Greek! It must be emphasized that no translation is totally literal.

Functional equivalence translates the meaning of the text rather than a simple word-for-word rendering. It desires to bring across the same meaning of the text that the original readers would have had.

This issue is as old as Bible translations. One of the first people to translate the Bible into English was King Alfred the Great. He said the following about how to translate the Scripture:

I began amidst other diverse and manifold cares of the kingdom, to turn into English the book which is called *Cura Pastoralis* in Latin, and in English, The Shepherd's Book, sometimes word for word, and sometimes meaning for meaning.

This same problem faced Jerome, the fourth century church father who translated the Latin Vulgate. Jerome believed every written work should be translated according to its sense, rather than by a literal word for word translation.

However, he said that the only exception to this rule was the Bible. Since it is God's Word, Jerome believed it should be translated word for word from the original. What is interesting to note is that Jerome did not always live up to the principles that he advocated. Much of his translation is meaning-based rather than word-for-word.

Sometimes a word-for-word translation will not make any sense. An illustration of this can be seen in 2 Corinthians 6:11. It literally reads as follows.

Our mouth is open unto you, O Corinthians (2 Corinthians 6:11 ASV).

The New Revised Standard Version translates this verse the same way as the ASV, with the exception of omitting "O" before Corinthians.

Yet, what does this phrase mean? Most modern versions do not literally translate the verse but rather render something like the following:

We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you (2 Corinthians 6:11 NRSV UE UE).

This is the meaning behind the phrase, but it is not a literal translation of the Greek. Which of the two should be in the translated text of Scripture? What it literally says, or what it most-likely means? This is a problem that all translators have to face. As we have observed, most translations, whether they claim to be literal, often translate the text based upon the meaning of the original rather than word-for-word.

Those who translated the *New Revised Standard Version* Updated Edition said they were, "as literal as possible and as free as necessary." A number of other modern translations have taken the same attitude when faced with passages such as this.

6. Which Level Of Style Should Be Used?

The issue of level of readability also has to be addressed. Who is the target audience? At what level of English style should the translation be made? Should technical terms such as sanctification, redemption, propitiation, and reconciliation be used, or should these terms be simplified?

Should the translation be aimed at the simplest level of reader, or should it be a literary work that is aimed at a higher level of reading competency?

Some translations aim at the lowest possible literacy level while others are written to an audience that is more literate. The decision not only has to be made as to which level will be the target, there must be consistency in carrying this out. The entire translation should reflect a certain level of style. Which level of readability has to be determined by those who are responsible for the translation.

Because these decisions have to be made, we find a number of different translations that are specifically aimed at a target group. Indeed, there are always new translations which are being produced to reach a particular audience such as young children, teenagers, and those who read English as a second language.

7. How Should The Text Be Punctuated?

Another problem facing translations is that of punctuation. The ancient Greek and Hebrew manuscripts had little, if any punctuation. In fact, there was no systematic use of punctuation marks until the eighth or ninth century A.D. Therefore, the translator has to make a number of decisions about whether to use the marks, when to use them, and which ones to use.

Since these marks were not systematically used until eight centuries after the books were written, the translator does not necessarily have to follow the ancient scribe in where to place the marks. Neither does the translator necessarily have to follow the punctuation in printed Greek and Hebrew texts nor the punctuation found in other translations. Consequently, different translations will see different punctuation of the text.

For example, unlike English, the beginning of a sentence did not start with a capital letter. Therefore, the translator must make the decision as to when the sentence begins and ends.

There is also the matter of quotation marks; they do not appear in any Hebrew or Greek manuscript. Therefore, whether the translator should use them, and where to put them, is entirely the decision of those translating the Scripture and there are no infallible rules in which to guide them.

Fortunately, the beginning of a direct quotation can often be determined when we find a verb such as “asked,” “said” or “replied.” These words usually introduce a direct quote. Apart from that, it is the decision of the translators as to when something is being directed quoted for something is merely being referred to.

An Example Of The Problem Of Who Is Speaking: John 3

There are problems determining when the direct quotation ends. One of the best examples of this is found in the conversation Jesus had with the religious leader Nicodemus (John 3). It is uncertain when the words of Jesus stopped, and the comments of the writer, John, began.

For example, the King James Version and the Rheims-Douay of 1899 have no quotation marks whatsoever. Consequently there is no help to determine where they think one person stopped speaking and another person started.

The Revised Standard Version, the New American Bible, think Jesus’ words end at John 3:15. After that it was John commenting on the words of Jesus. However, other translations such as the New International Version, the New Living Translation, the New American Standard Bible, and the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition think Jesus’ words end at John 3:21.

A further problem arises in red-letter Bibles where the words of Jesus are placed in the color red. A decision has to be made when Jesus has stopped speaking and when John began to comment.

There is no clear answer to this issue in this section of John’s gospel. However, since all of Scripture is divinely inspired, including any comments made by the author John, in one sense it does not really matter where Jesus’ words ended and John’s began.

All of Scripture is for our benefit. This entire passage, no matter how one divides whom is speaking to whom, is still the Word of God and thus totally trustworthy.

The Problem With When To Use Commas

There are more issues with respect to punctuation. The placing of a comma within a sentence can change the sense of the sentence. For example, Luke 23:43 records the response of Jesus to the criminal who asked the Lord to remember Him when He came into His kingdom. Jesus said:

Truly I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.

However, this sentence is punctuated differently by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Jehovah Witnesses in their 'New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures.'

The Watchtower does not believe that the dead are conscious but rather are sleeping. Consequently, they have placed the comma after the next word "today." Their punctuation reads as follows:

Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise (NWT)

According to their punctuation, Jesus is emphasizing that He is talking to the criminal today rather than at some other day. The idea that the criminal will immediately be with Jesus in paradise is not found with this punctuation.

Yet it is rather obvious when Jesus was answering his request, that very same day. Therefore, the traditional punctuation is the only way that makes any real sense out of Jesus' reply.

In Revelation 5:1 the traditional punctuation describes the scroll held in the right hand of God. It is usually translated as follows:

Then I saw in the right hand of the one seated on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides, sealed with seven seals (Revelation 5:1 CSB)

It is possible, however, to understand the Greek text in a different way. It would read as follows:

Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with written on the inside, and sealed on the back with seven seals.

Another example of a difference in punctuation can be seen in the Lord's Prayer. The King James Version punctuates Matthew 6:10 as follows:

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10 KJV).

However, modern translations usually punctuate it differently. They place the comma after the word "done:"

Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Therefore, the punctuation of a text can make a difference as to its meaning.

8. Should Poetic Passages Be Laid Out Differently Than Other Literary Forms?

There is also the question of poetic passages. The Bible contains a number of passages that are poetic in form.

Should these poetic passages be laid out in such a way that it is clear they are poetry? If so, then how are poetic passages to be identified? Should they be indented? Italicized? Should they be placed in a different typeface?

What is to be done with passages where there is no consensus as to whether it is poetic or not? Should they be marked in a certain way to show that there is some question as to whether it is actually poetry we are dealing with? As can be imagined, translations differ on how this is to be accomplished.

9. Should The Translation Be Divided Into Paragraphs?

There is also the problem of paragraphs. There were no paragraph divisions in the original. Furthermore, it is not known as to when the biblical text was broken into paragraphs. There are some paragraph divisions in fourth century manuscripts. However, the modern paragraph divisions were not made until the thirteenth century, and they differ from the ones found in these earliest manuscripts. Therefore, should the present English translations be divided up into paragraphs? If so, how often should this be done?

Some translations begin a new paragraph with each verse while others divide the paragraphs differently. Others do not have any paragraphs at all. If the Bible is divided up into paragraphs should there be a heading written above each paragraph? All of these questions need to be answered.

10. Should The Translation Attempt To Use The Same English Word For Each Greek And Hebrew Word?

This is another stylistic question. Should the translation attempt to consistently translate the same Hebrew and Greek word with the same English word, or should they use a variety of words to translate the same word?

For example, the translators of the King James Version did not feel the need to use the same English word for the same Greek word. They stated their reasons in the preface to the translation.

On the other hand, if different English words are used for the same Greek word, then how is the English reader to know that it is the same Greek word that is being used? Would not they assume that a different Greek word is used because there is a different English word found in the translation?

11. Should Archaic Forms Of Words Be Retained?

Many modern translations have felt the need to retain some archaic forms of words. This is especially true in reference to Deity in the language of prayer.

Older translations such as the Revised Standard Version and the older editions of the New American Standard Bible use the archaic form of “you” and “your,” “thou,” “thy,” “thine,” when God is addressed in prayer.

Supposedly, this is the more reverent form of the word. Should this be done? If so, then a good explanation is needed as to why this is the case.

12. Should Pronouns That Refer To Deity Be Capitalized?

Should the translation capitalize all forms of words that refer to God? Until the twentieth century, there was no English translation that capitalized the pronouns when it referred to Deity.

However, since that time, a number of translations have adopted this practice. This includes the Amplified Bible, the Berkeley Version, the New American Standard Bible, and the New King James Bible. The thought behind this practice is to show more reverence for God.

On the other hand, those who do not adopt this practice point out a number of things.

First, this type of distinction is not found in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. In fact, they did not use capital letters whatsoever. If the translator capitalizes third person pronouns such as he, his, him, should this also be done with the relative pronouns (who, whom whose) that refer to God?

What about situations where it is an unbeliever speaking to Jesus? For example, Pontius Pilate asked Jesus the question, “Are you the king of the Jews?” (Matthew 27:11). Should the “you” be capitalized when Pilate refers to Jesus? There are a number of versions which do this.

There are further problems. What about sections where the identity is uncertain? There are some verses where it is uncertain as to whether the Holy Spirit or the human spirit is under discussion.

If the word spirit is capitalized then the reader will assume that this refers to the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, if it is not capitalized in translations that capitalize pronouns referring to Deity then it will be assumed by the reader that this is not a reference to the Holy Spirit.

Either way the translators have made an interpretive decision concerning the identity of the spirit. This is another matter translators have to deal with.

13. Should The Divine Name Of God Be Translated?

A further issue concerns the name of God as it is revealed in the Old Testament. How should it be translated, or should it be translated? All English Bibles have this problem. It can be summed up as follows.

There are four Hebrew consonants that make up the divine name (YHWH). This is called “the tetragrammaton.”

In older translations, such as the King James Version and the American Standard Version, the name was rendered as Jehovah. This represents the consonants from the Tetragrammaton and the vowels from another Hebrew word adonay which means “master.” The letter “J” was pronounced like “Y” in the 17th century. There is no letter “J” in Hebrew.

The vowels were substituted by a group of Hebrew scholars called the Masoretes in order to avoid pronouncing the divine name. When the Tetragrammaton appeared in the text the word adonay was pronounced instead.

Most scholars believe that the divine name would have been pronounced something like Yahweh. If this be the case, then should Yahweh be used when the divine name of God appears in the Old Testament? Translators differ on this issue. Some translations will use Yahweh while others substitute the term LORD in small capital letters. Again, this is a decision that each individual translation will have to make.

14. How Should Variant Readings Be Dealt With?

There is the issue of dealing with variant readings, or variations in the text, that are found in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Should they be listed? If so, how often should they be listed? What information should be given for the reading adopted in the text as well as the readings that were not adopted?

Should phrases such as “the best manuscripts” be used in describing the reading chosen as original? Or should more objective descriptions such as, “the oldest manuscripts,” “the majority of manuscripts,” or “some of the oldest manuscripts” be used?

Each translation will have to make its own decision as to how to deal with the variants.

15. Should Long Sentences Be Made Into Shorter Ones?

There is also the issue of translating long and complicated sentences. For example, there are places in the writings of Paul where he writes a long, involved sentence. There is the frequent repetition of words such as “and” “but” “moreover” and “for” in these long sentences.

How should this be translated into English? English prefers to break up long sentences into smaller ones. Should this be done with Paul’s long sentences or should they be kept long and involved as he originally wrote them? What is the best way of dealing with this problem? Again, the translators have to make a decision.

16. How Should Issues Of Ancient Measuring Systems Be Dealt With?

The writers of Scripture used the measuring and numbering systems of their day. These are not the same systems used in modern times. For example, Scripture measures things in cubits. This was the distance between the elbow and the middle finger. Should the term cubit be retained in text?

If the ancient systems are converted into modern systems then which modern system does the translation use? Should it be the metric system or the imperial system as found in America? Should the Scripture speak of meters or yards? Or should neither system be used, and the term cubits retained?

17. Should Any Words Be Italicized?

One issue that can be confusing is the use of italics in Scripture. The *Geneva Bible* was the first to put italics in the text where it was thought necessary to add English words to explain the Greek text when the Greek did not have these words. The King James translators also employed this practice. Very few translations do this today.

Indeed, this particular use of italics can be confusing to the modern reader. Today, we put words in italics for emphasis; we do not do it because the words are not found in the text.

Thus, unless the reader was made aware of the practice, they would assume that the author of Scripture emphasized the words that are found in italics. However, according to the translators of these two Bibles the opposite is true. The author of Scripture did not use these words at all! They are an attempt by the translators to make the translation more clear.

An example of this type of confusion can be found in Psalm 19. The King James reads as follows:

There is no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard (Psalm 19:3 KJV).

This verse seems to emphasize that the voice of nature can be heard everywhere. Yet, the word “where” is not found in the Hebrew text.

However, in this verse, the modern reader would assume that the psalmist is emphasizing that the voice of nature is heard everywhere.

Actually, it seems to be saying just the opposite. Nature does not have a voice but its testimony is inaudible. The NRSV UE reads as follows:

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard (Psalm 19:3 NRSV UE)

The NLT renders the verse as follows:

They speak without a sound or a word; their voice is silent in the skies (Psalm 19:3 NLT).

As is readily apparent, the use of italics in this case will make a big difference in the meaning if the reader does not understand the purpose of the italics in the King James Bible.

18. Should The Translation Contain Any Explanatory Or Reference Notes?

Apart from the translation of the text, how much other information should be given in a Bible? Should there be a cross reference system? Should there be notes that explain theological issues? Should there be headings before each section or paragraph. Should there be a written introduction to each book of the Bible?

In the past, there have been a number of translations that did not contain any explanatory notes except those that dealt with the meaning of words or variant readings among the manuscripts. Some people argue that extensive notes do not belong with a Bible translation. It gives the reader the wrong impression that the notes are of equal value as the divinely inspired text. Again, we find that Bible translations differ as to whether notes should be used.

19. Should The Words Of Jesus Be Put In Red Letters?

Some modern translations put the words of Jesus in red letters. This was first done in 1899 in an edition of the King James Version issued by the Christian Herald of New York.

Other publishers have done the same thing. Besides the words of Jesus found in the Gospels, such editions, they also print in red letters the sayings attributed to Christ in the Book of Acts, 2 Corinthians, and the Book of Revelation.

While the red letter editions make it easier to find the words of Jesus, there are problems with this practice. As we just mentioned, it is not certain where the words of Jesus leave off and the words of John begin in John chapter three. If this is the case, then what words should be put in red letters?

There are other problems. The original Greek text makes no distinction between the words of Jesus and those of others. We never find His words written in some type of special letters, or with special colored ink. Since the New Testament does not highlight His words why should a Bible translation?

And there is even a greater problem. Red letter Bibles seem to give the impression that the words of Jesus have more value than other words that are found in the New Testament. Yet, the explanation of what Jesus accomplished as our Savior is not found in the gospels but rather in the later New Testament books such as the writings of Paul. Indeed, Jesus death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead are not explained in His words.

Thus, red letter Bibles would tend to take away the emphasis of Jesus as the Savior and emphasize Jesus as the teacher. The point is that everything that Jesus said and did is of the utmost importance. Printing the words of Jesus Christ in red may cause some people to place lesser value on the words that are not in the red letters. This does not seem to be the wisest thing to do.

20. Should The Difference Between You Singular And You Plural Be Noted?

There is also the problem that translators face in making the distinction between the English word “you” as used in the singular number and “you” in plural number. Old English had no such problem. They would use “thou” for the singular and “ye” for the plural.

Modern English has no way to distinguish between the two. What then, if anything, should a translator do to distinguish between the singular and plural form?

21. Should They Translate Or Transliterate Certain Words?

Translation is when a Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic word is rendered into another language. Transliteration is when the letters of the Greek, Hebrew or Aramaic word are simply put into another language without any thought of translation. For example, the word “baptize” is not a translation of a word, it is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptizo*.

We find the writers of the New Testament transliterating on occasion. For example, in Matthew 1:22-23 it reads:

This all happened so that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet would be fulfilled: “Look! The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him Emmanuel,” which means “God with us.” (Matthew 1:22,23 NET)

The word “Emmanuel” is actually a transliteration of four Hebrew words which means “God is with us.” It is not a Greek word or a proper name. Matthew took the Hebrew phrase and transliterated it in his gospel to describe how people will refer to Jesus.

22. How Is Word Order To Be Decided?

The order in which words are arranged in a sentence can make a difference in meaning. For example, when Jesus was instituting the Lord’s Supper, He spoke to His disciples about drinking from the cup. The King James Version records Him saying the following:

Drink ye all of it (Matthew 26:27 KJV).

This translation is ambiguous. Does Jesus mean they should drink the entire contents of the cup or that all of them should drink of it? The translation does not make it clear. The Greek is very clear. The word “you” is plural in form. Therefore, the sentence should read like, “Drink from it, all of you.”

23. How Can A Passage Be Translated So That It Cannot Be Misunderstood?

A faithful translation does more than merely making it understandable, the translation must be done in a way where it cannot be misunderstood. The correct words must be chosen so there is no chance of misunderstanding. There are a number of examples where we find that translators have rendered the Scripture in a way in which it may be misunderstood. For example, the King James Version reads the following in Matthew’s gospel:

And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way (Matthew 20:17 KJV).

In what sense did Jesus “take the disciples apart?”

The King James translators rendering of Luke 17:34 could also give the wrong impression:

I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left (Luke 17:34 KJV)

The italics mean that the word “men” is not found in the original. Even worse, is the rendering of Luke 17:34 in James Moffatt’s 1934 revision of the New Testament. It reads “two men in bed.”

Another example of an ambiguous reading can be found in the Revised Standard Version. In speaking of the prophet Elisha, it says the following:

Then he arose and went after Elijah (1 Kings 19:21 RSV)

The text, however, emphasizes that Elisha followed Elijah as his servant or attendant; not that he went after him in the sense of trying to apprehend him or catch up with him.

The Revised Standard Version also is ambiguous in a verse in Zechariah. It reads:

Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments (Zechariah 3:3 RSV).

Who was clothed with filthy garments? Was it the angel or Joshua?

There is also an unclear translation of a passage in Exodus. Speaking of Moses the verse reads as follows:

And he went out from Pharaoh in hot anger (Exodus 11:8 ASV).

