

Bible Translations

Which Translation is better?

It has been our experience after having compared many English translations, that there is (at this time) not one completely reliable translation of the Bible that is correctly translated from the Hebrew or Greek host language, into the English language. **All the translations that we have reviewed have errors.** Some errors are very critical, that may lead to incorrect doctrines, some are "honest" errors, and some appear to be "deceptive." Considering the fact, that we have had English translations of the Bible for the last 500 years, this is a bit disheartening and also disturbing. We know that this is a bold statement to make, but the fact remains, we have not yet "found in our search "even one" completely reliable English translation that we would have confidence in, or that we feel accurately translates the Host Hebrew or the Greek language of the Scriptures.

We find that part of the problem is that most translations are done through committee, and many are funded by religious organizations having an agenda, or as a primary objective, are required to uphold previously formulated doctrines even though newly discovered manuscripts, or improved linguistics would demand corrections. In some cases these corrections may require that previously held doctrines must be discarded. This is indeed a dilemma for those of us seeking the pure unadulterated truth from Bible writings, no matter where it would lead, or what doctrines would need correction, the truth required in unbiased translating should never be overlooked. This problem is becoming quite clear to those seeking pure unadulterated truth found in Scripture, and it is prompting many people to ask us which translation we use, and which translation we would recommend.

Even errors that have been perpetuated for centuries, i.e. error upon error, should be corrected in all unbiased correctly translated English Bibles. For example, **there is no book in the Bible that is (in the original Greek) called "James."** The Greek language has always called the book "**Jacob.**" Early translators committed an error in translation, and subsequent translations have perpetuated the same error so as not to offend. But, calling the book of Jacob "James" is an absolute indisputable translation error. The book of "James" does not exist. It is the book of Jacob in the Greek language, and it has always been the book of Jacob. Maybe this was a tribute by the early translators to "King James" who led to the "King James Version" (KJV) of the Bible, we don't know, but an accurate translation would correct such error, or at least provide a correction in a footnote.

Since it is our opinion that an accurate translation in the English language does NOT at this time exist (that we know of), it is not possible to answer the question which Bible we would recommend. However, there are some English translations that are clearly better than others, at least in some areas. Here is some background information and some basic requirements that we feel are necessary for any translation to be considered "useful."

Basic Concepts of Translation

There are two basic approaches to translation

- 1). The literal approach - The literal method seeks to convey the exact sense of the words, and in many cases, also the structure of the original host language into the words of the new language.
- 2). The paraphrase approach - or as is sometimes referred, the "dynamic equivalent" method. This approach attempts to translate the "essential thought" of the original language into the idiom and flow of the new language.

In reviewing these two basic methods, one quickly establishes a problem with the literal approach, in that an overly literal translation will many times develop into nonsense in the new language, when ancient idioms, metaphors, and figures of speech of the host language are translated into the new language. On the other hand, translating with the paraphrase approach, i.e. the "essential thought" system, using the "dynamic equivalent" method, can actually contribute toward obscuring or completely altering the original text, based upon the opinion of the translator(s), which is of course also not an option. The liberal, or free paraphrase translation

approach, may also invite deliberate deception, or the infusion of private doctrine especially when too much liberty is used to establish the "dynamic equivalent" translation, or to add language where the translator feels the need to "fill in" private perceived gaps.

Minimum Translation Objectives

A good translation must remain on the literal side of the translation spectrum, but it must also recognize that the new language should be somewhat "transparent" to allow the reader to see, "feel" and to hear the true dynamics of the host language through the translated language. This would include alliteration, word play, puns, idioms, metaphors, figures of speech, rhythm, even redundancies and obscurities. Because many Hebrew words are compound words, in other words contain sever connected meanings, one Hebrew word may require several English words to properly convey the meaning. YHWH (Yahweh) for example, the Almighty Sovereign Creator's name really means "He-Is, or He- exists, Ever-Living." The name Yahshua (aka Jesus) means "Yah-saves" or Yahweh is Savior" this meaning is completely lost in the word "Jesus."

