

THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION (1979/1982) – THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION (1989) – THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (2001)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In the last quarter of the Twentieth century, and into the beginning of the Twenty-First century, three translations of the Bible in the English language appeared.
2. The Thomas Nelson Corporation sponsored the New King James. The National Council of Churches is behind the New Revised Standard Version, Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publications, introduced the English Standard Version.

I. THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION (NKJV- 1979/1982)

- A. New Testament –1979; Old Testament - 1982
- B. Sam Moore, the President of Thomas Nelson Corporation saw the need “to modernize the language of the King James Version without compromising its text or translation principles.” (The Journey From Texts to Translations, p. 329)
 1. Textus Receptus (1881) was the Greek Text used.
 2. Footnotes indicating the knowledge from manuscripts discovered since the King James Version of 1611.
- C. More than 130 evangelical scholars worked as translators.
 1. Arthur Farstad was director of the New Testament (Dallas Theological Seminary); William White and later James D. Price (Temple Baptist Theological Seminary) headed the Translation of the Old Testament.
 2. Completed sections were passed to William H. McDowell, the English editor who checked grammatical accuracy, literary beauty, and effective communication” (The Journey From Texts to Translations, p. 330)
 3. Word-for-word translation technique.
- D. The translation – Characteristics
 1. Words not found in original text but necessary to make text understandable are set off by italics – except the 1979 printing of the N.T.
 2. All titles and terms are capitalized when referring to any member of the Godhead. (Examples: “Seed” –Gen. 3:15, Gal. 3:16; “Son” – Isa. 7:14; “Child” – Isa. 9:6; “Rod” and “Branch” – Isa. 11:1; “Servant” – Isa. 52:13; “Son of Man” – Dan. 7:13).
 3. Language kept that many consider outdated. (Examples: “feigned” – I Sam. 21:13, “winebibbers” – Prov. 23:20, Matt. 11:19, Lk. 7:34; “eventide” – Isa. 17:14; “the matrix of My mother” – Isa.

- 49:1; “dandled” – Isa. 66:12, “offscouring” – Lam. 3:45; “paramours” – Ezek. 23:20; “pinions” – Job. 39:13).
4. Improvements:
 - a. Acts 2:47 – “were being saved”.
 - b. I Pet. 3:21 – water baptism – “an antitype now saves you”.
 5. After first seven years of publication the New King James as run no better than third in sales – NIV and KJV consistently ahead – (Publishers Weekly, 1990).

II. THE NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION (NRSV- 1989)

- A. While a revision was produced in 1971 of the New Testament of the 1946,1952 Revised Standard Version, a revision of the Old Testament had never been done. So, in 1974, the Policies Committee of the Revised Standard Version proposed a complete revision of the Revised Standard Version.
 1. Bruce Metzger – chairman of new revision
 2. Information had come available from the Dead Sea Scrolls – early copies of all the books of the Hebrew Scriptures – except Esther.
- B. 30 well-known scholars (men and women) participated in the new translation.
 1. Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Jewish
 2. Joseph Blenkinsopp (Notre Dame)
 3. Paul D. Hanson (Harvard)
 4. Walter Harrelson (Vanderbilt)
 5. Marvin Pope (Yale)
 6. Translation techniques: Literal as possible, as free as necessary.
- C. Comparison of Terms from Revised Standard and New Revised Standard
 1. “base fellows” – “Scoundrels” – Deut. 13:13
 2. “sluggard” – “lazybones” – Prov. 6:6,9
 3. “sinner” – “bungler” – Eccl. 9:18
 4. “astonished” – “spellbound” – Mk. 11:18
 5. “unjust” – “rogues” – Lk. 18:11
 6. “judge” – “liberator” – Acts 7:35
 7. “wicked fellows of the rabble” – “ruffians” – Acts 17:5
 8. “spokesman” – “attorney” – Acts 24:1

III. THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV – 2001)

- A. Attitude towards Bible in preface: “God’s sacred Word...is that inestimable treasure that excelleth all the riches of the earth.” – “The

translators pledge that this sentiment ‘is the motivating force’ that undergirds the publication of the ESV.” (The Bible Translation Controversy Expanded Edition, Wayne Jackson, p. 23).

- B. More than 100 scholars worked on the translation.
1. Robert Mounce
 2. J.I Packer
 3. R.C. Sproul
 4. Leon Morris
 5. Harold Hoehner
 6. Jack Cottrell
 7. Translation technique was “...to capture the precise wording of the original text and personal style of each Bible writer.” – Produce a “word-for-word” edition (Ibid, p. 23).
- C. Characteristics of the Translation
1. “virgin” in Isa. 7:14 – Isaiah in harmony with Matthew (Matt. 1:22-23)
 2. “Expanse” instead of “firmament” in Gen. 1:7,8
 3. “God tested Abraham” instead “tempted” in Gen. 22:1 (cf. Jms. 1:13).
 4. “you are restricted in your own affections” instead of “you are straightened in your own bowels” (2 Cor. 6:12, KJV).
 5. “On the first day of *every* week” instead of “On the first day of the week” in I Cor. 16:2.
 6. “not enslaved” instead of “is not bound” (NIV) in I Cor. 7:15.
 7. Translates “porneia”, translated “fornication” (ASV), as “sexual immorality” (Matt. 19:9)
 8. Translates “monogenes”, translated “only begotten” (KJV) as “only” (John 3:16, cf. Lk. 7:12, 8:42).
 9. Translates the “present participle, huparchon” as “was in the form of God” instead of “being” or “existing” in the form of God (Phil. 2:6, KJV, ASV).
 10. Translates “aner” and “gune” as “husband “ and “wife” instead of “man” and “woman” (I Cor. 11:3ff).
 11. “Perfect” instead of “complete” while rendering I Cor. 13:10b as “the partial”.
 12. Renders Greek word “hades” “hell” in Matt. 16:18 and “hades” in Acts 2:27.
 13. Has in footnotes the recognition of the “perfect tense” in Matt. 16:19, 18:18 – “shall have been bound”.
 14. Does not put in italics the words that were being added for clarification purposes as KJV, NKJV, ASV and NASB do.