The RSV translates the verse the same way. Although the text is speaking of Moses going out in hot anger, it could be read in such a way that it referred to Pharaoh.

Some expressions can have a meaning different than the translators intended. For example, we read the following in the Revised Standard Version in the Psalms:

I am dumb (Psalm 39:9 RSV).

The word dumb is used here to mean “mute.” It has nothing to do with the intelligence of a person.

Since the Bible is God’s Word to the human race, it is terribly wrong to give the inference that it is folklore. However, the New English Bible introduces the account of the confusion of tongues at Babel with the following statement:

Once upon a time (Genesis 11:1 NEB).

Obviously, this rendering can lead to misunderstanding as well as to the idea that we are dealing with legend, not reality. There are some other examples where the NEB is doctrinally imprecise. In the Book of Genesis, we have the following two examples:

Noah had won the Lord’s favour (Genesis 6:8 NEB).

Later we read Abraham saying,

If I have deserved your favour (Genesis 18:3 NEB).

These two passages suggest that humans can somehow earn God’s favor. This is something that the text does not say, neither does it imply. God’s favor, or grace, is not earned.

These examples can give the wrong impression as to the meaning of the text. Therefore, a good translation must make certain that its readings cannot be misunderstood.

24. How Does The Translation Keep From Being Ambiguous When Read Out Loud?

Translators must also be aware of possible ambiguity when the text is read out loud. For example, Luke 22:35 records Jesus asking His disciples a question:

And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing (Luke 22:35 KJV).

Their answer could be misunderstood when read out loud. It could give the impression that the disciples were silent when, in actuality, they replied to Jesus’ question. While this is clear that the disciples answered Jesus’ question when one reads the text, it can be unclear if someone hears it read out loud.

Consequently, some translations render their answer to the question as, “No, not a thing.”

There can also be confusion with words that sound exactly the same but have a different spelling and a different meaning. The words “there” and “their” are examples of this. Both words are pronounced exactly the same way yet, they are spelled differently and mean entirely different things.

There are a number of passages where this can be unclear when read out loud:

Because there God had revealed himself (Genesis 35:7 RSV).

When read out loud, this could be mistakenly thought to mean “their God” as opposed to the God of someone else. There is another example of possible confusion in the Psalms:

There thrones for judgment were set (Psalm 122:5 RSV).

Again, this could be misunderstood as referring to thrones belonging to someone rather than the place where the thrones were to be set up.

Consequently, care must be taken when translating these words so that the listener understands which form of the word is used.

25. How Do The Translators Deal With Male Oriented Terms?

One issue that has always faced translators is the correct use of gender. Is it acceptable to use masculine terms in a passage that refers to both men and women?

Should terms like “man” and “mankind” be used when speaking of both men and women as a group? This problem has plagued translators from the time the beginning. For example, the Septuagint is the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. It was produced in approximately 150 B.C.

We find in Hosea 2:4 there is a discussion of the three children of a woman named, two sons and one daughter. The Hebrew calls all three children “sons of whoredom.” The Septuagint, however, uses a neuter term—children. Therefore, we find the translation changing the text from the masculine gender to the neuter gender.

Translations such as the King James Version, the American Standard Version, the New International Version, and the New Revised Standard Version also use the word “children” to translate the Hebrew.

We find the same problem in the earliest of English translations. William Tyndale was the first person to translate the New Testament from Greek into English. In Matthew 5:9 he rendered the Greek word *huioi* as “children.” This is despite the fact that it is usually rendered as “sons.”

The Hebrew word *ben* means “son.” However, the King James Version rendered the Hebrew term *ben*, and its plural form, as “child” or “children” about thirty-five percent of the time. The phrase “children of Israel” literally reads “sons of Israel” in the Hebrew.

This is not a problem in passages where it is clearly addressed to both men and women. In these instances a more general term should be used.

In older translations, we often find the word “man” or “men” when referring to humanity in general. For example, John 12:32 reads as follows in the King James Version:

And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all *men* to myself (John 12:32 KJV)

The word “men” is italicized. This is the way the King James translators indicated the word was not in the original text. Modern translations have made it clear that Jesus was not limiting His words to male adults.

There are times that man or men can only mean a male adult. For example, in the feeding of the five thousand:

Now there were five thousand men who ate the bread (Mark 6:44 NET).

In this instance, the Scripture specifically makes a distinction between the men and the women and the children. Thus, the five thousand were probably more like fifteen thousand when the women and children were counted.

26. How Do They Translate The Lack Of A Generic Third Person Pronoun?

Another difficulty that English translators face is the lack of a common gender third person singular pronoun. English has only “he,” “she,” and “it.”

There is not a singular pronoun that represents both males and females. For example, how is Matthew 16:24-26 to be translated? Consider the following ways in which it has been done:

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:24-26 KJV).

The KJV consistently uses the masculine forms throughout. This is a literal translation of the Greek which uses the singular masculine form. On the other hand, the NIV renders the passage as follows:

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:24-26 NIV).

The NIV replaces “man” with “anyone” in the first instance. Yet it keeps “man” and “he” for all the remainder of the references.

The NRSV UE, however, substitutes plurals for the singulars:

Then Jesus told his disciples, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?” (Matthew 16:24-26 NRSV UE).

The NRSV UE has no male references in this passage. In verse twenty-four, instead of “man” it uses the word “any.” The remainder of the references are changed from the singular to the plural.

Instead of “he” and “his” it is translated “they” and “their.” This tactic avoids any masculine references. The idea is to make it more consistent with Jesus’ command that both males and females were instructed to follow after Him.

The Contemporary English Version, the CEV, translates the verse as follows:

If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me. If you want to save your life, you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me, you will

find it. What will you gain, if you own the whole world but destroy yourself? What would you give to get back your soul? (Matthew 16:24 CEV).

The CEV uses “you” “yourself” and “your” instead of the masculine pronouns.

What does the translator do when confronted with such a problem? Should they keep the word “he” when referring to both male and females or should they change the singulars to plurals?

Or should they change the third person singular “he” to the second person singular “you?” There is no completely satisfactory answer.

27. How Do They Translate Hebrew Poetry?

There is also the issue of translating Hebrew poetry. Contrary to English poetry, Hebrew poetry does not rhyme. Moreover, there are a number of different types of Hebrew poetry.

For example, Psalm 119 is poem that contains twenty-two sections. These twenty-two sections correspond to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each section begins with a different letter of the Hebrew alphabet – starting from the first letter and ending with the last.

How can a translator bring that out in English? The letters of English alphabet are not only different in number than the Hebrew alphabet, they do not correspond to each other. What, if anything, is the translator to do?

28. How Do They Translate Play On Words?

In the original languages of Scripture, Hebrew and Greek, we find a number of instances where there is a play on words. The problem is that the play on words does not translate into English. One of the famous examples of this is Jesus’ statement to Peter in Matthew 16:18:

And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it (Matthew 16:18 NIV).

The word Peter means “rock.” Therefore, when Jesus said to Peter, “on this rock” there is a play on words with his name. How can the translator bring out this word play in the original that does not translate into English? At times, translations indicate the play on words in a footnote. In other cases, the play on words is ignored.

29. How Should Proper Names Be Translated?

There is also the issue of how to translate proper names. Sometimes it is difficult to know if the word is to be used as a proper name or to be translated with a different meaning.

For example, the Hebrew word *adam* is both a noun meaning “man” as well as a proper name “Adam.” There is a question as to when the translation should read Adam rather than man. There is no agreement among the various translations as to when this should happen in the Book of Genesis.

The Septuagint, the first Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, makes the change at Genesis 2:16. However, the King James Version, the New King James Version, the New Living Translation, the New American Standard, the Net English Translation, and the New International Version make the change at Genesis 2:20.

The American Standard Version and the Revised Standard Version at Genesis 3:17, while the New American Bible, New Jerusalem Bible, Revised English Bible, New Revised Standard Version do not make the change until Genesis 4:25. Which one of these is correct?

Another example of this can be found in the Book of Psalms. Psalm 84:6 reads as follows in the King James Version:

Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well (Psalm 84:6, KJV).

Here the word Hebrew word *baca* is understood as a proper name for the valley. Many other translations, such as the NIV, NKJV, NASB, and the NRSV UE, render the verse in a similar way.

However, the Hebrew word can also mean “a balsam tree.” Thus, the New Jerusalem Bible translates this verse:

As they pass through the Valley of the Balsam (Psalm 84:6, NJB).

There is more. This word can also mean to “weep.” The American Standard Version of 1901 and the New Living Translation understand it in this manner:

When they walk through the Valley of Weeping (Psalm 84:6 NLT).

These examples show the difficulty often encountered when confronted with a word that can be a proper name or translated as something else.

30. How Should Citations From The Old Testament Be Acknowledged?

There is the issue of how to acknowledge the quotation of the Old Testament by the New Testament writers. Should the quotations be put in bold type? Should they be placed in italics? Or should they even be acknowledged at all in the text? There is nothing in the Greek manuscripts that makes any type of acknowledgment that the Old Testament is being cited. Thus, should translations of the New Testament do what the original does not do?

Conclusion: Translation Is Not An Easy Job

We gave an extended answer to this question to make a point; translating the Scripture is not an easy task. Consequently, one should be careful before criticizing translations and translators on their work.

As we have clearly seen, decisions have to be made and in many instances there is no right or wrong decision. This being the case we should be gracious with the way we evaluate any translation. Each translator is painfully aware of the problems and of their limitations. We too should be aware of the problems they must face. While there are indeed times where Bible translations should be criticized, any criticism should be done with the full knowledge of the issues.

Summary To Question 7

What Are Some Of The Key Decisions That Have To Be Made When Translating The Bible?

Bible translation is not a science nor is it a simple process. There are a number of issues that need to be considered when the Bible is to be translated.

First, it must be decided who is going to do the translating. Next, it must be decided which books should be placed in the translation. Then a decision must be made about which Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic text should be used to translate from. Each of these decisions has to be made before any translation can begin.

Decisions have to be as to what to do with words which have an uncertain meaning. Should there be some type of marginal note explaining the various options? It should also be determined what type of translation will be made. Should it be a more literal word-for-word translation or should it be more thought for thought? In addition, the style of the translation must be determined. Should it be for a more literate audience or should it be more for the general public?

Punctuation is a problem since there was no punctuation in the originals. Other stylistic issues, such as how to acknowledge poetry and whether or not to break the text into paragraphs, needs to be determined. There is no right or wrong answer to these stylistic questions.

Many other issues have to be determined. Should the translator capitalize pronouns which refer to God? Should archaic pronouns such as “thy” or “thine” be retained in prayer to God? How should the divine name of the Lord be translated?

What about the variations in the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts where the readings are not the same? How should that be noted? Should long sentences be broken up into smaller ones as English likes to do? What system of weights and measures do we use? Should we retain the ancient system, which is not understood today, or should we substitute it with a modern system? If so, which modern system?

There is also the issue of italics. Should they be employed by the translators? If so, then what words should be italicized?

Male-oriented terms are also a problem for translators. Should the terms “men” or “mankind” be used when referring to both men and women? If not, what terms should be employed to designate a group of people which include women as well as men?

All of these questions, as well as many more, must be dealt with by Bible translators. Many of the issues do not have a right or wrong answer; it is a matter of preference. This being the case, we should be very careful in criticizing any translation or translator for the job which they have done.

While there are indeed times when criticism is valid, all too often translations are criticized out of a lack of knowledge of the issues at hand. We should not make that mistake.

Question 8

Why Have There Been So Many Translations Of The Bible?

Why does there seem to be new translations of the Bible coming out all the time? Are all of them really necessary? Doesn't this add to the confusion of the person who wants to read the Bible?

The truth is that all translations are done to meet some practical need. New translations of the Bible will always be necessary for the following reasons.

1. There Are Always Changes In Language

One of the reasons for the need of new translations of the Scripture is the changes that take place in all languages. Languages are not static; they are always in a state of flux. There are changes in vocabulary, changes in grammar, as well as changes in how words are pronounced. The English language is no exception. There are slow, ongoing changes of English that are constantly occurring. These changes cannot be prevented.

Consequently, new translations must be produced in order to let the people read God's in the language they are currently using. Therefore, as languages change, so will the need for translating the Scripture in up-to-date language. Indeed, because language is changing all the time there can be no final translation of the Bible in any language. New translations will always be necessary to bring the Bible in a meaningful way to each generation or readers.

For example, for modern readers, it is difficult to understand some parts of the King James Version because it was written four centuries ago. English has undergone many changes during that time.

Two hundred years before the King James Bible, Chaucer wrote the Canterbury Tales. To read Chaucer is much more difficult than to read the KJV. However, if one would go back some five hundred years before Chaucer to what is called "Old English" we could not read any of it in the original. Such is the nature of language. There are changes that happen naturally in language but there are also other changes which are not necessarily happening naturally.

One case in point is the change from male oriented language to a more neutral language. Changes are made that people are insensitive to the feelings of others if they continue to use male oriented terms such as man and mankind for both men and women. The traditional way is replaced by a more acceptable way in many translations in order to be sensitive to the modern reader. Whether or not this is a good idea, it is something which has been done.

2. Words Change In Meaning Through Time

With the passage of time, some words change in meaning. There are many English words that have a different meaning today from their meaning in the past. We will cite a few examples of words found in translations of the past that do not have the same meaning today. The King James Version has Jesus saying the following:

Suffer the little children to come unto me (Mark 10:14 KJV).

In the seventeenth century, the word "suffer" had the meaning of "allow" or "permit." Yet many modern-day readers would not be aware of this fact because the word suffer now has an altogether different meaning.

In another example of words changing their meaning through time, we read the following in the Book of James:

And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool (James 2:3 KJV).

Today “gay clothing” means something entirely different than it did in 1611!

3. Ambiguous Words And Phrases Need To Be Updated

There are a number of words and phrases in translations that need to be updated so that the reader will not misunderstand what is being said. The Revised Standard Version translates a phrase in the Psalms as follows:

I will accept no bull from your house (Psalm 50:9 RSV).

Although the RSV is a fairly recent translation, the way the verse is translated can cause the reader to misunderstand what is being meant.

Sometimes the translation renders the text in such a way that would be offensive to modern readers. For example, Darby's translation has Jacob saying the following:

And Jacob saith unto Simeon and unto Levi, 'Ye have troubled me, by causing me to stink among the inhabitants of the land' (Genesis 34:30 Darby).

Young's literal translation in 1 Samuel reads as follows:

And they rise early in the morning on the morrow, and lo, Dagon is fallen on its face to the earth, before the ark of Jehovah, and the head of Dagon, and the two palms of its hands are cut off at the threshold, only the fishy part hath been left to him (1 Samuel 5:4 Darby).

This translation needs updating on a couple of counts. We now know that Dagon was not the fish-god, as was once thought, but rather the grain-god. Therefore, the “fishy part” is entirely inappropriate. It was the trunk of his body that was left-not the fishy part.

In 2 Corinthians 11:25, the Revised Standard Version reads as follows:

Once I was stoned (2 Corinthians 11:25 RSV).

This phrase definitely has a different meaning today than what Paul meant!

These words and phrases, once considered appropriate, have a new meaning today. Therefore, the language needs to be updated.

4. There Are New Manuscript Discoveries

In times past, new manuscript discoveries called for a fresh translation of the Scriptures. When the King James Version was translated in 1611, only a few Greek manuscripts were available to use in translating the New Testament.

In 1881, there were about 1,500 Greek manuscripts that were known. Therefore, the Revised Version of 1881 took advantage of the newest evidence. Today there are about 5,000 Greek manuscripts that are available to reconstruct the text. Furthermore, translations made before 1948 did not have the advantage of the discoveries from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Therefore, these new discoveries call for the updating of the text of Scripture.

5. We Now Know The Meaning Of Some Terms

In the past, there have been a number of terms found in the Hebrew and Greek texts that had uncertain meaning. Fortunately, the meanings of many of these terms are now known. However, there are a number of examples where the translator guessed at the meaning and made an incorrect guess.

One example of this can be found in First Samuel. The King James reads as follows:

Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulthers, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads (1 Samuel 13:21 KJV).

The Hebrew word translated “file” is *pim*. It was thought that this referred to a file used by blacksmith to sharpen tools. However, it was discovered in the twentieth century that a *pim* was actually an ancient set of weights that were used in business transactions.

Now the translators realize that *pim* refers to the amount the blacksmith charged when he sharpened the tools—it was not a file he used to sharpen the tools. Therefore, modern translations will read something like the following:

The charge was two-thirds of a shekel for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and one-third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads (1 Samuel 13:21 NRSV UE).

From an ancient Greek papyrus, we learn of the custom of committing a boy to the care of a trusted slave. This slave brought the boy to school and watched over his conduct until he became an adult. This was the person that Paul refers in Galatians 3:24.

The KJV translates the word as “schoolmaster.” However, rather than being the teacher, this was actually the person who took the boy to the teacher. Thus, he was more like a guardian than a teacher or schoolmaster. It is only in recent times that this has been understood.

Many more examples can be given. Hence, there is always the need for updating Bible translations.

6. Some Ancient Customs Are Now More Understandable

Many biblical customs are now more understandable because of the findings of archaeology. In 1968, for example, while builders were excavating for apartment buildings in Jerusalem, they found the skeleton of a man who had been crucified. The iron nail was still in the heel bones, and the calf bones had been broken. We now know the position of the victim as he hung on the cross. This new knowledge can be reflected in the way certain words are translated which deal with the crucifixion of Jesus.

They All Give The Same Basic Same Account

It cannot be emphasized enough that *every* translation, except for a corrupt few, says virtually the same thing. This is because the text behind the translations has not appreciably changed. All one must do is compare the renderings of different verses or passages in different translations and one will readily see that the message is always the same. In sum, the great number of Bible translations should not cause anyone to lose confidence in God’s Word.

Summary To Question 8

Why Have There Been So Many Bible Translations?

There have been, and continue to be, numerous translations of the Bible. The main reason is that most people do not read biblical Hebrew or biblical Greek. Therefore, there is the need to translate the Scripture into a language the person can understand.

However, languages are always changing. Words change meaning and new words are added to the language. If the Bible is going to communicate to the modern reader, then these changes must be reflected in the latest translations.

Furthermore, many phrases that were used in past translations have now changed in meaning. Therefore, any new translation has to reflect these changes.

In addition, many advances have been made in the understanding of ancient words and customs. These need to be reflected in the latest translations.

The good news is that while translations of the Bible are constantly changing the message remains the same. Thus, the fact that new translations are coming out all of the time should not bother the Bible-believer.

Question 9

How Does A Person Know If A Bible Translation Is A Good One?

There are many good translations of the Bible. The ultimate test of a good translation is faithfulness to the original text. But what if a person does not know Greek or Hebrew? How can one know whether a translation has been faithful to the original? What should they do?