There are many places in the language of the original Scriptures, both in the Hebrew, Aramaic, in the Greek, where the language is "unclear" or "uncertain, or has become "obscure." There is a tendency for some translators to "fill in" these areas, which then becomes their "Best Judgment" solution as to what may be "in their opinion," the proper meaning of the original text. In cases like this, it is our belief that the meaning should remain obscure, or uncertain, rather than placing in the translated text a "Best Judgment" solution provided by the translator. In such cases, a footnote should incorporate ALL the possible alternatives, rather than providing in the text, only the "Best Judgment" solution of the translator.

Textual Variants

Generally, the oldest complete manuscripts of the Hebrew, and of the Greek, would be considered the most reliable, and the backbone for the new translation. However, there are variants not only in the texts of the Masoretic tradition, but also in the Greek Septuagint, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Syriac, and the Samaritan (Pentateuch), to name a few. In the case of the New Testament, we have the Leningrad Codex, and the Codex Sinaiticus, and several other great Codices like the Vaticanus, Alexandrinus, the Bezae, and the so-called Textus Receptus. There are also the thousands of papyri fragments available, plus existing versions like the Syriac and the Valgate et al.

Good translations will make use of the oldest complete originals, and place ALL the variants and their source in the footnotes, rather than developing an eclectic blend of many manuscripts in an attempt to recover what the scholars may feel is "the most original reading."

Names with Reverence

One of the most common of errors found in many Modern Translations is the perversion, and continuous obstruction of the proper Name of the Creator, "Yahweh" and the proper name of the son "Yahshua." Scripture clearly provides us with these proper names. **In a correct reliable translation, the proper names must be used, there is in our opinion, no exception.** Substitutions for the proper names must not be permitted and is in fact a violation of the Commandment, "You shall not hold the name of Yahweh, your Alueim to no effect. . ." The Tetragrammaton **YHVH, YHWH** (transliterated as Yahweh) should never be translated as LORD, and "Alueim" (Mighty One(s)) should never be translated as "G-d" or as "g-d."

As a minimum, the following Names should be used in a good translation

YHWH, or YHVH (transliterated as **Yahweh or Yahuweh**, the proper Name of the Creator)

YAH (as a shortened form of **YHWH**)

ADON (translated as Master) but never as Lord

ADONI (plural of **ADON**)

EL, ELOAH and the plural **ELOHIM** (translated as Mighty One(s) or mighty one(s))

ELYON (translated as Most High) **YAHSHUA (Yahushua, or Yehoshua)** the proper name of the son, (never Yeshua or J-sus)

ANOINTED or Messiah (rather than Christ)

Correct usage of the proper names can eliminate much confusion in Scripture. The word G-d, Gawd, Gad, in its many forms or derivatives are all from pagan sources, and should be avoided.

Supplied words

There are times where the English requires words that are supplied by the translators to produce "smooth English." Many of these reflect the use of the article "the" and is often supplied in English translations. However the article "the" is definite, when the host language may have required the use of the "indefinite." Supplied words should be minimized in any translation, even if the reading is not quite as "smooth" in the new language. In either case, when "supplied words" are used, they should always be clearly indicated by use of the "italic type" as adopted by the KJV or by some other notation.

Footnotes

Footnotes have a proper purpose, but may also be misused. They may be used to cross reference similar passages or phrases, or they may relate to linguistic matters with the clear intent to clarify the translation, or to indicate textual variants. Footnotes should provide enough information for the reader to make an informed judgment, on the text. **Footnotes but should never be an attempt by the translator to "interpret the text" or the "application" of the text.** Theological interpretations, or doctrinal understandings, or conjecture of any kind in Footnotes must be strictly avoided.

Conclusion

It is our opinion that ALL translations have errors of some form or another, some are deliberate, some have good intent. Some incorrect assumptions are made when the meaning of common words (as in the 1911 KJV) changes with time. A good translation must accurately convey the meaning of the original host language in the new language. Sometimes this requires more than a "word for word" translation from the original host language, sometimes only a "direct word for word" translation is the only honest method. If the literal meaning is "transparent enough" in the host language, it might be best to let the reader formulate the meaning from the original, rather than transliterate or be the manufacturer of the meaning in the New language. In most cases, the substitute a "new" word for a word which has no direct corresponding word or term of the original language will likely lead to error. It is better, in these cases then, to transliterate rather than translate the word.

