

Reference: VARIOUS

Church: GRACE

Date: 4/30/00

Word of God - Translations

Purpose: To review the basis of the English translations of the Bible and show how and why they differ from each other.

1. Introduction

- the inspiration of Scripture
- its inerrancy
- how we have the canon of scripture today
- the authority of Scripture
- how Scripture attests to itself
- the sufficiency of Scripture
- the work of the Spirit in illumination
- Last week?
- Transmission of Scripture
- How well preserved are the OT and NT texts?

This week, will look at the subject of translation of Scriptures

2. Why translate?

What would be the reasons to translate the Bible?

Accessibility to the reader

People want to read the Bible in their own language

Any support in the Bible for this?

Faith comes through hearing

The Gospel is address to the mind

There must be understanding

1 Corinthians 14:6-11 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? 7 Yet even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? 8 For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 9 So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. 10 There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. 11 If then I do not

know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me.

Also NT quotes of Septuagint

What is the danger where scriptures are not in the language?

RC – never allowed laity to read scriptures until 1940's

3. Is translation a new thing?

No – think of Septuagint in 250 B.C.

Many translations were made in different languages – early as 2nd C

Coptic for Egyptians, Syriac for Aramaic speakers, gothic for the Germanic groups, latin for the Romans etc.

Jerome, 400 AD – Vulgate (“common”)

4. What are the pros and cons of a translation?

Pro – people understand

Pro – Can revise as language evolves

Con – it is a translation – not perfect or flawless

Sometimes hard to render the exact meaning from another language

5. Our English Translations

See where our translations come from

Pick up on the Greek and Hebrew texts as we saw them last week

See handout.

5.1. Different Approaches to Translation

5.1.1. Formal Equivalence

Attempt to give a more literal translation

Adhere as closely as possible to the original text

5.1.2. Dynamic Equivalence

Translate words with thoughts

One word with a phrase – often interpretive

Update thoughts into modern idiom

5.1.3. Paraphrase

Use any words to attempt to convey the meaning
Not a translation

5.2. *Translations of the Latin Vulgate*

5.2.1. Caedmon

Monk from Rome
Metrical version of parts of OT & NT
Probably 1st English Scriptures -

5.2.2. Bede

Also churchman – translated the Gospels

5.2.3. Alfred the Great

True believer.
Translated 10 Commandments and Psalms
Used 10 Commandments in his laws

5.2.4. Lindisfarne Gospels

950 AD

5.2.5. Shoreham's Psalms, Rolle's Psalms

14th C

5.2.6. Wycliffe

Eminent Oxford Theologian
Questioned Papal authority
Criticized sale of indulgences
Denied transubstantiation
Translated whole Bible into English
To help people see errors of Rome
“Poor preachers” or Lollards traveled the land to teach the gospel
and read scripture in English
Condemned for heresy decades after death
Dug up body, burned it and threw ashes into a river

5.3. *Translations from the original languages*

2 things happened now to change matters entirely
First – renaissance led to renewed study of Greek and Hebrew
Second – invention of printing

5.3.1. Tyndale, Coverdale

Tyndale studies Greek & Hebrew scriptures
Fled England due to persecution
RC opposed putting scriptures into hands of laity
Competed NT and began smuggling into England
Martyred before the OT completed
Coverdale took up the work and finished entire Bible in 1537
Henry VIII severed ties with Pope and accepted the Bible!

5.3.2. Matthews Bible and Great Bible

Matthews – John Rogers – friend of Tyndale
Based on Tyndale and Coverdale
Also received King's favor
Revised for public use - large and expensive

5.3.3. Geneva Bible

Translation for English exiles in Geneva
Annotated according to teaching of Calvin

5.3.4. Bishops' Bible

Issued to improve the Great Bible
To compete with Geneva Bible
Used many sources, including Geneva Bible
Deleted the notes!

5.3.5. KJV

James I of England
Called together scholars to do the work
Told to follow the Bishops' Bible
Captured all preceding translations and exceeded them
Authorized by the King

But over time more learning (esp. Hebrew)
More texts were found
Weaknesses in the text used for KJV recognized

5.3.6. English Revised Version

Major revision of KJV
Corrected mistranslations in OT and NT
Decided to follow Westcott and Hort, not TR
Non-conservative scholars involved

5.3.7. American Standard Version

American scholars joined work on RV
Allowed to publish their own version 15 years later – ASB - 1901
Accurate, literal rendering of very trustworthy OT and NT texts.

5.3.8. Revised Standard Version

Growing recognition that scriptures were in everyday Greek
Koine Greek
Decided to translate into modern everyday English
Also – new texts found (Dead Sea Scrolls, Chester Beatty Papyri)
Not very evangelical in emphasis
Waters down Deity of Christ

5.3.9. NASB

Evangelical translation based on eclectic Greek and latest Hebrew texts
Wanted to renew interest in ASV
Stuck to original texts
Sometimes not very readable
But it is a very accurate translation

5.3.10.NIV

Modern translation
Used dynamic equivalence
Very popular
Outsold the KJV since 1987

It is interpretive in places
Sometimes helpful, sometimes not

5.3.11.NKJV

Revised the KJV but NT based only on TR
Takes no account of the wealth of texts found since 1550.
Does correct some of the difficulties in KJV
Modernizes language.

6. Conclusions

What is the best version?
Generates more heat than light
Should thank God we have so many to choose from
Some do not even have the whole Bible
Factor that adds to the condemnation against us

Bible suit different purposes – reading, study
Different translations can draw out different shades
ASV, KJV, NIV and NASB good set to work from
Why limit to only one?
Next week – can a believer understand everything in the Bible?