The following guidelines should be applied in a case like this.

1. One Should Compare The Various Translations

To begin with, the reader should compare translations. As this happens, it will immediately be recognized that most of them will be very much alike.

In other words, they all tell the same basic story in slightly different words. Those that differ radically from the majority should not be considered reliable.

2. Read The Preface Of The Translation

The preface of almost every translation of Scripture lists guidelines by which the translators set about their work. The reader should find out what these guidelines were.

Questions that should be answered include: “Why was the translation made? What specific things were they trying to accomplish?” What are the Hebrew and Greek texts in which the translation based upon? What is the theory of translation that is used? Is it a more word-for-word translation or a meaning-based?

All of these questions are usually answered in the introduction.

3. Find A Translation That Is Readable For You

Another thing the reader should look for is a translation that he or she understands. Does the translation convey the message in an understandable way? Each reader will have his or her own particular likes or dislikes concerning different translations. Some will prefer the more straightforward, literal renderings while still others will lean toward more meaning-based translations.

While this should not be the only criterion used in choosing a Bible, it should be a consideration. Each reader should ask himself the same question that Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch:

Do you understand what you are reading? (Acts 8:30 NIV).

Each of us must ask ourselves this question as we are reading God’s Word.

4. A Good Translation Survives The Test Of Time

Many new translations of the Bible attempt to reach particular groups of people by “using their own language.” Unfortunately, due to the changes in language, most of these translations are out of date by the time they are printed. This type of translation is not recommended. A good translation will stand the test of time. This does not mean that it will never go out of date.

All translations will eventually become dated. This is because languages are always changing, they never remain the same.

Summary To Question 9

How Does A Person Know If A Particular Bible Translation Is A Good One?

A good translation is one that is faithful to the original text of Scripture. It takes the message of the Bible and puts it in a readable and reliable manner. There are a number of ways to discover whether or not a translation is good.

First, translations should be compared with one another. A comparison will demonstrate they are all relating the same message.

Next, it also helps to read the preface of the translation. This gives an idea of what the translators are trying to accomplish. The preface usually provides important information about the goals of the particular translation.

However, a translation, no matter how accurate, must be readable. It is crucial that a person understand what they are reading.

Finally, a good translation is one that does not go out of date soon after it is published. While all translations will need revision from time to time, a good translation is one that is written in a readable way that will survive the test of time.

Question 10

What Is An Interlinear Bible?

Many people think that a faithful translation of the Bible means a word-for-word translation. If the verse in Hebrew contains ten words, then ten English words should be used to translate the verse.

If the Greek text contains eight words, then only eight English words are necessary to translate it. To be a faithful translation of the original text each Hebrew and Greek word should have a corresponding English word. Yet this is not the way translation works.

The idea of corresponding English word, or words, which matches with the original text of Scripture, is not found in translations, but rather in interlinear Bibles. We must appreciate the fact that an interlinear Bible is different from a translation.

This Is Not A Translation

An interlinear Bible is not a translation. It is a tool that helps identify Greek and Hebrew words with their English translation. For example, in an interlinear of Matthew 1:18, the English words under the Greek words would look something like this:

of moreover Jesus Christ the birth in this manner was after having been engaged the mother of him Mary to Joseph before to come together they she was found with a stomach having from spirit holy

This example makes a couple of things obvious.

First, it is not possible to translate Greek words with only one English word. Certain Greek words need a number of different English words to convey their meaning. In addition, some words, do not translate by themselves.

Second, it is not possible to keep the same word order in English as in the original. To do so would make no sense whatsoever. This example illustrates this fact.

While there are places in Scripture where the word order is similar to English, this verse is more the rule than the exception. It shows why translations cannot usually reproduce the word order of the original—it will not make sense in English.

The Value Of An Interlinear

An interlinear can be useful to find which particular Greek or Hebrew word that is used for the English translation. Beyond this, they are not really much help. In fact, they can be misleading to someone who does not understand the grammar of the original languages. The best thing a student can do is to learn the biblical languages. If this is not possible, then owning an interlinear will only be of limited use.

Summary To Question 10 What Is An Interlinear Bible?

An interlinear Bible is not really a translation. It lists the Hebrew or Greek word in one line and below the Hebrew or Greek word is the corresponding English word, or words, that translate the meaning of the original word. An interlinear will make two things absolutely clear.

First, it is not possible to have one English word correspond to one Hebrew or Greek word—it just will not work.

In addition, the order of the words in the original cannot be kept in the English translation. If one attempts to do this it will not result in good English. Neither will it convey the message of the biblical writer.

A translation needs to be able to use one or more English words to translate the corresponding Greek or Hebrew word.

Furthermore, the order of the words usually has to be changed in the English translation to make sense out of the passage. Therefore, the interlinear only has limited value.

Question 11

How Should A Person Choose A Bible Translation? Which Bible Translation Is The Best?

One of the most often-asked questions about Bible is, “Which translation is best?” Is there one translation above all the others that someone should buy? If so, which one is it? There are a number of points that need to be made in answer to this question.

1. There Is No Single Answer To This Question

There is no answer to this question. Indeed, the reaction of one Bible scholar to this question was, “what verse are you referring to?” In other words, it is not a matter of a single translation always having the best translation.

Actually, the question can be turned around. Which translation is best for whom? Is it for adults? Is it for children? Is the translation for literate people or illiterate people? How about for people who use English as a second language?

We can ask further questions. Is it the best for study or best for reading? What about the best for memorization?

Consequently, here is no single Bible translation that is best for all of these different interests. The answer depends upon who is asking the question and even then, there is no simple answer to the question.

2. Each Believer Should Own A Number Of Translations

For those who read English, we strongly urge each believer to own and read a number of English translations. These translations should be those who have slightly different philosophies of translation, though, at the end of the day, they all do the same thing.

For example, there should be a more formal equivalent translation—such as the English Standard Version (ESV) or the New American Standard Bible 2020 Edition.

Also, there should be at least two that are of the more meaning-based translations. These include such translations as the New Living Translation (NLT), or the translation “God’s Word,” be consulted.

However, it may be best to start with translations that are some between these theories, also known as mediating translations. This includes the New International Version (NIV), the New English Bible (NET Bible) and the Christian Standard Bible.

By comparing one or more of these from each group, the reader will gain a more clear understanding of the meaning of the text. Since no one translation is perfect, it is best to compare a number of these translations.

Having said this, again we emphasize that all translations are “meaning based” not literal. Therefore, ultimately, the so-called more formal, or literal translations, are sometimes more non-literal in their translating than the ones who admit that they are “meaning based.”

3. Translations That Attempt To Promote A Particular Viewpoint Should Be Avoided

There are some translations that should not be used. They include biased translations such as The New World Translation by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Jehovah’s Witnesses.

This translation, which is produced by a non-Christian cult, mistranslates a number of passages in order to promote their non-biblical doctrines. This type of translation should be avoided.

4. Be Careful Of One-Person Translations

There have been a number of translations that were done by one individual. They include translations from James Moffatt, Richard Weymouth, Edgar Goodspeed, J. B. Phillips, Kenneth Wuest, the Berkley New Testament, Kenneth Taylor's *The Living Bible* and Eugene Peterson's *The Message*.

While there can be benefit derived from reading these translations, they should always be used with translations that have been done by a number of individuals.

A translation made by one person is more likely to reveal the individual bias of the translator. Indeed, an evaluation of these works will find this to be the case in each one of them. Therefore, it is wise to use works such as these as a secondary source for Bible reading and study.

5. Translations That Are Aimed A Certain Group Should Be Read With Caution

There have been a number of translations that have been made that attempt to reach a certain segment of society. Therefore, by definition, these would only reach a limited group of people.

For example, in the 1960's there was an attempt to reach "street people" with the message of Jesus. The New Testament was translated into the language they were speaking at that time. The title of the work was "God Is For Real Man." The language used in the translation was aimed directly at a subgroup of society. Reading the translation today shows how quickly this type of language becomes out of date!

Another translation that had a very limited appeal was known as the *Cotton Patch Version*. It was aimed at a certain group of people who lived in a small geographic area in the southern part of the United States. In this translation, the names of biblical places were changed to local references and the names of some of the biblical characters were changed to more understandable terms.

The city of Jerusalem is called Atlanta. Simon Peter's name is also changed. Peter means rock. Bar Jonah means "son of John." Therefore in this translation Simon Peter is called "Rocky Johnson."

The letter to the Romans is the letter to Washington. While this translation certainly gives a new perspective on the message of the New Testament, it is limited by its goal.

6. Realize That Translators Have To Make Difficult Choices

When a translator makes a choice in a passage that has difficult or ambiguous terms in the original, he has to make a choice as to how to best translate these terms. One philosophy of translation attempts to clear up difficult words and passages by simplifying the language.

Others keep the difficult words in an attempt to properly render the original. Each of these positions has its strengths and weaknesses. There will be both gains and losses with whatever decision is made. This is a fact that everyone has to understand.

7. Most Translators Are Not Entirely Satisfied With Their Work

Most translators are not entirely satisfied with their work. Indeed, they realize there is room for improvement. This is why many of them want to have feedback from those who have read and studied their translation. Since

they want to make the translation the best that it can possibly be, they will, at times, revise the previous translation.

8. Realize That Those Who Critique Translations Have Their Own Biases

Most translations state their goals in the preface. They attempt to the best of their ability to meet these goals. It must be appreciated that some people who criticize certain translations may believe that these translations should have different goals.

If the critic rejects the translator's goals, then obviously the translation will be evaluated in a negative light. This must be understood by all who read critiques of translations.

9. We Need To Know The Credentials Of Those Evaluating Bible Translations

This point cannot be emphasized enough! We need to know the credentials, as well as the bias, of the person critiquing the translation. Indeed, the *only* people who are qualified to critique a Bible translation are those who are familiar with the biblical languages.

Those who have had no training in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek have no business criticizing a Bible translation! Sadly, too many people, with no firsthand understanding whatsoever of the biblical languages, pontificate about the merits or demerits of certain translations. This should never be done and the opinions of those who do such things should be ignored since they have no credibility due to their lack of qualifications.

Bible Rage When A New Translation Is Made

Along this line, we must not have a similar reaction that many people have had in the past when a new Bible translation is printed. True, there have been, and there always will be, translations made by those who are unbelievers in the God of the Bible. Criticisms of these screwball translations are justified. Fortunately, these eccentric translations have never been widely received by the public and are soon forgotten.

Negative Reactions To Translations By Bible Believers

However, there is another kind of reaction that is often much worse, the response of some Christians to new translations made by Bible believers. Sadly, when any new Bible translation is made, there always seems to be some Christians who feel it their duty to oppose, in the strongest of terms, these new works.

Read The Bible!

This sums up some of the things to look for in choosing a translation. The key is to find what works for you. This can only be discovered by a continuous reading of the Bible. Read the Bible!

Summary To Question 11

How Should A Person Choose A Bible Translation? Which Bible Translation Is The Best?

It is not possible to answer the common question, "Which Bible translation is the best?" There is no one single translation that is best for everyone. Consequently, each person should use at least three translations to understand what the Scripture is saying.

We suggest that you should have a mediating translation such as the NIV, the NET Bible, or the Christian Standard Bible. In addition, a more idiomatic translation should also be used, such as the NLT. Add to this a modified literal translation such as the ESV or the NASB 2020. However, at the end of the day, they all do basically the same thing in their translation, namely, bringing the meaning across from one language to another.

In addition, certain translations should be avoided. This includes the biased and unscholarly New World Translation by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

Care should also be taken with one-person translations. The personal biases of the individual usually come through in these works. Furthermore, one should also be careful of translations that are specifically directed at certain segments of society. These usually become out of date by the time they are published.

It is evident that most Bible translators are not satisfied with the final result of their work. Improvements can always be made and they are the first to recognize this. Translation is a difficult business and those who do the translating should not be criticized too harshly unless they have made obvious errors in their handling of the Word of God. Consequently, it is good to read reviews of translations by other experts in the field. This can be helpful in evaluating translations. Yet it must be kept in mind that reviewers also have biases.

Furthermore, there are many people who believe that they can critique an English translation though they have no knowledge whatsoever of the biblical languages. Their evaluations should be completely ignored for they have no credibility to do such a thing.

It is best to read as many translations as possible to discover which ones work best for each individual reader. The key is to read the Bible and keep reading the Bible!

Question 12

Are Translations Really The Word Of God?

The Old Testament was mainly written in the Hebrew language with parts in Aramaic. The New Testament was originally written in the Greek. Must a person study the Scriptures in their original languages to really understand them or can English translations accurately bring across the meaning of the Old and New Testament Scriptures?

To put the question another way, “Should every Christian learn to read Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek to understand the Word of God or are translations sufficient to understand God’s message to humanity?” What is the answer to this question?

Translations Are Indeed The Word Of God

It cannot be stated too strongly that faithful translations of Scripture are the Word of God. Indeed, we must recognize the truth in what the translators of the King James Version declared in their preface. It said:

We do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest [worst] translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession, ... containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God. As the King’s speech, which he uttereth in Parliament, being translated into French, Dutch, Italian and Latin, is still the King’s speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace, nor peradventure so fitly for phrase, nor so expressly for sense, everywhere.... No cause therefore why the word translated should be denied to be the word, or forbidden to be current, notwithstanding that some imperfections and blemishes may be noted in the setting forth of it.

This statement is very well put. Translations are indeed the Word of God.

Jesus Christ Provides The Answer To This Question

We also find that Jesus Christ, as well as His apostles, provides the answer to this question. About eighty percent of the Old Testament quotations found in the New Testament are from the Greek Septuagint Old Testament translation.

The Septuagint is a not only a translation, it is not a word-to-word translation from the Hebrew text. The quotations from the Septuagint were treated as Scripture and were accepted as God’s authoritative Word. When Jesus quoted this translation, He made it clear that He was quoting the Word of God. Modern translations of Scripture can be placed in the same category.

Therefore, Bible translations are indeed the Word of God. We should not feel somehow cheated if we cannot read the Scripture in the original. The message of the Lord to the human race still comes across loud and clear.

Summary To Question 12 Are Bible Translations Really The Word Of God?

Can we trust the various translations as being the Word of God? Or, do we need to learn the biblical languages in order to correctly understand the message of Scripture? This is an important question and the answer is abundantly clear. These translations are God’s true Word. They should be read, compared, studied and trusted. People must be able to understand Scripture, and to do so they must have it in their own language. Translations accomplish this.

Jesus gave us the answer to this issue by the way in which He cited the Old Testament. When citing the Old Testament, Jesus usually cited the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament.

Although He was only citing a translation, He considered it the Word of God. In fact, He specifically called what He cited as “God’s Word.” Since Jesus is the last word on every subject, then His statements about the Old Testament settles the issue.

Confidently, we can read modern translations and assume we are reading God’s Word to the human race.

Part 2

Bible Translations And The Deity Of Jesus Christ How Various Translations Render Verses That May Teach That Jesus Christ Is God

Christians believe that Jesus Christ was more than a mere man – He is the eternal God who became a human being. In a number of places in the New Testament this is taught explicitly or implicitly. This section looks at a number of passages where some translations have understood it to teach that Jesus Christ is God.

To better understand how a certain passage should be translated, it is important to observe how various translators have rendered it throughout history.

We will list how all the major translations have rendered each passage. We will start by looking at the earliest – the translations of John Wycliffe and William Tyndale to the very latest.

Question 13

What Are The Main Issues Concerning English Bible Translations And The Deity Of Jesus Christ?

One of the main issues to be considered in evaluating any translation of Scripture is how it renders passages that state that Jesus Christ is God. The fact that Jesus Christ is the eternal God who became a human being is one of the central beliefs of the Christian faith.

There are a number of passages in Scripture that make this truth clear. There is some question as to whether other passages are attempting to emphasize the Deity of Christ.

In all, there are fifteen passages that certain English translations have rendered in such a way as to make it clear that Jesus Christ is the one, true, God.

1. It Is Important To Understand The Issues Involved

Each of these verses contains important issues with respect to their translation. It will be helpful to appreciate the various issues involved. This will help us better evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of various translations.

2. It Is Important To Note How The Various Translations Render These Passages

Once the issues are understood, it can then be noted how the various English translation dealt with these issues.

3. It Is Helpful To See The Differences Between Translations

It will also be helpful to notice how translations differ. In certain passages almost all the English translations will sound much the same. However, in other passages there will be some differences.

4. Not All Of These Passages Are Clear References To The Deity Of Christ

It must be appreciated that not all of these passages necessarily teach the Deity of Jesus Christ. In some of the passages, such as John 1:18, Acts 20:28, and 1 Timothy 3:16 there is uncertainty about how the text originally read. In Romans 9:5, the issue is not how the text read but how the text should be translated.

This sums up our brief overview of these issues that we are about to consider.

Summary To Question 13:

What Are The Main Issues Concerning English Bible Translation And The Deity Of Jesus Christ?

The New Testament makes it clear that Jesus Christ is God Almighty. There are a number of passages in the New Testament that teach that Jesus Christ is God.

Some passages are more clearly state this truth than others. It is important that we observe how the different English translations have rendered these passages.

Consequently, we will look at these various passages and then consider how English translations render them.

Question 14

How Do Various Translations Render John 1:1?

John 1:1 has been a key verse in establishing the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God. As will be seen, most English translations make it clear.

The Issues Involved

In John 1:1 the big issue revolves around how the Greek word *theos* should be translated in the last part of the verse. There are three different ways in which it has been understood.

Option 1: The Word Was God

Most translations render the last clause “the Word was God.”

Option 2: The Word Was a god

This translation denies that Jesus Christ is equal in nature to God the Father. It assumes that He is a created being.

Option 3: The Word Was Divine

This translation stresses the quality of Jesus’ nature—the fact that He was divine. However, the word “divine” is ambiguous in modern day English. It does not necessarily refer to the one, true God. By calling Jesus divine could give the impression that He is something less than the true God.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered John 1:1

The first English translation was made by John Wycliffe. He rendered John 1:1 as follows.

In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at God, and God was the word. **Wycliffe**

The translation of William Tyndale set the stage for most English translations.

In the beginnyng was the worde and the worde was with God: and the worde was God. **Tyndale**

Matthew Coverdale translated John 1:1 almost word-for-word as Tyndale.

In the begynnyng was the worde, and the worde was with God, and God was ye worde. **The Coverdale Bible**

The Geneva Bible translated this verse exactly the same as Tyndale

In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God. **Geneva Bible**

Many translations have followed the exacting wording of Tyndale with modern spelling.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The following translations have followed Tyndale word-for-word in John 1:1.