The key for the student is to use as many well known translations as are available, then compare the verses that you have under study. If there is considerable disagreement, this would call for further study most likely in the language of the Hebrew, the Aramaic, or in the Greek.

The following Translations are better than most "English" Translations, (we have given their good points and bad points)

THE SCRIPTURES

For online information: click this link - [The Scriptures](#)

Or write to:

Institute for Scripture Research

P.O. Box 1830

Northriding

2162 South Africa

Good points: Uses the Hebrew letters for the Sacred Names and "Alueim" for God. In the Preface, it is stated

that this is done to avoid getting into the middle of the controversy of "Yahweh", "Yahuweh", "Yahoweh", "Yahowah", "Yehowah, etc. The books of the Bible are arranged in the traditional Hebraic order of the TANAK (Torah, Nebi'im, and Kethubim - Teaching, Prophets, and Writings). Good for learning the proper Hebrew transliterated into English letters to form the Hebrew or Greek proper names.

Bad Points: Full of footnote opinions that attempt to define the dogma of the Author(s) or the editor in the Footnotes. Opinions have no place in a good translation, especially those that have a specific doctrinal slant, as many in this translation do. **Avoid the opinions in this Translation**, they are not accurate! Also, be aware, that this translation is biased in the "futurist position" i.e., they believe in a so-called second coming (which is not supported by Scripture).

THE SACRED SCRIPTURES (Bethel Edition)

For online information: click this link - [The Sacred Scriptures \(Bethel Edition\)](#)

Or write to:

Assemblies of Yahweh

P. O. Box C Bethel, PA 19507

Good points: The Bethel Edition uses "Yahweh", "Yahshua", and "Alueim" and is based on the translation work of the AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION 1901. The books of the Bible are arranged as in the ASV, KJV, and NIV versions. This translation is good for the OT.

Bad Points: This translation is lacking and dated in the NT, from the poor NT translation of the 1901 ASV, and not having available for its NT text the latest discovered manuscripts.

THE KING JAMES (New King James)

Available most anywhere

Good Points: Many errors of the 1611 version have been corrected in the more modern translations. Useful because of the many available study documents, and Hebrew and Greek helps that are keyed to the translation.

Bad Points: Even the New King James, is still a revision of the earlier 1611 translation. Great for its time but not accurate in either the Hebrew or the Greek due to the limited availability to the translators of ancient manuscripts.

THE JERUSALEM BIBLE

Available most anywhere

This translation is based on textual studies of the Roman Catholic School of Biblical Studies in Jerusalem, and is an English translation of the French Bible prepared under editorship of Rere Rolan de Vaux, OP. The English version was prepared under English Scholars. Includes the Apocrypha.

Good Points: Uses the proper name Yahweh in the OT, has informative footnotes, that are largely non-sectarian even though the scholars are all Roman Catholic. Worth having for comparing and study purposes.

Bad Points: It is sometimes a bit too liberal in Translation and becomes "interpretive" at times.

THE CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT (New Testament only at this time)

From the Concordant Publishing Concern [Concordant Publishing](#)

15570 West Knochaven Road,
Canyon Country, CA 91351

Good points: accurate in the proper translation of important "pronouns." Includes a very handy built in Keyword Concordance, helpful to determine the etymology of the Greek word behind the English translation. Still somewhat biased, but quite literal.

Bad Points: Does not use the proper name "Yahshua" in the NT. Sometimes reads a bit backward due to the "concordant method of translation."

Translations to avoid:

Avoid any and ALL "paraphrased" translations of the Bible. Avoid translations that use "textual freedoms." Avoid any Translation with excessive leading commentary or doctrinal bias in the footnotes. Avoid any Bible translation funded by a Denomination or that is promoted by a particular Ministry. Avoid Commentaries based upon pre-conceived Christian specific doctrines. The following list includes some of these types of Bibles, but this list it is far from conclusive, Be Aware.

Avoid "The New Testament in Modern English" by J. B. Phillips

Avoid "The Living Bible" (Living letters) by Kenneth N. Taylor.

Avoid "Today's English Version" (Good News for Modern Man) the American Bible Society.

Avoid "New International Version" New York Bible Society.

Avoid "The New Testament" Recovery Version, promoted by the Living Stream Ministry

Assembly of Yahweh, Cascade

<http://AOYcascade.com>