

From the Pastor

It is a terrible irony that our generation, which has known in an unprecedented way the wonderful blessing of the availability of God's Word in the English language, also has experienced serious confusion over the topic of Bible translations.

This little pamphlet is designed to let you know about the convictions we hold dear at New Boston Baptist Church when it comes to our Bibles.

Few today realize that the first King James Version of the Bible, published in 1611, included an 11 page preface called, "The Translators to the Readers." Had this preface been published with each successive copy of the KJV Bible, today's controversy may have never happened. We refer to this preface repeatedly here. Our convictions are nothing new.

May God richly bless both your confidence in and your understanding of the Holy Scriptures. We hope you will contact us regarding any questions you may have on this important topic.

Our Weekly Schedule

Sunday:

10:30 am Sunday morning worship

12:00 pm Fellowship

12:30 pm Mutual ministry assembly

Tuesday:

6:00 am Men's Morning Prayer

Wednesday:

9:00 am Ladies Bible Study (2nd and 4th weeks of the month)

Thursday:

7:00 pm Prayer Meeting for all ages

A nursery room is available for parents, but children are welcome at all services.

Please visit our website for additional information and other ongoing ministries.

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What the Bible
Teaches About:

Bible Translations



New Boston Baptist Church

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What the Bible teaches about Bible translations.

Before discussing Bible translations, we should begin by noting exactly why this discussion is so very important.

At New Boston Baptist Church, the Bible is our only rule of faith and practice. We believe that when God gave mankind the Bible, using over 40 different authors with varying backgrounds spanning roughly 15 centuries, He miraculously gave us a revelation of Himself that is consistent, unified, complete, and truthful.

This miracle, called *inspiration*, did not involve a dictation process, but it did involve a supernatural superintendence that made all of the words written by these authors in the Bible the very words of God. They wrote in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, for reasons unique to their situations and with styles unique to their abilities, and when they did so, God spoke His inerrant revelation to man.

This conviction puts us in league not only with our Baptist forefathers and all other Protestants who are true to their heritage, but also with the faith of Jesus Christ and the apostles, like Paul and Peter (2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 1:21). When Jesus quoted Moses' writings in Genesis 2:24, He did so by saying, "[God] said . . ." (Matt. 19:4-5).

The practical implications of this conviction are clear. First, it means that God has communicated to us an objectively verifiable message. He has communicated to us just as others communicate to us. When Congress communicates a law in writing, they do so assuming that citizens will be able to ascertain the law's intended meaning through the normal use of the conventions of language. The meaning of a law is never thought to be a matter of the personal opinion of the reader,

but rather a function of the intent of the author. The meaning of the Bible is clear in the same sense.

Second, true religion consists of possessing and obeying this clear revelation from God. Bible translations help us possess, understand, and obey the Word of God in our own language. With these foundational understandings, note five important principles from "The Translators to the Readers" (Preface to the KJV) regarding the preservation and translation of the Bible.

(1) The preservation of the Bible is different than the inspiration of the Bible.

Whereas the inspiration of Scripture is a work of God's revelation, a supernatural process involving authors, the preservation of Scripture is a work of God's providence, a natural process involving publishers and translators. The KJV translators understood this doctrine: "For whatever was perfect under the Sun, where Apostles or Apostolic men, that is, men endued with an extraordinary measure of God's spirit, and privileged with the privilege of infallibility, had not their hand?" Clearly, one cannot improve upon the original manuscripts of the authors of Scripture. Translations, however, may involve room for improvement. The KJV translators never claimed apostolic infallibility for their translation.

(2) Translation is a blessing to be appreciated, not a curse to be avoided.

The Preface says: "Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water." Because language changes over time, the passage of time requires translation updating. Disallowance of this important work hinders understanding. No English translation has made all new translation an evil.

(3) Preservation has not precluded variation among translations.

Though by far the best preserved book of antiquity, the Bible's original manuscripts no longer exist, and minor

variation exists among the copies of extant manuscripts. God has not eliminated completely variation through preservation. The KJV translators agree: "Therefore as S. Augustine saith, that variety of Translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures: so diversity of signification and sense in the margin, where the text is not so clear, must needs do good."

(4) Preservation has precluded doctrinally significant variation.

The Preface says: "it hath pleased God in his divine providence, here and there to scatter words and sentences of that difficulty and doubtfulness, not in doctrinal points that concern salvation." No doctrine of the common confession of Christianity depends upon the use of a particular translation or a specific segment of textual evidence.

(5) The originals are the standard that judges every translation.

Though the originals no longer exist, what they said certainly does in the extant manuscripts available to us today. With small exception, it is perfectly clear what the originals said. A translation is the Word of God only if it accurately reflects this sense of the originals. If that sense is unclear, we must patiently await more evidence. The Preface counsels: "also, if anything be halting, or superfluous, or not so agreeable to the original, the same may be corrected, and the truth set in place."

Finally, remember that Christ and the apostles used both the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. The variation between these is significant, yet where they were sound each was used as God's authoritative truth. Neither our Lord nor His apostles picked one option over the other in service of a my-translation-only crusade. They were thankful for both, and they used both humbly in the cause of truth. We do well in this important area only when we follow their example.