King James Version (The Authorized Version)

John Wesley's New Testament

Revised Version (1881,1885)

American Standard Version (1901)

Weymouth

New King James Version

New American Standard Bible

Revised Standard Version

New Revised Standard Version

New International Version

English Standard Version

Douay/Rheims (DRB)

New American Bible

Darby (DHB)

Young's Literal Translation (YLT)

Revised Webster Bible (RWB)

Twenty First Century King James KJ21

Christian Standard Bible

King James II (LIT Version)

New Berkeley Version (NBV)

An American Translation (Beck)

Complete Jewish Bible (CJV)

Variations Of This Translation

A number of translations have slight variations from the above reading. They are as follows.

The Jerusalem Bible omits the word "and" before the second occurrence of "the Word."

In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. **Jerusalem Bible**

The revision of the Jerusalem Bible, the New Jerusalem Bible, has the same translation.

The CEV adds "the one who is called" before the first occurrence of "the Word." It omits "the Word" in the last part of the sentence and adds "truly" before God.

In the beginning was the one who is called the Word. The Word was with God and was truly God. **The Contemporary English Version**

The New Living Translation uses "already existed" instead of "was" in the first clause. It also translates the last clause as "he was God" instead of "the Word was God."

In the beginning the Word already existed. He was with God, and he was God. **The New Living Translation**

The ISV says "the Word existed" instead of "was the Word" in the first part of the verse.

In the beginning, the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. **The International Standard Version**

The Bible in Basic English uses the phrase, “from the first,” instead of “in the beginning.” It also emphasizes the Word was “in relation with God.”

From the first he was the Word, and the Word was in relation with God and was God. **The Bible In Basic English**

The Amplified Bible explains “in the beginning” as “before all time.” It also explains that Christ was the Word. Finally it adds “Himself” after “the Word was God.”

IN THE beginning [before all time] was the Word (Christ), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. **The Amplified Bible**

Williams used “existed” instead of “was” in the first clause. He also added “face to face” before “with God.” There is also an attempt to make the last part of the verse emphatic by adding the word “yea” at the beginning of the clause, and the word, “Himself” at the end of the clause.

In the beginning the Word existed, and the Word was face to face with God; yea, the Word was God Himself. **The New Testament In The Language Of The People – Williams**

The Bible in World English is a paraphrase that attempts to explain the meaning of John 1:1.

The Word already was, way back before anything began to be. The Word and God were together. The Word was God. **The Bible In World English**

Therefore it says “way back before anything began to be” for the phrase, “in the beginning.” It also says “The Word and God were together” instead of “the Word was with God.”

The Twentieth Century New Testament reads similar to other translations.

At the Beginning the Word already was: The Word was with God; And the Word was God. **The Twentieth Century New Testament**

The Concordant Version does not capitalize “word.”

In the beginning was the word, and the word was toward God, and God was the word. **The Concordant Version**

It also translates the Greek preposition *pros* as “toward God” instead of “with God.”

The translation called God’s Word reads “already existed” instead of “was.”

In the beginning the Word already existed, The Word was with God, and the Word was God. **God’s Word**

The Good News Bible reads the same as God’s Word.

In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **The Good News Translation**

The Living Bible, which is a paraphrase, explains what John 1:1 means. It emphasizes that Christ existed before anything else and that He has eternally existed as God.

Before anything else existed, there was Christ, with God. He has always been alive and is himself God. **The Living Bible**

Before the world began, the Word was there. The Word was there with God. The Word was God. **Holy Bible - Easy To Read**

Kenneth Wuest has a unique reading for this verse.

In the beginning the Word was existing. And the Word was in fellowship with God the Father. And the Word was as to His essence absolute deity. **Wuest**

Eugene Peterson's "The Message" has an incomprehensible paraphrase of this verse.

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. **The Message**

The so-called literal Rotherham translation uses the word "originally" instead of "in the beginning."

Originally, was, the Word, and, the Word, was, with God; and, the Word, was, God. **The Emphasized Bible – Rotherham (EBR)**

J.B. Phillips uses "expression," rather than "Word" to translate the Greek term *logos*

At the beginning God expressed himself. That personal expression, that word, was with God, and was God, and he existed with God from the beginning. **Phillips Translation (TJBP)**

Moffatt is the only major translator who did not translate the Greek word *logos*. He merely transliterated it. Other, less-well known translations have also done this. In addition, he is one of the few who used "divine" instead of "God" to describe the Word or Logos.

The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine. **Moffatt**

Goodspeed also used the word "divine" to describe the "Word."

In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was divine. **Goodspeed**

The **NET** Bible emphasizes the fact that the Word was fully God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. **New English Translation**

The New English Bible has a unique rendering. It emphasizes the fact that the Word, Jesus, was of the same nature or quality as God.

When all things began, the Word already was. The Word dwelt with God, and what God was the Word was **New English Bible**

The Revised English Bible changes the wording in the New English Bible.

In the beginning the Word already was. The Word was in God's presence, and what God was, the Word was. **The Revised English Bible**

George Lamsa's translation from the Aramaic emphasizes the Deity of Christ.

The Word was in the beginning, and that very Word was with God, and God was the Word. **Lamsa**

At the beginning of time the Word already was; and God had the Word abiding with him, and the Word was God. **Knox**

When the world began, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the nature of the Word was the same as the nature of God. **Barclay**

In the beginning was the LOGOS, and the LOGOS was with GOD, and the LOGOS was God. **Emphatic Diaglott (EDW)**

The New World Translation is unique in the fact that it says the word was "a god."

In [the] beginning was the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. **New World Translation**

In the beginning was the Word. *And the Word was with God.* So the Word was divine. **Authentic New Testament (Schonfield)**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was face to face with God, and the Word was God. **Centenary Translation Of The New Testament**

Observations On English Translations Of John 1:1

With the exception of Moffatt, Goodspeed, the Authentic New Testament, and the New World Translation, all other translations of John 1:1 make it clear that the Word was God.

The New English Translation, the New English Bible, and the Revised English Bible emphasize the fact that the Word, Jesus, had the same nature or quality as God.

In sum, John 1:1 is a clear statement that the Word, Jesus Christ, is God. Almost all English translations bring this out. While there are some exceptions to this, it is obvious that the majority of Greek scholars, whether Bible-believing or not, see this passage as a testimony to the deity of Christ.

Question 15

What Are The Various Ways In Which John 1:18 Is Translated?

John 1:18 poses some interesting problems. They can be simply summarized as follows.

1. What Did The Text Originally Say?

First, there is the question as to what the text originally said. There are two readings that are found in the existing manuscripts. One reading is the word for “son” while the other reading is the word for “God.”

In the original Greek, there would only be a difference of one letter between these two possible readings. It is difficult to know which was original. As we will see, translations are divided as to what the text originally read.

2. What Does The Greek Word *Monogenes* Mean?

There is also the problem of the correct understanding of the Greek term *monogenes*. Does it mean “only begotten” or does it mean “unique, one of a kind?” If it means “only begotten” then, in what sense is Jesus “only begotten?”

3. Are There Two Or Three Descriptions Of Jesus?

Should there be two or three descriptions of Jesus? Most translations see two. He is the “only Son” or the “only God” who is “in the bosom of the father” or “next to the Father.”

However, the New English Translation sees three descriptions. Jesus is “The only one,” “himself God,” and “who is in the presence of the Father.”

4. How Should The Phrase “In The Bosom Of The Father” Be Translated?

There is also the matter of understanding the Greek phrase, “in the bosom of the Father.” While this is a literal reading of the text, it is not very clear as to its meaning. The idea is that Jesus is close to the Father. This has been brought out in various ways by English translations.

We will divide the translations into those which have used “Son” and those which have used “God.”

Translations That Use Son Rather Than God In John 1:18

Wycliffe’s translation became the basis for many later English translations.

No man sai euer God, no but the `oon bigetun sone, that is in the bosum of the fadir, he hath teld out.
Wycliffe

Tyndale’s translation closely followed that of Wycliffe.

No man hath sene God at any tyme. The only begotte sonne which is in ye bosome of ye father he hath declared him. **Tyndale**

The **Geneva** Bible followed Tyndale’s translation almost “word for word.”

No man hath seen God at any time: that only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. **Geneva**

The KJV followed the Geneva translation almost “word for word.”

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. **King James Version**

Wesley’s translation is almost word for word with Tyndale, Geneva, and the KJV.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. **Wesley**

Douay is the same as Wesley’s translations the except that “bosom” is capitalized.

No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son who is in the Bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. **Douay/Rheims**

Darby is similar to previous translations except that he uses “one” for “man.” He also puts quotation marks around “he” and italicizes “him.”

No one has seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, *he* hath declared *him*. **Darby**

Young’s literal translation is not very good English. It is an example why a literal translation will not always bring across the meaning of the verse.

God no one hath ever seen; the only begotten Son, who is on the bosom of the Father -- he did declare. **Young’s Literal Translation**

The RWB is the same as Wesley’s translation except that “him” is italicized.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him* **Revised Webster Bible**

The ASV is the same as the **Revised Webster Bible**

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*. **American Standard Version 1901**

Weymouth’s translation is a bit different from previous ones. He uses “human” instead of “man.” He also uses “only” instead of “begotten.” He also uses “made Him known” instead of declared. Note that he capitalized the pronouns referring to God and Jesus.

No human has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the Father’s bosom-He has made Him known. **Weymouth**

Moffatt uses “nobody” instead of “no one” or “no man.” He adds the phrase “the divine One” which is not in the Greek text. Note that “divine” is not capitalized.

Nobody has ever seen God, but God has been unfolded by the divine One, the only Son, who lies upon the Father’s breast. **Moffatt**

The NKJV updates the language of the KJV. It also capitalizes the pronouns referring to God and Jesus.

No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. **New King James Version**

The RSV uses “only Son” to translate the Greek text.

No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known
Revised Standard Version

The NJB has “close to the Father’s heart.”

No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known
The New Jerusalem Bible

Instead of “bosom of the Father” the **BBE** reads, “breast of the Father.” It also reads “he has made clear what God is.”

No man has seen God at any time; the only Son, who is on the breast of the Father, he has made clear what God is **Bible In Basic English**

The Bible in World English paraphrases this verse in a clear way.

No one has ever seen God. But his only Son is very near to his Father’s heart. He has told us plainly about God. **The Bible In World English**

The KJ21 is exactly the same as the KJV except that it capitalizes the pronouns for God and Jesus.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him. **21st Century King James**

God’s Word uses “only Son.”

No one has ever seen God; God’s only Son, who is closest to the Father’s heart, has made him known.
God’s Word

No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—he has revealed him **Christian Standard Bible**

The GNT makes it clear that the Son is God.

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is the same as God and is at the Father’s side, he has made him known. **Good News Translation**

No man has ever seen God. But the only Son (Jesus) is God. He is very close to the Father (God). And the Son has shown us what God is like. **Holy Bible Easy To Read**

No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known. **The New International Version**

Translations That Use God Rather Than Son

There are a number of translations that adopt the reading “God” instead of “Son.”

The NRSV UE is a very powerful translation of this verse. It makes it very clear the Jesus, the Son, is God.

No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known. **New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition**

The NET is unique in that it sees three descriptions of Jesus. He is the “only one,” He is “himself God, and He is in “the presence of the Father.”

No one has ever seen God. The only one, himself God, who is in the presence of the Father, has made God known **The New English Translation**

The ESV calls Jesus “the only God.”

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known. **The English Standard Version**

The CEV makes it very clear that the Son is God by adding “truly.”

No one has ever seen God. The only Son, who is truly God and is closest to the Father, has shown us what God is like **The Contemporary English Version**

The NLT is very clear that the Son is God.

No one has ever seen God. But his only Son, who is himself God, is near to the Father’s heart; he has told us about him **The New Living Translation**

The ISV understands the Greek word *monogenes* to mean “unique.” The phrase “unique God” seems a bit difficult to understand.

No one has ever seen God. The unique God, who is close to the Father’s side, has revealed him. **The International Standard Version**

The Amplified Bible gives both possible renderings “Son” and “God.”

No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, or the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known]. **Amplified**

Phillips uses the adjective “divine” to describe the Son.

It is true that no one has ever seen God at any time. Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known. **Phillips**

Williams’ translation leaves no doubt that the son is Deity. Interestingly, “son” is not capitalized.

No one has ever seen God; the only son, Deity Himself, who lies upon His Father’s breast, has made him known. **Williams**

The NASB calls Jesus the ‘only begotten God.’ This phrase would not be very clear to modern readers.

No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. **New American Standard Bible**

The NASB 2020 Editions has changed their translation.

No one has seen God at any time; God the only Son, who is in the arms of the Father, He has explained Him. **New American Standard Bible 2020**

The Concordant version also uses “only-begotten God.” This is an extremely literal translation.

God no one has ever seen. The only-begotten God, Who is in the bosom of the Father, He unfolds Him. **Concordant Version**

Rotherham has a couple of odd renderings. He calls Jesus, “An Only Begotten God.” In addition, Jesus is said to exist “within” the bosom of the Father.

No one, hath seen, God, at any time: An Only Begotten God, The One existing within the bosom of the Father, He, hath interpreted him. **Rotherham**

No one has ever seen God; but God’s only Son, he who is nearest to the Father’s heart, he has made him known **New English Bible**

No man has ever seen God; but the firstborn of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him. **Lamsa**

King James II is similar to the KJV.

No one has seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has revealed Him **King James II**

No one has actually seen God, but, of course, his only Son has, for he is the companion of the Father and has told us all about him. **The Living Bible**

No one has ever seen God, not so much as a glimpse. This one-of-a-kind God-Expression, who exists at the very heart of the Father, has made him plain as day **The Message**

Observations On English Translations Of John 1:18

We find a number of different ways in which John 1:18 is translated.

One of the reasons is the Greek text. Does it read “God” or “Son. As we have noted, translations are divided on this issue.

There is also the issue as to how to translate the Greek word *monogenese*. Is it only begotten, unique?

Translations that use the word “God” in describing Jesus make it clear that He is indeed God the Son; the One who has the same nature as God the Father.

Question 16

How Have English Translations Rendered John 5:18?

In the fifth chapter of the gospel of John there is the report of a dialogue between Jesus and the religious leaders:

So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” (John 5:16,17 NIV)

Two things caused the religious leaders to be upset. First, Jesus was continuing to not observe the Sabbath. Second, Christ made Himself equal with God the Father.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered John 5:18

English translations have rendered John 5:18 in the following way.

Wycliffe’s translation reads as follows.

Therfor the Jewis souyten more to sle hym, for not oneli he brak the sabat, but he seide that God was his fadir, and made hym euene to God. **Wycliffe**

Tyndale’s translation was followed by the English versions that came after him.

Therefore the Iewes sought the moare to kill him not only because he had broken the Saboth: but sayde also that God was his father and made him selfe equall with God. **Tyndale**

The Geneva follows Tyndale.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him: not only because he had broken the Sabbath: but said also that God was his Father, and made himself equal with God. **Geneva**

The KJV follows Tyndale and Geneva.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. **King James Version**

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God. **Wesley**

For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God **American Standard Version 1901**
Weymouth makes a few changes to previous translations.

The Jews, therefore, were all the more eager to put Him to death, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also spoke of God in a special sense, thus putting Himself on an equal level with God **Weymouth**

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because not only had he broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God **Moffatt**

Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. **New King James Version**

For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. **New American Standard Bible**

This was why the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but also called God his Father, making himself equal with God **Revised Standard Version**

For this reason the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because he was not only breaking the sabbath, but was also calling God his own Father, thereby making himself equal to God. **New Revised Standard Version**

The **NET** Bible emphasizes that it was the Jewish authorities, and not the Jewish nation, that was trying to kill Jesus.

For this reason the Jewish authorities were trying even harder to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was also calling God his own Father, thus making himself equal with God **New English Translation**

This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. **English Standard Version**

The **NLT** has Jesus disobeying the Sabbath rules. That expression should perhaps be qualified to something like “human-made, Sabbath rules.” Otherwise it may give people the impression that Jesus did something wrong.

So the Jewish leaders tried all the more to kill him. In addition to disobeying the Sabbath rules, he had spoken of God as his Father, thereby making himself equal with God. **New Living Translation**

Hereupon therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he did not only break the sabbath but also said God was his Father, making himself equal to God. **Douay/Rheims**

But that only made the Jews even more intent on killing him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he spoke of God as his own Father and so made himself God's equal **New Jerusalem Bible**

Now the leaders wanted to kill Jesus for two reasons. First, he had broken the law of the Sabbath. But even worse, he had said that God was his Father, which made him equal with God. **Contemporary English Version**

So the Jews were trying all the harder to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath but was also calling God his own Father, thus making himself equal to God **International Standard Version**

This was why the leaders of the Jews tried much more to kill Jesus. He had broken the law of the Sabbath day. And also he called God his Father. In that way, he was making himself equal with God. **The Bible In World English**

This made the Jews more determined than ever to kill Him [to do away with Him]; because He not only was breaking (weakening, violating) the Sabbath, but He actually was speaking of God as being [in a special sense] His own Father, making Himself equal [putting Himself on a level] with God. **Amplified Bible**

Williams brings out the fact the Jesus was persisting in breaking the Sabbath.

It was on account of this that the Jews tried all the harder to put Him to death, because He not only persisted in breaking the sabbath, but also kept on saying that God was His Father, and so was making Himself equal to God. **Williams**

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. **Revised Webster Bible**

For this therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he had not only violated the sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God **Darby**

For this cause the Jews had an even greater desire to put Jesus to death, because not only did he not keep the Sabbath but he said God was his Father, so making himself equal with God **Bible In Basic English**

because of this, then, were the Jews seeking the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the sabbath, but he also called God his own Father, making himself equal to God. **Young's Literal Translation**

This remark made the Jews all the more determined to kill him, because not only did he break the Sabbath but he referred to God as his own Father, so putting himself on equal terms with God. **Phillips**

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. **21st Century King James**

Therefore, then, the Jews sought the more to kill Him, for He not only annulled the sabbath, but said His own Father also is God, making Himself equal to God. **Concordant**

His reply made the Jews more intent on killing him, Not only did he break the laws about the day of worship, but also he made himself equal to God when he said repeatedly that God was his Father. **God's Word**

This is why the Jews began trying all the more to kill him: Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God. **Christian Standard Bible**

This saying made the Jewish authorities all the more determined to kill him; not only had he broken the Sabbath law, but he had said that God was his own Father and in this way had made himself equal with God. **Good News Translation**

On this account, therefore, the rather, were the Jews seeking to slay him, - because, not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but was calling God, his own Father, making, himself, equal, with, God. **Rotherham**

For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. **New International Version**

This made the Jews still more determined to kill him, because he was not only breaking the Sabbath, but, by calling God his own Father, he claimed equality with God. **New English Bible**

Lamsa has weakening the Sabbath.

