

## Issues in Translation

For more, see White, James R. *The King James Only Controversy*. (Minneapolis: Bethany House), 2009.  
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See also Jones, *How We Got the Bible*

“Reading the Bible in translation is like kissing your bride through the veil.”

– Jewish poet Hayyim Nachman Bialik

- I. The “Best” Bible Translation? This issue often comes up particularly regarding KJV
  - A. “I like KJV the best” – this group tends not to be an issue – God bless them
  - B. Some use the Text family (Majority Text/Textus Receptus) argument
    1. Don’t necessarily oppose original languages or good argumentation
    2. Think the underlying texts favor the KJV
  - C. Others say KJV was *inspired* in 1611
    1. They often call it King James Bible – since to them it’s the only valid Bible in English
    2. Their logic: “The King James Bible Alone = The Word of God Alone”;  
This tends to be their starting point and ending point.
    3. Not interested in underlying original languages
    4. Not interested in underlying text families
    5. Often militant – can cause severe division within the church
  - D. An even more extreme group says KJV was actually new revelation
    1. 1611 English version was re-inspired
    2. Greek and Hebrew originals should be changed to match KJV English
    3. Often militant – can cause severe division within the church
- II. Some History (history repeating itself)
  - A. [early 5<sup>th</sup> c. AD] Jerome and his Vulgate (Latin) were excoriated by Augustine and followers
    1. Not because Vulgate was inaccurate
    2. But because it was unfamiliar
      - a. This isn’t the Bible we know and love (LXX – Septuagint)
      - b. This isn’t the apostles’ Bible (LXX)
    3. Eventually, Vulgate supplanted LXX as the Bible of choice
  - B. [c.AD 1514] Erasmus published 1st printed edition of Greek NT (w/ Latin translation side-by-side)
    1. Those in love with the Vulgate were just as angry with Erasmus as Augustine’s followers were with Jerome 1100 years prior!
    2. KJV NT based largely on Erasmus’ Greek NT
    3. Note Erasmus: “You must distinguish between Scripture, the translation of Scripture, and the transmission of both. What will you do with the errors of the copyists?” (p.39)  
[canon, translation, textual criticism]
  - C. Modern Times
    1. Now the “standard” in English Bibles (by traditional use) is the KJV
    2. Just like Vulgate and LXX before

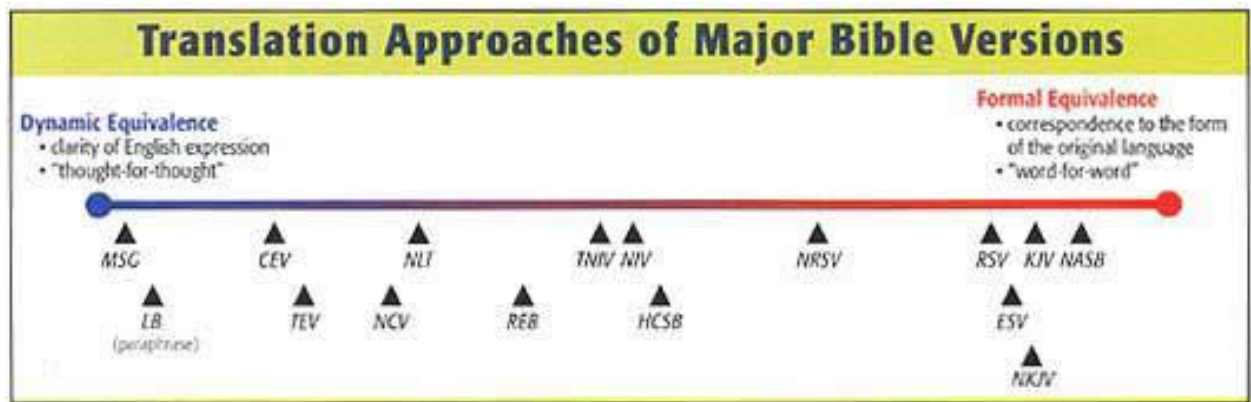
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### III. Some Basics

- A. Bible originally written in Hebrew (OT), Greek (NT), and small portions in Aramaic
- B. Issues in translation stem primarily from two areas of study:
  1. Textual disputes – disagreements over what was originally written by prophets/apostles (next week's topic);
    - a. e.g. John 6:47
  2. Translation disputes – disagreements over how to translate what was originally written by prophets/apostles
    - a. e.g. John 3:36
- C. Methods of Translation also relevant
  1. Functional/dynamic translation vs. formal/literal translation
  2. All good translations require some measure of both!
  3. Examples
    - a. *J'ai le cafard* (Fr.) means (literally) "I have the cockroach," & (figuratively) "I'm depressed," or "I have the blues." That's what someone means by that saying.
    - b. *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund* (Ger.) means, "Morning hours have gold in the mouth." → (The early bird gets the worm). These are *idiomatic* expressions.
    - c. *What's up?*
    - d. 1 John 3:17 – "heart"; τὰ σπλάγχνα ("bowels")



### IV. Variants because of Translation

- A. Isaiah 14:12
  1. KJV – "How art thou fallen from heaven, **O Lucifer**, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"
  2. NIV – "How you have fallen from heaven, **O morning star**, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations!"

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3. ESV – “How you are fallen from heaven, **O Day Star**, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!”

Note: the term *Lucifer* came into the English from Jerome’s Vulgate (in Latin)  
Do the modern versions equate Jesus (Rev. 22:16) with Satan?

### B. Ephesians 2:1ff.

1. ESV – “And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked”
2. KJV – “And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;” (see v.5)

### C. More general translation examples – not strictly KJV/non-KJV issues

1. John 1:1 – και θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος
  - a. “And the word was God” or “And the word was **a** god” (Jehovah’s Witness NWT)?
  - b. Colwell’s Rule (KMP p.161)
    - (1) Other examples of a definite noun without the article:
      - (a) Matt 27:42 – “He is **the** King of Israel”
      - (b) Heb 9:15 – “He is **the** mediator of a new covenant”
      - (c) Compare John 8:12 and 9:5 (“I am the light of the world”)
        - i. John 8:12 – ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου
        - ii. John 9:5 – φῶς εἰμι τοῦ κόσμου
2. Rom 3:22 – διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
  - a. “through faith in Jesus Christ” (objective genitive)
  - b. “through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ” (subjective genitive)
  - c. Note in KMP p.114 – NT Scholar Douglas Moo – the strongest argument for the objective genitive here “is the consistent use in 3:21-4:25 to designate the faith exercised by people in God, or Christ, as the sole means of justification.”
  - d. See also D.A. Carson, *Tabletalk*, Feb 2010 (“Faith” and “Faithfulness”) – as above, the entire argument about Abraham rests on it being Abraham’s faith in God.

## V. Some other things to remember

### A. Translation of KJV

1. Done by committee, as many modern translations are
2. Done mostly by Anglicans (as the hated Westcott and Hort were)
3. Relied heavily on previous translations (even previous hated translations)
4. KJV Translators wrote in the preface: “...variety of translations is profitable for the finding out of the sense of the Scriptures” (see references on p. 122)
5. KJVO position is utterly ahistorical – it requires KJV to be something its authors never intended

### B. KJV was revised many times (which is the “inspired” revision??)

### C. KJVO camp – foundation is a *desire for absolute certainty*, over and above logical, factual, or even Scriptural reasoning