

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS AND VERSIONS

There are no original texts of the Word of God in existence today as it was originally received by holy men of God (II Peter 1:21). Many translations and versions of the Bible have been produced throughout the centuries, but no single translation or version can be called “the Word of God.” In our Way Ministry fellowships we use the King James Version for uniformity and because of certain strengths this version provides. However, in researching the Scriptures, one can utilize different versions to help get to the accuracy of the Scripture as it was originally given. As is presented in our foundational teachings, this is indeed the goal of Biblical research—to get back to God’s original intent. The term “translation” is generally applied to a word-by-word conversion from an ancient text into contemporary languages. A version, on the other hand, can refer to a revised text or an edited translation. However, in the common vernacular, the term “version” is often interchangeably applied to either a translation or version. In addition to the King James Version, there are five other Bible “versions” available from The Way International Bookstore. Following is a discussion of the books containing these versions and how they can benefit you in your reading and study of God’s Word.

The Holy Bible from the Ancient Eastern Text (or “Lamsa Bible”) is a translation of the Peshitta manuscripts by Dr. George M. Lamsa. The Peshitta is the standard version of the Old and New Testaments in Aramaic (also called Syriac). Because Aramaic was Dr. Lamsa’s native tongue, he was in a unique position to handle the subtle complexities of meaning that the nonnative speaker could miss. Also, because of his background and experience, he had a keen understanding of many Biblical customs and of Biblical culture.

The developers of The Amplified Bible set out to go beyond the traditional word-for-word concept of translation to bring out the richness of the Hebrew and Greek languages. They produced a greatly expanded version by incorporating into the text many definitions that would be found in a lexicon. This version can help the reader get an “amplified” (meaning increased or stronger) sense of the original emphasis and heart of the Scriptures. The “Introduction to The Amplified Bible” thoroughly explains the notations and markings used in this Bible.

The *Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament* (produced in three volumes) not only is a valuable research tool but can also be used as a comparative translation in Biblical research with a word-by-word translation of the Aramaic in proper English and a parallel King James Version for comparison.

The Comparative Study Bible includes four Bible versions: the King James Version, The Amplified Bible, the New American Standard Bible, and the New International Version. The New American Standard Bible is an update from the 1901 American Standard Version. This edition of the NASB represents revisions and refinements recommended over the last several years as well as thorough research based on modern English usage. The New International Version was put together by a group of scholars who met in 1965 to translate the Bible into contemporary English. They worked directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.

Comparing versions of the Bible helps the Biblical student in two major ways. First, it can help us get to a more accurate understanding of God’s Word by revealing translational errors and reconciling apparent contradictions. Second, it can often add insight to our understanding of a term or phrase by using words of a synonymous and sometimes more descriptive nature.

Biblical Accuracy

On occasion, checking a difficult scripture in different versions can clarify inaccuracies that have crept into the texts. For example, in the Book of Job the Word testifies that in all his calamities, Job did not sin or blame God for his attacks (Job 1:22). The Word says that after days of Job's enduring the "miserable comforters" that maligned him continually, they "ceased to answer Job." This statement is found in Job 32:1. The King James Version indicates that the reason they stopped speaking to Job was that he was righteous in his own eyes.

Job 32:1 (KJV):

So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he *was* righteous in his own eyes.

The way this verse has been translated, it seems as if these men gave up on Job because *he* just couldn't see the light. This doesn't make sense. How could the Word indicate Job is incorrigible here and then later in Job 42 say that Job has spoken that which is right?

Job 42:7 (KJV):

And it was *so*, that after the Lord had spoken these words unto Job, the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me *the thing that is* right, as my servant Job *hath*.

Job 32:1 and Job 42:7 stand in direct opposition to each other in the King James Version. The Lamsa Bible clarifies Job 32:1.

Job 32:1 (Lamsa Bible):

So these three men who wanted to condemn Job ceased answering him, because he was found righteous in their eyes.

Now the Word fits. These three men "woke up" and realized that Job was righteous, that all the truth he had declared concerning his integrity was correct.

Another example in Ephesians shows how looking at other versions can uncover translational errors or misinterpretations.

Ephesians 3:9 (KJV):

And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 3:9 (A word-by-word translation as found in the *Aramaic-English Interlinear New Testament*, Volume II):

and [that] I might show to every man what is the administration of the mystery, which had been hidden from the ages in God who created all [things].

Note the more accurate use of the word "administration" in the Aramaic, compared to "fellowship" in the King James Version. Also, the words "by Jesus Christ" at the end of the verse in the King James Version are omitted from the Aramaic. As it stands in the King James Version, one is left with the impression that Jesus Christ was assisting God in the creation of all things. This is a trinitarian forgery and cannot represent the accuracy of God's Word. In this case, the Aramaic is more precise.

Adding Understanding

Another benefit from comparing the translations done in different versions is the depth it can add to our comprehension of the God-breathed Word. Hearing words of a synonymous nature stimulates our minds to deeper levels of recognition and understanding. Romans 11:33 communicates the fathomless depth of God's wisdom and knowledge.

Romans 11:33:

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

This refers to His Word which makes known His knowledge and will for our lives. God's Word cannot be overstated. That is why it behooves the Biblical student to see how other versions often utilize vocabulary that may add to our understanding. Here is Ephesians 1:19 in the King James Version, then in The Amplified Bible.

Ephesians 1:19 (KJV):

And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power.

Ephesians 1:19 (Amplified):

And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable *and* unlimited *and* surpassing greatness of His power in *and* for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength.

Following is Ephesians 6:19 as it reads in The Comparative Study Bible. The versions included are the King James Version, The Amplified Bible, the New American Standard Bible, and the New International Version. This is another example of how seeing synonymous words in different Bible versions can aid in our understanding and enjoyment of the Word.

Ephesians 6:19 (KJV):

And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.

Ephesians 6:19

(Amplified):

And [pray] also for me, that [freedom of] utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth to proclaim boldly the mystery of the good news (the Gospel).

Ephesians 6:19 (New

American Standard):

and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel.

Ephesians 6:19 (New

International):

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

We have seen in the above examples how reading different versions of the Bible can clarify contradictions and inaccuracies. It can also stimulate fresh thoughts and perspectives about the Word. Have fun studying the truth of God's Word and enjoying its richness and variety by exploring different Bible translations and versions.