And for this the Jews wanted the more to kill him, not only because he was weakening the Sabbath, but also because he said concerning God that he was his Father, and was making himself equal with God.
Lamsa

The Living Bible uses the term “Jewish leaders”

Then the Jewish leaders were all the more eager to kill him because in addition to disobeying their Sabbath laws, he had spoken of God as his Father, thereby making himself equal with God. **The Living Bible**

The Message has the reading “expose him.” This could be understood a number of different ways.

That really set them off. The Jews were now not only out to expose him; they were out to kill him. Not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was calling God his own Father, putting himself on a level with God. **The Message**

This made these Jews try harder to kill him. {The Jews said}, “First this man (Jesus) was breaking the law about the Sabbath day. Then he said that God is his Father! He is making himself equal with God!” **Easy To Read**

Observations On English Translations Of John 5:18

We find that the English Versions make it clear in their translations that Jesus was making Himself equal with God the Father. This is a very powerful verse that expresses the truth that Jesus claimed to be of an equal nature with God. This is how the Jews understood His claims.

Question 17

Did Thomas Call Jesus God In John 20:28?

When Jesus first appeared to His disciples in the upper room, Thomas was not present. When being told of Jesus appearance Thomas reacted in this manner:

So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it” (John 20:25 NIV).

Scripture says that Jesus later appeared with Thomas present:

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe" (John 20:26-27 NIV).

It is at this point that we have the reply of Thomas to Jesus.

The Issues Surround The Reply Of Thomas

There are a couple of issues that are involved in the translation of John 20:28.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered John 20:28

English translations have rendered John 20:28 as follows.

In the first English translation of the Bible, Wycliffe rendered the verse in this manner:

Thomas answeride, and seide to him, My Lord and my God. **Wycliffe**

Tyndale translated the verse the same as Wycliffe.

Thomas answered and sayde vnto him: my Lorde and my God. **Tyndale**

The following versions are basically word-for-word the same as Wycliffe and Tyndale.

ASV

Moffatt

NASB

Douay/Rheims

Rotherham

A number of other English versions translated the verse exactly the same except for the addition of “and” at the beginning of the sentence.

KJV

Wesley

Concordant Version YLT

RWB

NKJV
KJ21

They read as follows.

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

The following translations read.

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"

RSV
NRSV UE
GNT
ESV
Williams

Most other translations are variations on these translations. They read as follows.

Then Thomas answered, and said unto him, Thou art my Lord, and my God **Geneva**

Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" **NIV**

Thomas replied to him, "My Lord and my God!" **NET**

'My Lord and my God!' replied Thomas. **Weymouth**

"My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed. **NLT**

Thomas answered him, saying "My Lord and my God!" **ISV**

Thomas answered Him, My Lord and my God! **Amplified**

And Thomas said in answer, My Lord and my God! (**Darby**)

And Thomas said in answer, My Lord and my God! (**BBE**)

"My Lord and my God!" cried Thomas. **Phillips**

Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!' **BWE**

Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (**HBETR**)

Thomas responded to Jesus, My Lord and my God! **God's Word (GW)**

Thomas responded to Him, "My Lord and my God!" **HCSB**

My Lord, and my God! Thomas said. **TLB**

Thomas said, 'My Lord, and my God!' **NEB**

All of these translations have Thomas calling Jesus his “Lord” and his “God.”

Two Slightly Different Translations To Note

While most translations read basically the same in this verse, there are a couple of ones that should be noted – the Contemporary English Version and The Message.

The CEV translates the verse in such a way that Thomas is clearly confessing that Jesus is Lord and God.

Thomas replied, “You are my Lord and my God!” **The Contemporary English Version**

The words “you are” are not in the Greek text. Yet the text could be understood as saying this.

The Message is a little ambiguous here. It makes the reply of Thomas into two sentences,

Thomas said, “My Master! My God!” **The Message**

The second sentence could be understood as some type of excited exclamation such as people says today, “Oh, my God!”

Therefore, this rendering is not as clear as is found in other English translations.

Observations On English Translations Of John 20:28

It is interesting to note that English translations uniformly translate the reply of Thomas as, “My Lord and my God.” In sum, there is no doubt that Thomas expressed his belief in the deity of the Lord Jesus.

Question 18

How Has Acts 20:28 Been Translated?

In the Book of Acts we have Paul making his farewell statement to the elders at the church of Ephesus.

Issues Involved In Acts 20:28

We find that there are a number of issues involved in the translation of this verse.

1. Does The Text Say, “Church Of God” Or “Church Of The Lord”

There is a variant reading. Some manuscripts read “God” while a few read “Lord.”

2. Does The Text Read “With His Own Blood” Or “Blood Of His Own Son”

Another question revolves around how to translate the Greek phrase.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Acts 20:28

The following are some of the ways in which English translations have rendered Acts 20:28.

Wycliffe translated the passage in this manner.

Take ye tente to you, and to al the flocke, in which the Hooli Goost hath set you bischops, to reule the chirche of God, which he purchaside with his blood. **Wycliffe**

Tyndale used the word “congregation” instead of church.

Take hede therfore vnto youre selves and to all the flocke wherof the holy goost hath made you oversears to rule the congregacion of God which he hath purchased with his blood. **Tyndale**

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, whereof the holy Ghost hath made you Overseers to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with that his own blood. **Geneva**

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

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

Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood. **American Standard Version**

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. **New King James Version**

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. **The New American Standard Bible**

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. **New International Version**

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. **English Standard Version**

Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to be shepherds of God's church, which he acquired with his own blood. **International Standard Version**

Take heed to yourselves and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood **Douay/Rheims**

Take care and be on guard for yourselves and the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has appointed you bishops and guardians, to shepherd (tend and feed and guide) the church of the Lord or of God which He obtained for Himself [buying it and saving it for Himself] with His own blood. **Amplified Bible**

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

Take heed, therefore, to yourselves, and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit made you overseers, to feed the assembly of God that He acquired through His own blood **Youngs Literal Translation**

Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, wherein the Holy Spirit has set you as overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God, which he has purchased with the blood of his own **Darby**

Give attention to yourselves, and to all the flock which the Holy Spirit has given into your care, to give food to the church of God, for which he gave his blood **Bible In Basic English**

Now be on your guard for yourselves and for every flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians - you are to be shepherds to the Church of God, which he won at the cost of his own blood. **Phillips**

Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood. **KJ21**

The Concordant Version does not capitalize "Holy Spirit." However, it does capitalize the pronouns referring to God.

Take heed to yourselves and to the entire flocklet, among which the holy spirit appointed you supervisors, to be shepherding the ecclesia of God, which He procures through the blood of His Own. **Concordant**

Pay attention to yourselves and to the entire flock in which the Holy Spirit has placed you as bishops to be shepherds for God's church which he acquired with his own blood. **God's Word (GW)**

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has placed you to take the oversight for Him and act as shepherds to the Church of God, which He has bought with His own blood. **Weymouth**

Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood. **Christian Standard Bible**

Be taking heed unto yourselves, and unto all the little flock in which the Holy Spirit hath set, you, as overseers, - to be shepherding the assembly of God which he hath acquired through means of the blood of his own. **EBR**

Be careful for yourselves and for all the people that God has given you. The Holy Spirit gave you the work of caring for this flock. You must be like shepherds to the church (people) of God. This is the church that God bought with his own blood. **Easy to Read**

Translations That Say “Blood Of His Own Son”

Look after yourselves and everyone the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be like shepherds to God’s church. It is the flock that he bought with the blood of his own Son. **Contemporary English Version**

Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the guardians, to feed the Church of God which he bought with the blood of his own Son **New Jerusalem Bible**

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God which he obtained with the blood of his own Son **Revised Standard Version**

Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. **New Revised Standard Version**

Watch out for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God that he obtained with the blood of his own Son. **New English Translation**

So keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he made his own through the blood of his Son **Good News Translation**

The Message does not clearly bring out the fact that the church was bought or purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ.

Now it’s up to you. Be on your toes-both for yourselves and your congregation of sheep. The Holy Spirit has put you in charge of these people – God’s people they are – to guard and protect them, God himself thought they were worth dying for. **The Message**

Take care of yourselves and of the whole flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, so as to continue to be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. **Williams**

As usual, Moffatt has a different rendering than other translations.

Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock of which the holy Spirit has appointed you guardians; shepherd the church of the Lord which he has purchased with his own blood. **Moffatt**

He translates it as “church of the Lord.” Also, according to his usual translation pattern, Moffatt does not capitalize “Holy” before “Spirit.”

The New English Bible, like Moffatt, reads “church of the Lord” rather than church of God. Also we have the unusual rendering “which he won for himself.”

Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has given you charge, as shepherds of the church of the Lord which he won for himself by his own blood. **The New English Bible**

And now beware! Be sure that you feed and shepherd God's flock-his church, purchased with his blood-for the Holy Spirit it holding you responsible as overseers **The Living Bible**

Observations On English Translations Of Acts 20:28

Almost all English translations believe the “church of God” rather than the “church of the Lord” is the original reading. Most of them translate the last phrase in the verse, “with his own blood.” While this verse could be used to argue for the deity of Christ, the fact that there are variants in the text make it difficult to do this.

Question 19

How Has Romans 9:5 Been Understood By Various Translations?

In Romans 9:5 there is a statement by Paul concerning Jesus the Messiah. The question is whether or not he directly calls Jesus God in this verse. The issue revolves around how the statement is understood and how it is punctuated.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Romans 9:5

whos ben the fadris, and of which is Crist after the fleisch, that is God aboue alle thingis, blessid in to worldis. **Wycliffe**

whose also are the fathers and they of whome (as concernynge the flesshe) Christ came which is God over all thinges blessed for ever Amen. **Tyndale**

Of whom are the fathers, and of whom concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed forever, Amen. **Geneva**

whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. **King James Version**

whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen **American Standard Version**

of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. **New King James Version**

whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. **New American Standard Bible**

to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen **Revised Standard Version**

to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. **New Revised Standard Version**

Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen. **New International Version**

To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, by human descent, came the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever! Amen **New English Translation**

To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. **English Standard Version**

Their ancestors were great people of God, and Christ himself was a Jew as far as his human nature is concerned. And he is God, who rules over everything and is worthy of eternal praise! Amen **New Living Translation**

Whose are the fathers and of whom is Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all things, God blessed for ever. Amen. **Douay/Rheims**

To them belong the fathers and out of them, so far as physical descent is concerned, came Christ who is above all, God, blessed for ever. Amen **NTJB**

They have those famous ancestors, who were also the ancestors of Jesus Christ. I pray that God, who rules over all, will be praised forever! Amen. **Contemporary English Version**

To them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, Christ descended, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen **International Standard Version**

God's own promises - all these are theirs, and so too, as far as human descent goes, is Christ himself, Christ who is God over all, blessed for ever. **TJBP**

To them belong the patriarchs, and as far as His natural descent was concerned, from them is the Christ, Who is exalted and supreme over all, God, blessed forever! Amen (so let it be) **Amplified Bible**

whose {are} the fathers, and of whom {is} the Christ, according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed to the ages. Amen **Youngs Literal Translation**

Whose are the fathers, and of whom came Christ in the flesh, who is over all, God, to whom be blessing for ever. So be it. **Bible in Basic English**

whose *are* the fathers; and of whom, as according to flesh, *is* the Christ, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen **Darby**

Whose *are* the fathers, and from whom according to the flesh Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen **Revised Webster Bible**

of whom are the fathers, and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen. **KJ21**

whose are the fathers, and out of whom is the Christ according to the flesh, Who is over all, God be blessed for the eons. Amen! **Concordant**

The Messiah is descended from their ancestors according to his human nature. The Messiah is God over everything, forever blessed. Amen. **GW**

To them the Patriarchs belong, and from them in respect of His human lineage came the Christ, who is exalted above all, God blessed throughout the Ages. Amen. **Weymouth**

the patriarchs are theirs, and theirs too (so far as natural descent goes) is the Christ. (Blessed evermore be the God who is over all ! Amen. **Moffatt**

the patriarchs, and from them by natural descent the Christ has come, who is exalted over all, God blessed forever. Amen! **Williams**

The forefathers are theirs, and from them, by physical descent, came the Messiah, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen. **Christian Standard Bible**

they are descended from the famous Hebrew ancestors; and Christ, as a human being, belongs to their race. May God, who rules over all, be praised forever! Amen. **GNT**

Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them, in natural descent, sprang the Messiah. May God, supreme above all, be blessed for ever! Amen. **New English Bible**

Whose are the fathers, and of whom is the Christ - according to the flesh - he who is over all, God, blessed unto the ages. Amen. **Rotherham**

Great men of God were your fathers, and Christ himself was one of you, a Jew so far as his human nature is concerned, he who now rules over all things. Praise God forever! **The Living Bible**

Those people are the descendants of our great fathers. And they are the earthly family of Christ. Christ is God over all things. Praise him forever!
Easy To Read

Observations On English Translations Of Romans 9:5

Romans 9:5 has been used as a passage that proclaims that Christ is God over all. A number of translations render it in that manner. However, there is the question of how the verse is to be punctuated.

Question 20

Does Romans 10:9 Call Jesus The Lord?

In Romans 10, there is the possibility that Jesus is called “Yahweh” or “Lord” by Paul.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Romans 10:9

English translations have rendered Romans 10:9 in the following ways.

John Wycliffe translated this verse as follows.

That if thou knowlechist in thi mouth the Lord Jhesu Crist, and bileuest in thin herte, that God reiseide hym fro deth, thou schalt be saaf. **Wycliffe**

Tyndale follows Wycliffe very closely.

For yf thou shalt knowledge wt thy mouth that Iesus is the lorde and shalt beleve with thyn hert that God rayseed him up from deeth thou shalt be safe. **Tyndale**

For if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved **Geneva**

Again, the King James Version is almost word-for-word with Wycliffe, Tyndale, and Geneva.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **King James Version**

because if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved

American Standard Version 1901

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **New King James Version**

that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; **NASB 2020**

because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved **Revised Standard Version**

because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **New Revised Standard Version**

That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **New International Version**

because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **New English Translation**

because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **English Standard Version**

For if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved **New Living Translation**

For if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thy heart that God hath raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved **DRB**

that if you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe with your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved. **NTJB**

So you will be saved, if you honestly say, “Jesus is Lord,” and if you believe with all your heart that God raised him from death. **Contemporary English Version**

If you declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved **International Standard Version**

Because if you acknowledge and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **Amplified Bible**

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved **Revised Webster Bible**

that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God has raised him from among *the* dead, thou shalt be saved **Darby**

Because, if you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and have faith in your heart that God has made him come back from the dead, you will have salvation **Bible In Basic English**

that if thou mayest confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and mayest believe in thy heart that God did raise him out of the dead, thou shalt be saved **Young's Literal Translation**

If you openly admit by your own mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and if you believe in your own heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved **TJBP**

that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. **King James 21st Century**

If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and if you believe in your heart that God has raised Christ from death, you will be saved. **WE**

that, if ever you should be avowing with your mouth the declaration that Jesus is Lord, and should be believing in your heart that God rouses Him from among the dead, you shall be saved. **Concordant**

If you declare that Jesus is Lord, and believe that God brought him back to life, you will be saved. **God's Word**

If you confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God raised him from death, you will be saved. **GNT**

that if with your mouth you confess Jesus as Lord and in your heart believe that God brought Him back to life, you shall be saved. **Weymouth**

If you openly say, “Jesus is Lord,” and if you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from death, then you will be saved. **Easy To Read**

Confess with your mouth that ‘Jesus is Lord,’ believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, and you will be saved. **Moffatt**

If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **Christian Study Bible**

That, if thou shalt confess the declaration with thy mouth - That Jesus is, Lord, and shalt believe with thy hear - That, God, raised him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved; **Rotherham**

If on your lips is the confession, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and in your heart the faith that God raised him from the dead, then you will find salvation. **New English Bible**

For if you tell others with your own mouth that Jesus Christ is your Lord and believe in your own heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **The Living Bible**

Say the welcoming word to God- ‘Jesus is my Master’-embracing, body and soul, God’s work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That’s it. **The Message**

For it is with your lips you acknowledge that Jesus is Lord, and in your hearts you believe that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **Williams**

Observations On English Translations Of Romans 10:9

A good case can be made from Romans 10:9 that Paul is equating the Lord Jesus with Yahweh, Jehovah.

Question 21

How Has Philippians 2:5,6 Been Translated?

In the second chapter of Philippians we read the following words of the Apostle Paul which seem to equate Jesus Christ with God Himself.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Philippians 2:5,6

And fele ye this thing in you, which also in Crist Jhesu; that whanne he was in the forme of God, demyde not raueyn, that hym silf were euene to God; **Wycliffe**

Let the same mynde be in you that was in Christ Iesu: Which beyng in the shape of god and thought it not robbery to be equall with god. **Tyndale**

Let the same mind be in you that was even in Christ Jesus, Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God: **Geneva**

The King James translation is slightly different from Tyndale.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **King James Version**

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped **American Standard Version**

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, **New King James Version**

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **New American Standard Bible**

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped **Revised Standard Version**

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited **New Revised Standard Version**

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped **New International Version**

You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped **New English Translation**

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **English Standard Version**

Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. **New Living Translation**

For let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: **DRB**

Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus,
Make your own the mind of Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. **NTJB**

and think the same way that Christ Jesus thought: Christ was truly God.
But he did not try to remain equal with God. **Contemporary English Version**

Have the same attitude among yourselves that was also in Christ Jesus: In
God's own form existed he, and shared with God equality, deemed nothing needed grasping **International Standard Version**

Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: [Let Him be your example in humility:] Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God [possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God God], did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained **Amplified**

For, let this mind be in you that {is} also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, thought {it} not robbery to be equal to God **Young's Literal Translation**

Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus, To whom, though himself in the form of God, it did not seem that to take for oneself was to be like God **Bible Basic English**

For let this mind be in you which *was* also in Christ Jesus; 6 who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God **DHB**

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God **(RWB)**

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, **KJ21**

For let this disposition be in you, which is in Christ Jesus also, Who, being inherently in the form of God, deems it not pillaging to be equal with God **Concordant**

Have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Although he was in the form of God and equal with God, he did not take advantage of this equality. **God's Word**

Treat one another with the same spirit as your experience in Christ Jesus. Though he was divine by nature, he did not set store upon equality with God. **Moffatt**

Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself. He had equal status with God but didn't think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what. Not at all. **The Message**

Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited
Christian Standard Bible

The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had: He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to remain equal with God. **Good News Translation**

The same thing, esteem, in yourselves, which also, in Christ Jesus, ye esteem, - Who, in form of God, subsisting, not, a thing to be seized, accounted the being equal with God, **EBR**

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. Christ himself was like God in everything. Christ was equal with God. But Christ did not think that being equal with God was something that he must keep. **Easy To Read**

Keep on fostering the same disposition that Christ Jesus had. Though He was existing in the nature of God, He did not think His being on an equality with God a thing to be selfishly grasped. **Williams**

Let your hearing towards one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus. For the divine nature was his from the first; yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God. **New English Bible**

Your attitude should be the kind that was shown us by Jesus Christ, who, though he was God, did not demand and cling to his rights as God. **The Living Bible**

Observations On English Translations Of Philippians 2:5,6

Philippians 2:5-6 can, and should, be used to show that Paul believed that Jesus Christ was indeed God.

