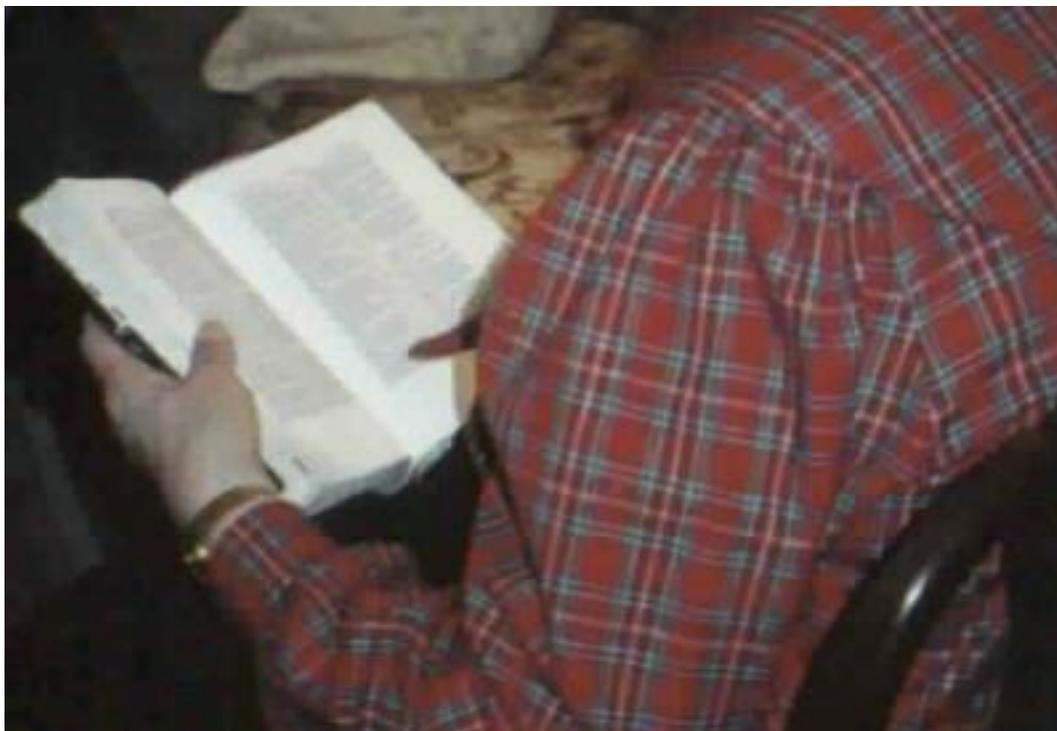


Bible Translations

(See also Bible Study)



It is not uncommon to find Christians who firmly believe that the King James Bible is some way the only legitimate Bible. It, however, despite its strengths, has no more claim to legitimacy than most other translations. It was translated in 1611 by command of King James of England. At the time of its translation, few ancient Hebrew or Greek manuscripts were available. Its language is the English of the early 17th century - a language which has words and usage not familiar to most of us today. Nevertheless, it has proven over the last four centuries a blessing to God's people and, because so many reference works are based on it, it is very useful as a primary study Bible.

Perhaps one thing to consider when choosing which Bible to use as a primary study Bible is that, because it will be primary, we get used to its language and we remember texts by the words of that particular translation. If we regularly switch translations, it is not as easy for us to remember or to find texts.

It is wisest to choose as a primary study Bible either the King James (because of its familiarity and the help based on it), or some other widely-used translation which has many reference works based on it. The New American Standard is the better of such choices. Remember, however, that regardless of translation, the good student, after study and comparison, will find it necessary to make changes to the text. Important errors exist in all translations. Many FEAR to make alterations in such a holy book;

but it is the Bible which is holy, not the translation. As more reliable and ancient manuscripts are discovered and evaluated, it is NECESSARY for an honest Christian to bring his own Bible translation as close to accuracy as humanly possible. We want God's Words, not the translators'!

Even though we usually favor our primary study Bible, all good students have come to realize the advantages of comparing translations. Sometimes we are even amazed how some poor translations are able to clarify some obscure verses.

There are too many translations to list. However, there are a few translations which are extremely helpful due to carefulness of the translator or due to his ability to choose words which best convey the original meaning best when translated into English. We will list a few with their strengths.

1. **THE EMPHASIZED BIBLE** by Joseph Rotherham

This is a 19th century translation by a man who was clearly reverent and conscientious. It is not easy to read but it does have the mark of honesty.

2. **A NEW TRANSLATION** by William Barclay

This 20th century work is excellent for easy reading and marvelous vocabulary. So frequently, it conveys accurately the Greek meaning by using a phrase instead of a single word for translation.

3. **THE EMPHATIC DIAGLOTT** by Benjamin Wilson

Wilson was a Presbyterian who denied the existence of a personal devil. Nevertheless, his work is accurate and insightful. Unfortunately, the Watchtower Tract Society, publisher of this work, is reluctant to let it be had by the general public.

4. **CONCORDANT LITERAL NEW TESTAMENT** published by Concordant Publishing

This is a 20th century work which attempts, where possible, to be consistent in the translation of individual words. This does not always provide smooth reading, but it often reveals the normally unseen. The Old Testament is currently in process of translation.

5. **TANAKH – THE HOLY SCRIPTURES** published by the Jewish Publication Society

This new version of the Hebrews Scriptures is an invaluable help getting a fresh perspective on Old Testament texts.

6. **THE BIBLE IN MODERN ENGLISH** by Ferrar Fenton

Fenton, in this 19th century translation, is eccentric to the extreme. His eccentricities, however, reveal much that may not otherwise be seen.

7. **THE NEW TESTAMENT IN MODERN SPEECH** by R. F. Weymouth

Weymouth died before completing this 19th century work. Others have revised his work through numerous editions. The first edition is best.

Weymouth seems to have been a reverent man hoping to provide clarity and readability.