

Teaching Sound Doctrine

Bible Translations Pt.6

First of all, the Preface of the NIV should be considered in order to gain an understanding of the perspective of the translation committee. Unfortunately, the church of Christ is listed among and referenced as a denomination. Anyone who has ever read Christ's prayer for unity in John 17:20-23 knows how disappointing it is to see the church for which he died presented as being what Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, and Wesleyan are—a denomination. The word of God teaches, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

The seventh paragraph of the Preface says, "The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers. They have striven for more than a word-for-word translation." If we are told the translators are placing emphasis on "the thought of the biblical writers" and were going for "more than a word-for-word translation," then we ought not be surprised if that is just what they have done. Those who write about what the biblical writers thought based upon the words they used in the text are called commentators, not translators. Some of the doctrines crucial to the denominations listed in the Preface did make their way into the NIV, and herein lies one of the greatest dangers of the NIV. The commentators have placed their denominational views into the text. If the NIV is easier to read and understand than the KJV or ASV and contains errors, then the error is easily grasped and in many cases more readily accepted than a creed book, manual, book of discipline, catechism, or even an erroneous commentary would be because it has been presented as if it were the Bible itself.

G. The interpretive nature of the NIV.

1. Psa. 51:5 "5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (KJV) "5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (NIV)

a. Choices must be made in translating passages.

(1) Passages can be translated in more than one way and both be a correct

translation.

(2) There is often more than one interpretation of a passage.

b. If a translation chooses to translate a passage in such a way that eliminates certain possible interpretations and forces another, they do an injustice to the reader.

c. The NIV has taken a view of total depravity of man and forced this interpretation upon the reader in this passage.

(1) The reader should be given the privilege of studying for himself all possible interpretations and determining the meaning for himself.

(2) The NIV's forced interpretation of Total Depravity is false.

2. Mat. 19:28 “28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (KJV) “28 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” (NIV)

a. There is no textual basis for “the renewal of all things.”

b. The change to *renewal* instead of *regeneration* (as is in the KJV and ASV) is to accommodate Premillennialism which the translators believe.

(1) The only other time this word is found in the Bible is Tit. 3:5.

(2) There the NIV translated it *rebirth* (which is a correct translation).

3. Acts 3:21 “21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (KJV) “21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.” (NIV)

a. The NIV has revised the beginning of this verse to: “21 Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything...”

b. Here the NIV changes the plural *times* (which is in KJV and the Greek) to the singular *time*.

c. This makes the times of restitution begin where the Greek has them ending.

- (1) The times of restitution are to end at the descent of Christ from heaven.
- (2) The only reason to change as the NIV does it is the theological bias of the translators.

H. The English Standard Version (ESV).

1. This is the new *darling* version that has become very popular.

2. Both English Standard Version and ESV “are registered trademarks of Good News Publishers. Use of either trademark requires the permission of Good News Publishers...When quotations from the ESV text are used in non-saleable media, such as church bulletins, orders of service, posters, transparencies, or similar media, a complete copyright notice is not required, but the initials (ESV) must appear at the end of the quotation.”

3. A couple of its claims in the preface:

a. “The words and phrases themselves grow out of the Tyndale–King James legacy, and most recently out of the RSV, with the 1971 RSV text providing the starting point for our work.” Thus, if you compare the RSV and the ESV according to (Randy Kea in his review of the ESV).there is “great similarity” and “in most places there is no difference at all”

b. “The ESV is an ‘essentially literal’ translation that seeks as far as possible to reproduce the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on ‘word-for-word’ correspondence, at the same time taking full account of differences in grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages.”

c. Notice this telling point giving into gender inclusion language: “In the area of gender language, the goal of the ESV is to render literally what is in the original. For example, ‘anyone’ replaces ‘any man’ where there is no word corresponding to ‘man’ in the original languages, and ‘people’ rather than ‘men’ is regularly used where the original languages refer to both men and women.”

(1) Gen. 3:16 “16 To the woman he said, “I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.””

(2) Mat. 12:31 “31 Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.”

(3) Jam. 3:8 “8 but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”