Question 22

How Has Colossians 1:15-17 Been Rendered Into English?

In Colossians 1:15-17 there is a passage that emphasizes the Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Colossians 1:15-17

Wycliffe translated this as follows.

Which is the ymage of God vnuysible, the first bigetun of ech creature. For in hym alle thingis ben maad, in heuenes and in erthe, visible and vnuysible, ether trones, ether dominaciouns, ether princehodes, ethir poweris, alle thingis ben maad of nouyt bi hym, and in hym, and he is bifor alle, and alle thingis ben in hym.
Wycliffe

Tyndale's translation reads.

which is the ymage of the invisible god fyrst begotten of all creatures. For by him were all thynges created thynges that are in heven and thynges that are in erth: thynges visible and thynges invisible: whether they be maieste or lordshippe ether rule or power. All thinges are creatyd by hym and in him and he is before all thinges and in him all thynges have their beyng.
Tyndale

Who is the image of the invisible God, the first begotten of every creature. For by him were all things created which are in heaven, and which are in earth, things visible and invisible: whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Principalities, or Powers, all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things consist.
Geneva

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.
King James Version

who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist
American Standard Version

Who is the Image of the invisible God, Firstborn of every creature, for in Him is all created, that in the heavens and that on the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or sovereignties, or authorities, all is created through Him and for Him, and He is before all, and all has its cohesion in Him
Concordant

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
New King James Version

And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
New American Standard Bible

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities -- all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Revised Standard Version

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers - all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **New Revised Standard Version**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **New International Version**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, for all things in heaven and on earth were created by him—all things, whether visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions, whether principalities or powers—all things were created through him and for him. He himself is before all things and all things are held together in him. **New English Translation**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **English Standard Version**

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation. Christ is the one through whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see-- kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through him and for him. He existed before everything else began, and he holds all creation together **New Living Translation**

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers. All things were created by him and in him. And he is before all: and by him all things consist. **Darby**

He is the image of the unseen God, the first-born of all creation, for in him were created all things in heaven and on earth: everything visible and everything invisible, thrones, ruling forces, sovereignties, powers -- all things were created through him and for him. He exists before all things and in him all things hold together **NTJB**

Christ is exactly like God, who cannot be seen. He is the first-born Son, superior to all creation. Everything was created by him, everything in heaven and on earth, everything seen and unseen, including all forces and powers, and all rulers and authorities. All things were created by God's Son, and everything was made for him. God's Son was before all else, and by him everything is held together. **Contemporary English Version**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether they are kings, lords, rulers, or powers. All things have been created through him and for him. He himself existed before all things, and by him all things hold together **International Standard Version**

[Now] He is the exact likeness of the unseen God [the visible representation of the invisible]; He is the Firstborn of all creation. For it was in Him that all things were created, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, whether thrones, dominions, rulers, or authorities; all things were created and exist through Him [by His service, intervention] and in and for Him. And He Himself existed before all things, and in Him all things consist (cohere, are held together). **Amplified**

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are upon earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist **RWB**

who is image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation; because by him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things have been created by him and for him. And “he” is before all, and all things subsist together by him (DHB)

Who is the image of the unseen God coming into existence before all living things; For by him all things were made, in heaven and on earth, things seen and things unseen, authorities, lords, rulers, and powers; all things were made by him and for him; He is before all things, and in him all things have being. **Bible In Basic English**

who is the image of the invisible God, first-born of all creation, because in him were the all things created, those in the heavens, and those upon the earth, those visible, and those invisible, whether thrones, whether lordships, whether principalities, whether authorities; all things through him, and for him, have been created, and himself is before all, and the all things in him have consisted. **Youngs Literal Translation**

Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed before creation began, for it was through him that every thing was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen. Through him, and for him, also, were created power and dominion, ownership and authority. In fact, every single thing was created through, and for him. He is both the first principle and the upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation. **TJBP**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature. For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist. **KJ21**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. He created all things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Whether they are kings or lords rulers or powers – everything has been created through him and for him. He existed before him, and holds everything together. **God's Word**

Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the first-born Son, superior to all created things. For through him God created everything in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen things, including spiritual powers, lords, rulers, and authorities. God created the whole universe through him and for him. Christ existed before all things, and in union with him all things have their proper place. **GNT**

Christ is the exact likeness of the unseen God. He existed before God made anything at all, and, in fact, Christ himself is the Creator who made everything in heaven and earth, the things we can see and the things we can't; the spirit world with its kings and kingdoms, its rulers and authorities all were made by Christ for his own use and glory. He was before all else began and it is his power that holds everything together. **The Living Bible**

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things hold together. **Christian Standard Bible**

Who, is an image of the unseen God, Firstborn of all creation, - Because, in him, were created all things in the heavens and upon the earth, the things seen and the things unseen, whether thrones or lordships or principalities or authorities, - they all, through him and for him, have been created, And, he, is before all, and, they all, in him, hold together; **Rotherham**

No person can see God. But Jesus is exactly like God. Jesus is ruler over all the things that have been made. Through his power all things were made--things in heaven and on earth, things seen and not seen, all {spiritual} powers, authorities, lords, and rulers. All things were made through Christ and for Christ. Christ was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him. **Holy Bible - Easy To Read**

He is the likeness of the unseen God, born first, before all of creation- for it was by him that all things were created both in heaven and on earth, both the seen and the unseen, including Thrones, angelic Lords, celestial Powers and Rulers, all things have been created by him and for him; he is prior to all, and all coheres in him. **Moffatt**

Yes, He is the exact likeness of the unseen God, His first-born Son who existed before any created thing, for it was through Him that everything was created in heaven and on earth, the seen and the unseen, thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities; all things have been created through Him and for Him. So He existed before all things, and through Him all things are held together. **Williams**

We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. We look at the Son and see God's original purpose in everything created. For everything, absolutely everything, above and below, visible and invisible, rank after rank of angels-everything got started in him and finds its purpose in him. He was there before any of it came into existence and holds it together right up to this moment. **The Message**

He is image of the invisible God; his is the primacy over all created things. In him everything in heaven and on earth was created, not only things visible but also the invisible orders of thrones, sovereignties, authorities, and powers; the whole universe has been created through him and for him. And he exists before everything, and all things are held together in him. **New English Bible**

Observations On English Translations Of Colossians 1:15-17

Christ is clearly said to be the Creator of all things in these verses. Since God alone created all things, then the logical conclusion is that Jesus Christ is Himself God.

Question 23

How Has Colossians 2:9 Been Translated?

In Colossians 2 there is a statement by the Apostle Paul about the fullness of God dwelling in Jesus Christ.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Colossians 2:9

Wycliffe translated this verse in this manner.

For in hym dwellith bodilich al the fulnesse of the Godhed. **Wycliffe**

Tyndale's translation was similar to Wycliffe's.

For in him dwelleth all the fulnes of the godheed bodily. **Tyndale**

A number of English versions follow Tyndale word for word. This includes the following:

Geneva

King James Version

Darby

American Standard Version

New King James Version

Other versions are similar.

For in Him all the fulness of Deity dwells in bodily form **NASB 2020**

For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily **RSV, NRSV UE**

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **NIV**,

for in Him the entire complement of the Deity is dwelling bodily.

Concordant

For in him all the fullness of deity lives in bodily form **NET**

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily **ESV**

For in Christ the fullness of God lives in a human body. **NLT**

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporeally.

Douay/Rheims

In him, in bodily form, lives divinity in all its fullness **NTJB**

God lives fully in Christ. **Contemporary English Version**

For in him the whole fullness of God lives in bodily form **International Standard Version**

Yet it is in him that God gives a full and complete expression of himself (within the physical limits that he set himself in Christ). **TJBP**

For in Him the whole fullness of Deity (the Godhead) continues to dwell in bodily form [giving complete expression of the divine nature]. because in him doth tabernacle all the fulness of the Godhead bodily
Young's Literal Translation

For in him all the wealth of God's being has a living form (BBE) Christ has everything that God has. **BWE**

For the full content of divine nature lives in Christ, in his humanity,
Good News Translation

All of God lives in Christ's body. **God's Word**

Because, in him, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead, bodily, **EBR**

For in Him the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily, **Christian Standard Bible**

All of God lives in Christ fully (even in Christ's life on earth). **Easy to Read**

For in Christ there is all of God in a human body. **The Living Bible**

Everything of God is expressed in him. **The Message**

For it is in Christ that the complete being of the Godhead dwells embodied. **New English Bible**

It is in Christ that the entire fulness of deity has settled bodily. **Moffatt**

For it is in Christ that the fulness of God's nature dwells embodied, and in Him you are made complete,
Weymouth

For in him is embodied all the fulness of the Godhead. **Lamsa**

For it is in Him that all the fulness of Deity continues to live embodied. **Williams**

Observations On English Translations Of Colossians 2:9

According to this verse, the fullness of God dwelt in the Lord Jesus. The usual way of understanding this is that Jesus was God Himself.

Question 24

Does 1 Timothy 3:16 Directly Call Jesus God?

First Timothy 3:16 contains an ancient creed or statement of Christian belief.

The Issues Involved

The main issue in translating 1 Timothy 3:16 has to do with how the original text read.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered 1 Timothy 3:16

Wycliffe does not make a direct reference to the Deity of Christ in this verse.

And opynli it is a greet sacrament of pitee, that thing that was schewid in fleisch, it is iustified in spirit, it apperid to aungels, it is prechid to hethene men, it is bileuyd in the world, it is takun vp in glorie. **Wycliffe**

The translation of Tyndale makes it clear that God became a human being in Jesus Christ.

And with out naye great is that mistery of godlines: God was shewed in the flesshe was iustified in the sprete was sene of angels was preached vnto the gentyls was beleved on in erth and receaved vp in glory. **Tyndale**

And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, which is, God is manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up in glory. **Geneva**

Like Geneva, the King James Version gives a powerful statement of the deity of Christ.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. **King James Version**

On the other hand, the ASV of 1901 does not make this an explicit statement of Christ's deity.

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness; He who was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the spirit, Seen of angels, Preached among the nations, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. **American Standard Version**

And avowedly great is the secret of devoutness, which was manifested in flesh, justified in spirit, seen by messengers, heralded among the nations, believed in the world, taken up in glory. **Concordant**

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory. **New King James Version**

And by common confession great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory. **New American Standard Bible**

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory **Revised Standard Version**

Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among Gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory. **New Revised Standard Version**

Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. **NIV**

And we all agree, our religion contains amazing revelation: He was revealed in the flesh, Vindicated by the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory **NET**

Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. **ESV**

Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ appeared in the flesh and was shown to be righteous by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and was announced to the nations. He was believed on in the world and was taken up into heaven **NLT**

And evidently great is the mystery of godliness, which was manifested in the flesh, was justified in the spirit, appeared unto angels, hath been preached unto the Gentiles, is believed in the world, is taken up in glory **Douay**

Without any doubt, the mystery of our religion is very deep indeed: He was made visible in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed to the gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory **NTJB**

Here is the great mystery of our religion: Christ came as a human. The Spirit proved that he pleased God, and he was seen by angels. Christ was preached to the nations. People in this world put their faith in him, and he was taken up to glory. **CEV**

By common confession, the secret of our godly worship is great: In flesh was he revealed to sight, kept righteous by the Spirit's might, adored by angels singing. To nations was he manifest, believing souls found peace and rest, our Lord in heaven reigning! **ISV**

And great and important and weighty, we confess, is the hidden truth (the mystic secret) of godliness. He [God] was made visible in human flesh, justified and vindicated in the [Holy] Spirit, was seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, [and] taken up in glory. **Amplified**

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was revealed in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. **RWB**

And confessedly the mystery of piety is great. God has been manifested in flesh, has been justified in *the* Spirit, has appeared to angels, has been preached among *the* nations, has been believed on in *the* world, has been received up in glory **(DHB)**

And without argument, great is the secret of religion: He who was seen in the flesh, who was given God's approval in the spirit, was seen by the angels, of whom the good news was given among the nations, in whom the world had faith, who was taken up in glory **(BBE)**

and, confessedly, great is the secret of piety -- God was manifested in flesh, declared righteous in spirit, seen by messengers, preached among nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory! **YLT**

No one can deny that this religion of ours is a tremendous mystery, resting as it does on the one who showed himself as a human being, and met, as such, every demand of the Spirit in the sight of angels as well as of men. Then, after his restoration to the Heaven from whence he came, he has been proclaimed among men of different nationalities and believed in all parts of the world. **TJBP**

And beyond controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. **KJ21**

God's plan is very great as we all know. Here it is: we saw God as a man; God's Spirit proved he was right; angels saw him; the nations were told about him; people of the world believed in him; God took him up into heaven. **BWE**

The mystery that gives us our reverence for God is acknowledged to be great: He appeared in his human nature, was approved by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was announced throughout the nations, was believed in the world, and was taken to heaven in glory. **God's Word**

No one can deny how great is the secret of our religion: He appeared in human form, was shown to be right by the Spirit, and was seen by angels. He was preached among the nations, was believed in throughout the world, and was taken up to heaven. **GNT**

Without any doubt, the secret of our life of worship is great: He (Christ) was shown to us in a human body; the Spirit proved that he was right; he was seen by angels. {The Good News about him} was preached to the nations (non-Jews); people in the world believed in him; he was taken up to heaven in glory **Easy To Read**

The Christian life is a great mystery, far exceeding our understanding, but some things are clear enough: He appeared in a human body, was proved right by the invisible Spirit, was seen by angels. He was proclaimed among all kinds of peoples, believed in all over the world, taken up into heavenly glory. **The Message**

And most certainly, the mystery of godliness is great: He was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. **CSB**

And, beyond controversy, great is the mystery of our religion-- that Christ appeared in human form, and His claims justified by the Spirit, was seen by angels and proclaimed among Gentile nations, was believed on in the world, and received up again into glory. **Weymouth**

Moffatt calls 1 Timothy "Timotheus."

And who does not admit how profound is the divine truth of our religion?-it is He who was "manifest in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on throughout the world, taken up in glory. **Moffatt**

And, confessedly great, is the sacred secret of godliness, - Who was made manifest in flesh, was declared righteous in spirit, was made visible unto messengers, was proclaimed among nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory. **EBR**

Undoubtedly the mystery of our religion is a great wonder: “He was made visible in human form, He was vindicated by the Spirit, He was seen by angels, He was proclaimed among the heather. **Williams**

And great beyond all question is the mystery of our religion: He who was manifested in a body, vindicated in the spirit, seen by angels; who was proclaimed among the nations, believed in throughout the world, glorified in high heaven. **NEB**

It is quite true that the way to live a godly life is not an easy matter. But the answer lies in Christ, who came to earth as a man, was proved spotless and pure by his Spirit, was served by angels, was preached among the nations, was accepted by men everywhere and was received up again to his glory in heaven. **TLB**

Observations On The Various Ways 1 Timothy 3:16 Has Been Translated Into English

The main issue in this verse revolves around the Greek text. Did it say that “God” was manifest in the flesh, as a number of translations say, or does it merely say that “he” was manifest in the flesh, that the majority of translations have it?

Since there is a question as to how the Greek text originally read, this should not be used as an indisputable verse that teaches the deity of Christ.

Question 25

Does Titus 2:13 Call Jesus The Great God And Savior?

In Titus 2:13, we find the Apostle Paul writing about the coming of the Lord. Is it a clear statement of the deity of Jesus Christ?

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Titus 2:13

Wycliffe's translation is unclear with respect to the Deity of Jesus Christ.

abidinge the blessid hope and the comyng of the glorie of the greet God, and of oure sauour Jhesu Crist;
Wycliffe

Tyndale, like Wycliffe, does not translate this verse as a clear statement of the Deity of Christ.

lokinge for that blessed hope and glorious apperenge of ye myghty god and of oure savioure Iesu Christ
Tyndale

Looking for that blessed hope, and appearing of that glory of that mighty God, and of our Savior Jesus Christ. **Geneva**

The King James Version followed Tyndale and Geneva almost word for word.

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;
The King James Version

looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ
American Standard Version 1901

anticipating that happy expectation, even the advent of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ
Concordant

looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **New King James Version**

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; **New American Standard Bible**

awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ **Revised Standard Version**

while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **New Revised Standard Version**

while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, **NIV**

as we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ **NET**

waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, **ESV**

while we look forward to that wonderful event when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed **NLT**

Looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ **Douay**

waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus **NTJB**

We are filled with hope, as we wait for the glorious return of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. **CEV**

as we wait for the blessed hope and the glorious appearance of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ **ISV**

Awaiting and looking for the [fulfillment, the realization of our] blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus (the Messiah, the Anointed One) **Amplified**

waiting for the blessed hope and manifestation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, **(YLT)**

Looking for the glad hope, the revelation of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; **(BBE)**

awaiting the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; **(DHB)**

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; **(RWB)**

And while we live this life we hope and wait for the glorious dénouement of the Great God and of Jesus Christ our saviour **TJBP**

looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ **KJ21**

All this is while we wait and hope to see the one who brings blessing. We are waiting for our great God to come in Jesus Christ. He is the One who will save us. He is wonderful! **BWE**

in expectation of the fulfilment of our blessed hope-- the Appearing in glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ; **Weymouth**

Awaiting the blessed hope of the appearance of the Glory of the great God and of our Saviour Christ Jesus. **Moffatt**

This new life is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, appears. **The Message**

while we wait for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **CSB**

At the same time we can expect what we hope for-the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **GW**

Prepared to welcome the happy hope and forthshining of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Christ Jesus, - **EBR**

as we wait for the blessed Day we hope for, when the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ will appear. **GNT**

We should live like that while we are waiting for the coming of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He is our great hope, and he will come with glory. **Easy To Read**

Looking forward to the happy fulfillment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus will appear. **NEB**

While we are waiting for the realization of our blessed hope at the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus. **Williams**

Looking forward to that wonderful time we've been expecting, when his glory shall be seen-the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. **TLB**

Observations On English Translations Of Titus 2:13

Contrary to how a few versions translate this verse, Titus 2:13 is a clear reference to Jesus Christ being God. Indeed, He is our “great God and Savior.”

Question 26

How Has Hebrews 1:8 Been Translated?

In the first chapter of Hebrews there is a statement that God the Father makes to God the Son.

A Look At How English Translations Have Rendered Hebrews 1:8

In the translation of Wycliffe, the Son is directly addressed as “God.”

But to the sone he seith, God, thi trone is in to the world of world; a yerde of equite is the yerde of thi rewme; **Wycliffe**

Tyndale also translates the Father addressing the Son as God.

But vnto the sonne he sayth: God thy seate shalbe forever and ever. The cepter of thy kyngdome is a right cepter. **Tyndale**

But unto the Son he saith, O God, thy throne is forever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a scepter of righteousness. **Geneva**

But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. **King James Version**

but of the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; And the sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom **American Standard Version**

But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. **New King James Version**

But of the Son He says, “Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. **New American Standard Bible**

But of the Son he says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom **Revised Standard Version**

But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. **New Revised Standard Version**

But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. **NIV**

but of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and a righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom” **NET**

But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom. **ESV**

But to his Son he says, "Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. Your royal power is expressed in righteousness **NLT**

But to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of justice is the sceptre of thy kingdom
Douay

but to the Son he says: Your throne, God, is for ever and ever; and: the sceptre of his kingdom is a sceptre of justice **NTJB**

But God says about his Son, “You are God, and you will rule as King forever! Your royal power brings about justice. **CEV**

But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is a righteous scepter.” **ISV**

But as to the Son, He says to Him, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever (to the ages of the ages), and the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of absolute righteousness (of justice and straightforwardness). **AB**

But to the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom (**RWB**)

but as to the Son, Thy throne, O God, *is* to the age of the age, and a sceptre of uprightness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom. (**DBY**)

and unto the Son: "Thy throne, O God, {is} to the age of the age; a sceptre of righteousness {is} the sceptre of thy reign (**YLT**)

But of the Son he says, Your seat of power, O God, is for ever and ever; and the rod of your kingdom is a rod of righteousness. (**BBE**)

But when he speaks of the Son, he says: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of your kingdom **TJBP**

But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy Kingdom. **KJ21**

But here is what God says about his Son: `O God, you will sit and rule for ever. You will rule in the right way. **WE**

Yet to the Son: Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of the eon, And a scepter of rectitude is the scepter of Thy kingdom. **Concordant**

But of His Son, He says, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and for ever, and the sceptre of Thy Kingdom is a sceptre of absolute justice. **Weymouth**

but, as to the Son, - Thy throne, O God, is unto times age-abiding, and - A sceptre of equity, is the sceptre of his kingdom, **EBR**

But God said about his Son, Your throne, O God, is forever and ever. The scepter in your kingdom is a scepter for justice. **God's Word**

but about the Son: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of justice. **CSB**

But he says to the Son, You're God, and on the throne for good; your rule makes everything right. **The Message**

But God said this about his Son: "Your throne, O God, will continue forever and ever. You will rule your kingdom with right judgments." **Easy to Read**

But regarding the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, will stand forever and ever; a righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom. **Williams**

But of the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, and the sceptre of justice is the sceptre of his kingdom. **NEB**

But of the Son he says, "Your kingdom, O God, will last forever and ever; its commands are always just and right. **TLB**

Moffat has an odd rendering as does the Good News translation.

he says of the Son, 'God is thy throne for ever and ever, thy royal sceptre is the sceptre of equity. **Moffatt**

About the Son, however, God said: forever and ever! You rule over your people with justice. **Good News Translation**

Observations On English Translations Of Hebrews 1:8

Hebrews 1:8 is normally translated in such a way as to equate Jesus Christ with God since He is directly addressed as God. Almost every English translation does this.

Question 27

Does 2 Peter 1:1 Clearly Speak Of The Deity Of Christ?

In the first verse of Second Peter there is a statement that is often translated in such a way that Jesus Christ is equal to God the Father.

Wycliffe makes it clear that Jesus Christ is “our God and Savior.”

Simount Petre, seruaunt and apostle of `Jhesu Crist, to hem that han take with vs the euene feith, in the riytwisnesse of oure God and sauour Jhesu Crist, **Wycliffe**

Tyndale also translates this verse in such a way where Jesus is spoken of as both our God and Savior.

Simon Peter a seruaunt and an Apostle of Iesus Christ to them which have obtainyd lyke precious fayth with vs in the rightewesnes that commeth of oure God and savioure Iesus Christ. **Tyndale**

Geneva does likewise.

Simon Peter a servant and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, to you which have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. **Geneva**

The KJV is ambiguous in this verse. It could be understood to refer to two Persons –God and our Savior.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: **King James Version**

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and *the* Saviour Jesus Christ **American Standard Version**

Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who are chancing upon an equally precious faith with us, in the righteousness of our God, and the Saviour, Jesus Christ: **Concordant**

Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: **New King James Version**

Simon Peter, a bond-servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith of the same kind as ours, by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ: **New American Standard Bible**

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours in the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: **Revised Standard Version**

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: **New Revised Standard Version**

Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: **New International Version**

From Simeon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ, have been granted a faith just as precious as ours **NET**

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: **ESV**

This letter is from Simon Peter, a slave and apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to all of you who share the same precious faith we have, faith given to us by Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, who makes us right with God. **NLT**

Simon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ: to them that have obtained equal faith with us in the justice of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Douay**

Simon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith as precious as our own, given through the saving justice of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ **NTJB**

From Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. To everyone who shares with us in the privilege of believing that our God and Savior Jesus Christ will do what is just and fair **CEV**

From Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith that is as valuable as ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **ISV**

SIMON PETER, a servant and apostle (special messenger) of Jesus Christ, to those who have received (obtained an equal privilege of) like precious faith with ourselves in and through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ **Amplified**

Simon Peter, a servant and Apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who with us have a part in the same holy faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: **(BBE)**

Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who did obtain a like precious faith with us in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: **(YLT)**

Simon Peter, bondman and apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have received like precious faith with us through *the* righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: **(DBY)**

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: **(RWB)**

Simon Peter, a servant and messenger of Jesus Christ, sends this letter to those who have been given a faith as valuable as yours in the righteousness of our God, and saviour Jesus Christ. **TJBP**

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: **KJ21**

I am Simon Peter. I am a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I send greetings to you who have believed as we have. Believing is worth just as much to you as it is to us. This is because our God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, is right and good. **BWE**

Simon Peter, servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, unto them who have obtained, equally precious, faith, with us, in the righteousness of our God, and Saviour Jesus Christ, **EBR**

From Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. To those who have obtained a faith that is as valuable as ours, a faith based on the approval that comes from our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **God's Word**

From Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ--- To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have been given a faith as precious as ours: **GNT**

Greetings from Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. To all you people who have a faith that is so valuable, like ours. You received that faith because our God and Savior Jesus Christ is fair. He does what is right. **Easy To Read Version**

I, Simon Peter am a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ. I write this to you whose experience with God is as life-changing as ours, all due to our God's straight dealing and the intervention of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. **The Message**

Simeon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those who have obtained a faith of equal privilege with ours through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ. **CSB**

Simon Peter, a bondservant and Apostle of Jesus Christ: To those to whom there has been allotted the same precious faith as that which is ours through the righteousness of our God and of our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Weymouth**

Simon Peter, a slave and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ have obtained the same precious faith that we have. **Williams**

Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have been allotted a faith of equal privilege with ours, by the equity of our God and saviour Jesus Christ. **Moffatt**

From: Simon Peter, a servant and missionary of Jesus Christ. *To:* All of you who have our kind of faith. The faith I speak of is the kind that Jesus Christ, our God and Savior, gives to us. How precious it is, and how just and good he is to give this same faith to each of us. **TLB**

Observations On English Translations Of 2 Peter 1:1

2 Peter 1:1 is most-often translated as equating Jesus Christ with God.

Question 28

How Has 1 John 5:20 Been Translated?

In the Book of First John we find a statement that some have translated as reference to the Deity of Christ.

The Issues In 1 John 5:20

The main issue in 1 John 5:20 with respect to the Deity of Christ concerns the last sentence in the verse.

And we witen, that the sone of God cam in fleisch, and yaf to vs wit, that we know veri God, and be in the veri sone of hym. **Wycliffe**

We knowe that the sonne of God is come and hath geven vs a mynde to knowe him which is true: and we are in him that is true through his sonne Iesu Christ. This same is very god and eternall lyfe. **Tyndale**

But we know that that Son of God is come, and hath given us a mind to know him, which is true, and we are in him that is true, that is, in that his Son Jesus Christ, the same is that very God, and that eternal life. **Geneva**

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. **King James Version**

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. **American Standard Version**

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. **New King James Version**

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. **New American Standard Bible**

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life **Revised Standard Version**

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **New Revised Standard Version**

We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true - even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **New International Version**

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us insight to know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This one is the true God and eternal life **NET**

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **ESV**

And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we are in God because we are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life **NLT**

And we know that the Son of God is come. And he hath given us understanding that we may know the true God and may be in his true Son. This is the true God and life eternal. **Douay**

We are well aware also that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know the One who is true. We are in the One who is true as we are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God and this is eternal life. Children, be on your guard against false gods
NTJB

We know that Jesus Christ the Son of God has come and has shown us the true God. And because of Jesus, we now belong to the true God who gives eternal life. **CEV**

We also know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true God. We are in union with the one who is true, his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **ISV**

And we [have seen and] know [positively] that the Son of God has [actually] come to this world and has given us understanding and insight [progressively] to perceive (recognize) and come to know better and more clearly Him Who is true; and we are in Him Who is true--in His Son Jesus Christ (the Messiah). This [Man] is the true God and Life eternal. **Amplified**

And we know that the Son of God hath come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life **(RWB)**

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding that we should know him that *is* true; and we are in him that *is* true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life **(DBY)**

And we are certain that the Son of God has come, and has given us a clear vision, so that we may see him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life **(BBE)**

and we have known that the Son of God is come, and hath given us a mind, that we may know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ; this one is the true God and the life age-during **(YLT)**

We know too that the Son of God has actually come to this world, and has shown us the way to know the one who is true. We know that our real life is in the true one, and in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the real God and this is real, eternal life **Phillips**

And we know that the Son of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true; and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and Eternal Life. **KJ21**

We know that the Son of God has come. He has given us a heart to know him who is true. We belong to him who is true, because we belong to his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God. He has the life that will live for ever. **WE**

Yet we are aware that the Son of God is arriving, and has given us a comprehension, that we know the True One, and we are in the True One, in His Son, Jesus Christ. This One is the true God and life eonian.

Concordant

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we know the true One, and are in union with the true One--that is, we are in union with His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and the Life of the Ages. **Weymouth**

We know, moreover, that, the Son of God, hath come, and hath given us insight, so that we are getting to understand, him that is Real, - and we are in him that is Real, in his Son Jesus Christ. This, is the Real God, and life age-abiding. **EBR**

We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we know the real God. We are in the one who is real, his Son Jesus Christ. This Jesus Christ is the real God and eternal life. **God's Word**

We know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we know the true God. We live in union with the true God---in union with his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and this is eternal life. **GNT**

And we know that the Son of God has come. The Son of God has given us understanding. Now we can know God. God is the One who is true. And we live in that true God. We are in his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and he is eternal life. **Easy To Read**

And we know that the Son of God came so we could recognize and understand the truth of God-what a gift!- and we are living in the Truth itself, in God's Son Jesus Christ. This Jesus is both true God and Real Life. **The Message**

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we may know the true One. We are in the true One--that is, in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **CSB**

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us insight to recognize the True One; and we are in union with the True One through His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **Williams**

We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us insight to know Him who is the Real God; and we are in Him who is real, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the real God, this is life eternal. **Moffatt**

We know that Christ, God's Son has come to help us understand and find the true God. And now we are in God because we are in Jesus Christ his son, who is the only true God; and he is eternal life. **TLB**

Observations On English Translations Of 1 John 5:20 Summary

First John 5:20 is a difficult passage. However, one of the ways in which it can be translated equates Jesus Christ with God Himself.

THE KING JAMES VERSION DEBATE

A Look At The Issues Surrounding The King James Version Controversy

One issue that continues to be controversial in a number of Christian circles has to do with the most well-known English translation that has ever been made, namely the King James Version. There is no question that the King James Bible, or the Authorized Version as it is also called, has had an impact like no other Bible translation in the history of the English speaking world.

However, we are now in the twenty-first century. What relevance does a seventeenth century English translation have in this day and age? Should it still be used? It is the best translation that a person can use or is it hopelessly outdated? Is the Greek text that is used to translate the New Testament superior to the ones used in modern translations?

There are a few of the many questions that are debated among Christians. In this section we will look in detail at the various controversies surrounding this ancient translation of Scripture.

Question 29

Why Do Some People Think The King James Version Is The Best Translation To Use?

Today, there are people who believe that the King James Version of 1611 is still the best English translation that is available. The reasons vary as to why this is thought to be so. Those who think this way can be placed in the following categories.

View 1 Some People Prefer The King James Version

For some, it is a matter of personal preference. While they do not believe everyone needs to read and study the King James Version they personally prefer it. The King James Version is the best translation for them – but not necessarily for everyone. There is certainly nothing wrong in holding this point of view. However, one who holds this perspective needs to be aware of the many problems with the King James Version.

View 2 The Greek Text Behind The King James Version Is Superior To Other Texts

Others believe the Greek text that is used to translate the New Testament is superior to the text used by other modern translations. Therefore, they use the King James because they believe the text is the closest to what was originally written. Those who hold this perspective might prefer the New King James to the King James Version.

View 3 The Greek Text Behind The King James Version Has Been Supernaturally Preserved

There are some who believe that the Greek text behind the King James Version has been supernaturally preserved or divinely inspired by God. Therefore the King James translators actually used a “divine text” to work from compared to other translations which used a “non-divinely inspired text.”

View 4 The King James Version Is Inerrant

This is another extreme position. Those who hold this perspective see the King James Version as divinely inspired of God. It is the *only* Bible translation in English that can claim this. Therefore, it is the *only* English translation that a person should use.

If the King James Version alone is God’s Word to humanity then an attack upon this version is an attack upon God and His Word. Since the King James Version is the standard, therefore, any difference we find between the King James Version and another translation is an addition or deletion from the Word of God.

Of course, the question that needs to be answered is, “Why use the King James Version to test all other versions?” Why not Tyndale’s version or the Bishops’ Bible? The King James Version was not the first English translation to be made neither was it the last.

View 5 The King James Version Is New Revelation From God

The most extreme position is that the King James Version is actually divine revelation. The English text of the King James Version is God’s inerrant revelation to humanity. Therefore, it is necessary to correct Greek and Hebrew texts by KJV.

In sum, these are the various reasons as to why certain people prefer the King James Version.

Evaluation

Views 3-5 do not fit with the evidence or the original principles that were set down for the translators. Donald Brake explains:

King James had appointed Richard Bancroft, then bishop of London, to the archbishopric of Canterbury upon the death of Archbishop Whitgift in 1604. Bancroft was a staunch defender of the faith and an especially tenacious supporter of the Anglican Church. His long-standing feud with the Puritans made him a natural choice to lead the translation process and suited him well to devise the overarching principles of translation. His fifteen rules for translation clearly reveal bias against the Puritans and inevitably led to a translation that favored the Church of England. It is noteworthy that none of his principles suggest seeking an inerrant translation or even one dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit. Translators were simply charged with making a good English translation better by applying a mechanical and logical approach to their work (Donald L. Brake, *A Visual History of the King James Bible*, Baker Books, 2011, p. 115).

We should not miss the fact that we find nothing in the fifteen rules for translation about the final result being inerrant, or any reference to the dependence upon the Holy Spirit for guidance. In other words, the translators did not see this exercise as some sort of “divine” or “special undertaking.”

Summary To Question 29

Why Do Some People Think That The King James Version Is Either The Best, Or The Only, English Translation To Use?

Many people believe the King James Version is still the best English translation for people to use. There are some who believe it is the only translation that a Bible-believer should read and study. There are a number of reasons as to why this view is embraced.

Yet, as we shall see, the evidence does not lead us to this conclusion.

Question 30

Is The King James Version The Best English Translation To Use?

There are a number of people who believe that the *King James* Version is the *only* English translation that a person should use. Others don't go quite this far. They claim that the KJV is still the best available English translation that exists today, but others may be used as long as the KJV get preference.

What do the facts say? Is the Authorized Version, as it's known in the UK, the best translation for English speaking people to use in our modern era?

The Merits Of The King James Version

To begin with, we will acknowledge the merits of the King James Version—and there are indeed many.

First, it is indeed a literary masterpiece. The translation contains so many words and phrases that have become part of the English language—phrases that are still quoted to this day. Nobody denies this.

Second, history shows us that the KJV helped unite the English-speaking world around this one particular translation of the Bible. In fact, for over two hundred years, when the Bible was quoted in English, it was King James Version that was cited. Millions of people placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior through the reading and studying of the King James Version.

The Translators Did An Excellent Job

We should also note that the translators of the King James Version were godly men. They did an excellent job when we consider the limited tools in which they had to work with at the time.

However, there are several facts that we must take into consideration as we evaluate it in the twenty-first century.

Fact 1 Our Knowledge Has Increased Over The Last Four Centuries

We are now more than four centuries on, and learning has certainly not stood still. Therefore, we will discover, through no fault of their own, that these translators were not as well equipped as modern translators. In fact, it could not be otherwise because of the limited understanding of their times.

Fact 2 The King James Translators Understood Their Work Was Not The Last Word

The translators of the Authorized Version clearly understood that their work in 1611 was not the final word for a Bible translation for the English speaking world. In fact, they state this in their preface.

Furthermore, their text contained over 8,000 marginal notes which indicated alternative readings of the text.

In addition, they made intentional changes soon after the first edition was released. In the 1613 edition, there were 413 changes from the 1611 edition.

In 1629, the edition omitted the Old Testament Apocrypha. There was also an additional revision in 1629.

Finally in 1638, there were other revisions by two of the four people who were on the original committee.

Fact 3 It Is Not The Best English Translation Today

The King James Version of 1611 is not the best translation for modern day English speakers. As we will discover, there are a number of reasons as to why this is so.

We can make the following observations as to why this is the case.

Observation 1 The Understanding Of Hebrew Has Greatly Increased

The King James translators used the Masoretic text along with the Latin Vulgate to translate the Old Testament text. The problem in 1611 was a lack of understanding of many Hebrew words. Today, this is no longer the case.

Observation 2 There Were No Known Similar (Cognate) Languages To Hebrew

Simply put, in 1611 there was no knowledge of any of the ancient languages that were similar to Hebrew in which similar words and expressions could be compared. This created a problem since there are a number of Hebrew words that are found only once in the text of the Old Testament.

With no other ancient language to compare it with, the translators had to make an educated guess as to the meaning of these words. As we will discover some of these guesses have turned out to be inaccurate.

Add to this, the science of archaeology, the study of the debris of ancient civilizations, had not yet been born. Consequently, there were many biblical references that were not understood by the translators.

However, today we have a wealth of material from languages similar to Hebrew as well as further evidence from the discoveries of archaeology. In fact, modern translations have access to at least a dozen languages that are similar to Hebrew!

All of this has allowed modern translations into English to be more accurate and up to date. Indeed, we are still learning new things every day about the world of the Bible!

Observation 3 Advances Have Also Been Made In Our Understanding Of Greek

With respect to the New Testament, in 1611, the only Greek that was known was classical Greek. Nothing would be known about the *koine*, or common Greek, that was used in the New Testament times until the end of the nineteenth century. Once this was understood, it revolutionized our understanding of the language of the Greek New Testament.

Observation 4 The Need For Change Has Been Recognized For Some Time

There is something else to be noted. For a couple of centuries it has been recognized that the language of the King James Version needed to be updated.

In fact, in about 1831, Noah Webster, the famous lexicographer, cited 150 words that had changed their meaning since 1611. Since the Authorized Version was no longer communicating to the common person, Webster decided to correct these flaws.

Observation 5 There Are Three Categories Of Problem Words Found In KJV

As we will discover, there are three main problems with the English that is found in the King James Version. This includes English words that are presently going out of use, English words that have now become obsolete, and words that have changed in meaning since 1611.

1. Words That Are Presently Going Out Of Use

There are a number of words found in the King James Version which are going out of use in modern English. Many people might still understand what these words mean despite the fact that they are seldom, if ever, used in English today.

2. There Are A Number Of Obsolete Words In The King James Version

While words that are going out of use do not cause a big problem with the modern reader, there are a number of words found in the King James Version that are no longer used in the English language. These do cause a problem. Consider these examples which are found in the Old Testament:

“tabret” (Genesis 31:27) “blains” (Exodus. 9:9), “cotes” (Exodus 30:35) “scall” (Leviticus. 13:30) “wen” (Leviticus. 22:22) “crookbackt” (Leviticus. 21:20), champaign (Deuteronomy 11:30), “glede” (Deuteronomy. 14:13), “amerce” (Deuteronomy. 22:19), “clouted” (Joshua. 9:5), “withs” (Judges. 16:7), descry” (Judges. 1:23), “scrabbled” (1 Samuel. 21:13), felloes” (1 Kings 7:33), covert (2 Kings 16:18), collops (Job 15:27), “neeing” (Job 41:18), habergeon” (Job 41:26), “suretiship” (Proverbs. 11:15), “nitre” (Proverbs 25:20), “muffler” (Isaiah. 3:19), wimples (Isaiah 3:22), “stomacher” (Isaiah. 3:24), “brigadine” (Jeremiah. 46:4 fanners” (Jeremiah. 51:2), “sackbut” (Daniel. 3:5), “wont” (Daniel. 3:19), “cieled” (Haggai. 1:4).

The King James translation of the New Testament also contains a number of obsolete words. They are as follows.

“charger” (Matthew. 14:8), “glistening” (Luke 9:29), “wist” (Acts 12:9), “hoised” (Acts 27:40), “froward” (1 Peter 2:18)

Most modern English-speakers would not have the slightest idea as to what these words mean. In fact, they are incomprehensible to us today!

3. The Biggest Problem: Hundreds Of English Words Have Changed In Their Meaning

While words that are going out of use, or words that are now obsolete, will certainly cause problems for persons reading the King James Version in the twenty-first century, this is not the biggest problem with the words that we find in this translation. By far, the biggest problem is English words that have actually *changed* in their meaning!

Indeed, there are hundreds of words that are found in the King James Version, which are still in use today in modern English, but now mean something different than they did in 1611! As can be imagined, these words will cause the modern reader all sorts of problems.

Sadly, it may make them think that the Bible, the Word of Living God, actually says something that it does not. This is tragic.

We will give a few examples in both testaments.

Examples Of English Words In The Old Testament That Have Changed In Their Meaning Since 1611

Target

Goliath had a “target of brass” between his shoulders.

And *he had* greaves of brass upon his legs, and a target of brass between his shoulders (1 Samuel 17:6 KJV)

The word translated “target” mean “javelin.”

The Mean Men, The Mean Man

The Authorized Version speaks of the “mean” men and the “mean” man.

Seest thou a man diligent in his business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean *men* (Proverbs 22:29 KJV)

And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not (Isaiah 2:9 KJV)

This word does not refer to cruel or evil men but rather to “common men.”

Cherish

Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not (First Kings 1:2,4 KJV).

Cherish in 1611 meant “to keep warm.”

Brass

Send me now therefore a man cunning to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in iron, and in purple, and crimson, and blue (2 Chronicles 2:7 KJV).

Brass was not known in those days. The word means “bronze.”

Great And Terrible

We read the following description of God in Nehemiah:

... the great and terrible God (Nehemiah 1:5 KJV).

In 1611, the word “terrible” meant something that was “full of awe.” In other words, full of astonishment or wonderment. Today, of course, the word has the idea of something that is bad, or something full of terror. Consequently, it means just the opposite today.

Prevent

But unto thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee (Psalm 88:13 KJV).

I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried: I hoped in thy word (Psalm 119:147 KJV).

The Hebrew word actually means “to meet” or “to confront.”

But I call to you for help, Lord; in the morning my prayer meets you (Psalm 88:13 CSB).

Again this word has an entirely different meaning today.

Wealthy

Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy *place* (Psalm 66:12 KJV).

The word wealthy has a different meaning today. Wealthy meant “happy,” not rich.

Words In The KJV New Testament That Now Have A Different Meaning Today

Let

The word “let” in the KJV means to “prevent.”

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth *will let*, until he be taken out of the way (2 Thessalonians 2:7 KJV).

This is exactly the opposite of what it means today—permit or allow.

Wealth

Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth (1 Corinthians 10:24 KJV)

In modern speech, wealth refers to riches. This verse seems to be advocating we seek after other people money. However, in 1611 the word wealth meant “welfare.”

Prevent

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep (1 Thessalonians 4:15 KJV)

Today, the word prevent means “hinder.” However, in 1611 it had the idea of “come before.”

Peculiar

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14 KJV)

Peculiar meant “that which belongs to one person.” Today it means “strange.”

By And By

And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist (Mark 6:25 KJV)

The Greek term means “immediately” or “right now.”

Conversation

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked 2 Peter 2:7 (KJV).

Likewise, ye wives, *be* in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives (1 Peter 3:1 KJV)
Conversation now means talk between two or more people. In 1611 it meant “behavior.”

Evidently

He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius (Acts 10:3 KJV).

Today “evidently” has the idea of uncertainty. However, in 1611, it meant “clearly.”

Feebleminded

Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men* 1 Thessalonians 5:14 (KJV)

Feebleminded means “faint hearted.” It does not have the idea of “someone with low intelligence.”

Unspeakable

Thanks *be* unto God for his unspeakable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15 KJV)

Unspeakable can mean something that is horrible. We often hear of criminals committing an “unspeakable crime.” In this context it means “inexpressible.”

Suffer

And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple. (Mark 11:16 KJV)

Suffer meant “permit.”

Time No Longer

And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and the earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer (Revelation 10:6 KJV).

“Time no longer” does not mean the end of time or when time ceases to exist. Instead, it means “there will be no more delay.”

There Are Phrases And Sentences That Are Difficult To Understand, Or Meaningless, To Modern Readers

There are a number of sentences, as well as phrases, in the King James Version that are not comprehensible to the modern reader. They include the following.

They Sware Both Of Them

Wherefore he called that place Beersheba; because there they sware both of them (Genesis 21:31 KJV).

The place was called Beersheba because both of them swore an oath there.

Sporting With His Wife

Isaac was sporting with his wife (Genesis 26:8 KJV).

The idea is that he was caressing his wife.

Lightly Lien With Thy Wife

One of the people might have lightly lien with thy wife (Genesis 26:10 KJV)

This means to have physical relations.

Rose Up Betimes

And they rose up betimes in the morning (Genesis 26:31 KJV)

This means early in the morning.

Garment Of Leprosy

The garment also that the plague of leprosy is in (Leviticus 13:47 KJV)

Clothes do not contain leprosy.

The Coast Of Og

The coast of Og (Joshua 12:4. KJV)

This has nothing to do with water. It means territory.

Cunning To Work

... cunning to work in gold (2 Chronicles 2:7 KJV)

This has the idea of someone skilled to work in gold.

The Check Of My Reproach

I have heard the check of my reproach.” (Job 20:3 KJV)

This refers to a rebuke that dishonors the person.

Possessed My Reins

thou hast possessed my reins (Psalm 139:13 KJV)

The idea is that God has created our innermost being.

Bind The Tire Of Thine Head

Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not *thy* lips, and eat not the bread of men (Ezekiel 24:17 KJV).

Tire means turban, not something you put on a car or a bicycle!

Judgment

Ye who turn judgment to wormwood and leave off righteousness in the earth (Amos 5:7 KJV)

But let judgment run down as waters (Amos 5:24 KJV)

The word in this context has the idea of justice, not judgment.

Burden Of Nineveh

The burden of Nineveh (Nahum 1:1 KJV)

An oracle concerning Nineveh.

Answered And Said

At that time Jesus answered and said (Matthew 11:25 KJV)

Jesus was not answering anybody here or in many other similar instances where this phrase is used. It is an idiomatic expression in Greek which simply means “he answered.”

Prevented Him

Jesus prevented him” (Matthew 17:25 KJV)

This was an idiomatic expression meaning that Jesus was the first to speak.

Strain At A Gnat

strain at a gnat (Matthew 23:24 KJV).

It means “strain out a gnat”

Drink Ye All Of It

Drink ye all of it (Matthew 26:27 KJV).

Some assume that this means that you drink everything that is in the cup. However, it simply means “all of you drink it.”

Observed John

Herod “observed” John (Mark 6:20 KJV).

The word means “protected.”

Thy Cousin Elizabeth

And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth . . . (Luke 1:36 KJV).

Luke does not specifically say that Elizabeth was a “cousin” of Mary. The word simply means relative.

Saluted

Mary saluted Elizabeth (Luke 1:40 KJV).

She greeted Elizabeth.

Writing Table

And he asked for a writing table (Luke 1:63 KJV)

Zechariah did not ask for a “writing table” but rather for a “writing tablet”

Nothing Worthy Of Death Is Done Unto Him

And, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him (Luke 23:15 KJV).

This is rather muddled. The idea is that Jesus had done nothing that would cause Him to be put to death.

Fetches A Compass

And from thence we fetched a compass (Acts 28:13 KJV).

The idea is “we set sail from there.”

He That Doubteth Is Damned

And he that doubteth is damned (Romans 14:23 KJV)

That would normally be understood to mean that the person who has doubts goes to hell.. However, the Greek word here means condemned:

But whoever doubts stands condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith, and everything that is not from faith is sin (Romans 14:23 CSB)

For I Know Nothing By Myself

For I know nothing by myself (1 Corinthians 4:4 KJV)

The idea is “my conscience is clear.”

Charity

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal (1 Corinthians 13:1 KJV).

It does not have the idea philanthropy; it simply means love.

Corrupt The Word Of God

For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God (2 Corinthians 2:17 KJV).

The word has the idea of peddling the word of God for profit.

For Us Who Knew No Sin

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21 KJV).

It was not “us” who did not know sin, it was Jesus!

Ye Are Called In One Hope Of Your Calling

There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling (Ephesians 4:4 KJV)

Ye are called in one hope of your calling is unclear as to its meaning. The idea is “just as you were called to one hope when you were called.”

Conversation

“conversation” (Philippians 3:20 KJV).

The idea is “citizenship.”

Communicate With My Affliction

Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction (Philippians 4:14 KJV)

The idea is to share in my troubles.

Your Election Of God

your election of God (1 Thessalonians 1:4 KJV)

The idea is your election “by God.” God was not elected to anything!

Joy Of The Holy Spirit

joy of the Holy Spirit.” (1 Thessalonians 1:6 KJV).

The idea is joy given by the Holy Spirit.

Abstain From All Appearance Of Evil

Abstain from all appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22 KJV).

This involves a misunderstanding of the Greek idiom. Rather it means to “Avoid every kind of evil.”

Nephews

But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God (1 Timothy 5:4 (KJV).

The KJV’s “nephews” is wrong. The Greek word refers to “grandchildren.”

Supposing That Gain Is Godliness

Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness (1 Timothy 6:5 KJV)

“Supposing that gain is godliness” is not a proper way of rendering this verse. CSB’s “who imagine that godliness is a way to material gain” translates the phrase correctly.

Asia

This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me.” (2 Timothy 1:15 KJV)

Should read “the province of Asia.” China, Russia, India, etc. are not in mind here.

Silly Women

For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins (2 Timothy 3:6 KJV).

The idea is “weak-willed women.”

Seducers

But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse (2 Timothy 3:13 KJV).

The word means “impostors.”

Conclusion

In sum, it becomes evident with the above facts that the King James Version of 1611 is certainly not the best Bible translation for a person to use in the twenty first century.

Summary To Question 30

Is The King James Version The Best English Translation To Use?

The King James Bible, or the Authorized Version, has had an unparalleled influence on the English speaking world. There is no doubt about this. Yet, many claim that it is only English version for the believer today. Others don’t go as far. Instead, they say it’s the best English translation and should be the primary one used by believers today. Unfortunately, both of these conclusions are simply not true.

In fact, there has been much progress made in our understanding of biblical languages since 1611. Therefore, in a number of places, modern translations have corrected the KJV where, through no fault of their own, there was a lack of understanding of the meaning of biblical words and phrases.

With respect to the words used in the authorized version, the KJV, there are three major issues for modern readers.

First, there are words found in the KJV translation that are rarely used in modern English. Consequently, many people would not understand them.

Second, there are a number of words used that are obsolete today. Simply put, no present-day English speaker would understand what these particular words mean.

Finally, and most seriously, there are many words used in the KJV translation that now mean something different than what they did in 1611.

For these reasons, the King James Version should not be the first English Bible consulted if someone once to know the message of Scripture. Indeed, if a person insists on using it, this should only be done along with modern English translations.

Question 31

What Observations And Conclusions Can We Make Concerning The King James Only Debate?

After examining the basic issues in the King James only debate there are three important observations that should be made.

Observation 1: It Is Unfortunate That This Debate Is Still Taking Place

To begin with, it is sad that certain Bible-believing Christians are still proclaiming that there is something “special” about the King James Version of 1611; special to the point that it should be the “only” translation that an English speaker should use.

The simple fact is that the King James Version of 1611 was a revision of an earlier translation, the Bishop’s Bible. The Bishops Bible, in turn, was a revision of an earlier work by William Tyndale.

In fact, it has been estimated 80-90% of the New Testament translation of William Tyndale has been reproduced in the 1611 edition of the King James Version. Accordingly, it is likely that verses that people have memorized from the King James Bible are actually verses from Tyndale!

Therefore, there was nothing supernatural or special about its origin. While it is true that the King James Version has had an unparalleled impact in the English-speaking world, that era is over. Hence, we should not treat this particular translation as though it was the final word in English from the Lord, or that there was something supernatural in its making.

There is something else that we should mention, the language was actually 16th century English, not 17th century! Donald Brake explains:

Perhaps the most distinctive element of the King James Version is its lyrical and stylized language. The average Bible reader today is likely to believe the King James Version was translated into the language of its time: the early-seventeenth-century language of the people. But the translation of the KJV was conducted according to controlling rules and principles established by Archbishop Bancroft, one of which required use of the Bishops’ Bible as the primary reference source, thereby guaranteeing that the King James Bible would use the sixteenth-century English found in the Bishops’ Bible (Brake, p. 115).

Hence, we should refer to the language of the King James Bible as 16th century English rather than the usual designation of 17th century English.

Brake also mentions the first of fifteen principles that were set down by Archbishop Richard Bancroft guaranteed the archaic nature of the language used in the translation:

Bancroft’s rules were set forth in Rules to Be Observed in the Translation of the Bible. The first of his principles controlled the use of archaic language. Principle One: The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible; to be followed, and as little altered as the Truth of the Original will permit. As they worked within the parameters of Bancroft’s rules, the translators were committed to translating each Greek word with an English equivalent. Among other things, this decision forced them to use forms of certain personal pronouns found in the Bishops’ Bible that were already becoming archaic, such as thou, thee, thy, and ye, even though the more popular form, you, had already come into use. By contrast, the Geneva Bible word choice was more representative of the contemporary English of the day since it was written by those in exile during Mary’s reign (Brake, p. 116).

This first principle made the translation archaic from the get-go!

Observation 2: Nobody Should Desire To Use A Bible Translation Which Has Words That Are Either Outdated Or Completely Incomprehensible

This is an issue that must be seriously addressed by those who advocate a King James only approach. As we have documented, there are many words found in the King James Version that are no longer used in the English language. Therefore, they are incomprehensible to the modern reader of English. Add to this, there are many words in the KJV which have changed in their meaning since 1611!

Why, therefore, should anyone continually consult a translation that put the Scripture in a language that cannot be readily understood by its readers? The simple answer is, “They should not!”

Observation 3: There Are More Important Issues Where Christians Should Be Spending Their Energy

Finally, the main problem with emphasizing the King James only approach is the energy spent by those who are trying to convince us that we should only read this one particular English translation. All the while we live in a lost world that needs to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

As the writer to the Hebrews warned his readers, Christians need to move on to maturity.

Therefore we must progress beyond the elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity, not laying this foundation again: repentance from dead works and faith in God, teaching about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment (Hebrews 6:1-2 NET).

Hence, let us place our energies where the Scripture places them and not get sidetracked by promoting a misguided belief in an ancient English translation, that was a revision of a revision, that does not, in any way, fit the facts.

Summary To Question 31

What Observations And Conclusions Can We Make Concerning The King James Only Debate?

Simply put, there should be no “King James Only” debate. Any rational look at the evidence reveals that there is no justification whatsoever for believing that the King James Version is best, or the only English translation that a believer should use. This is just not true.

As we have documented, there was nothing miraculous about the translation itself; since it was basically a revision of an earlier Bible, the Bishop’s Bible which itself was a revision of Tyndale.

Therefore, with the world desperately needing to hear the good news about Jesus, we should move on to maturity and not waste our time debating what should be a non-issue.

About The Author

Don Stewart is a graduate of Biola University and Talbot Theological Seminary (with the highest honors).

Don is a best-selling and award-winning writer having authored, or co-authored, over eighty books. This includes the best-selling *Answers to Tough Questions*, with Josh McDowell, as well as the award-winning book *Family Handbook of Christian Knowledge: The Bible*. His various writings have been translated into over thirty different languages and have sold over a million copies.

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