

The REV New Testament

Introduction

This New Testament, the Revised English Version® (REV®), is the version that we of Spirit & Truth Fellowship International are developing. We call it the Revised English Version because we are presenting to English Bible readers a version that, while it has much in common with other English versions, it also has significant differences.

The ESV began as a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901, which was an outgrowth of the translation project that produced the Revised Version of 1881 (NT) and 1885 (OT), which was designed to correct errors and mistranslations in the King James Version. The number of Greek texts that were available to the translators of the King James Version was quite small compared to what we have available today, and the texts themselves were not of the best quality. By the time the ASV translation was made in 1901, there were more, and better quality, Greek texts, available than there were in the early 1600's, and today there are better texts and better textual explanations and support than there was in 1901.

We have worked to keep the REV as a literal translation whenever appropriate, like the ASV or King James Version. It is not a “dynamic equivalent translation,” such as the NIV, although there are times when, to make good sense in English, we had to depart from a strictly literal translation. Our goal is to eventually have an “essentially literal” translation of the Bible that more closely represents biblical truth than any other translation currently on the market, and also one that is written in today's English. We think we can do that because we believe a person has to understand the meaning of the text correctly to be able to translate it correctly. The theology of the translator always affects the way he or she translates the Greek or Hebrew into English. It is our assertion that there are theological issues that we understand more correctly than most translators, and thus our translation will reflect that theology.

For years I have stayed away from suggesting that Spirit & Truth Fellowship International (STF) have its own translation, being aware that it may further separate us from the mainstream Christian Congregation. However, a number of things have changed my mind.

First and by far foremost, the more I concentrate on discipling others and raising people up in the Word of Truth, the more convinced I become that students need to be reading from a version that is accurate theologically, rather than from a Bible that has dozens and dozens of corrective marginal notes. Christians should be able to read the Bible and take what it says at face value.

Second, the plethora of new translations entering the market each year make producing another one not seem as drastic and partisan as it would have 30 years ago. Third, we believe that orthodox Christian doctrine has been compromised by error, and that error is reflected in the major translations of our day. Having a translation that handles verses from our theological viewpoint will be a great blessing to all those believers who have reached the same conclusion about doctrinal matters as we have.

Hints and Helps for Reading the Revised English Version

Italics: Like the American Standard Version, the King James Version, and the New American Standard Version, we attempted to put significant additions to the text in italics. An italicized word is not in the original, but hopefully makes the version more readable. Due to the many differences between languages, doing this completely is impossible, but we, like the translators of the versions that also have italics, have tried to italicize the important additions.

Bold print: Like many versions, we put quotations from the Old Testament in a distinctive type so they can be readily seen. In the REV, quotations from the Old Testament are in bold print, as E. W. Bullinger has done in *The Companion Bible*.

Present tense: Many verses, especially in the Gospels, are in the present tense even though it would seem that they should be in the past tense. A present tense narrative communicates more emotional energy than a past tense narrative. An excited person tends to speak in present tense. Imagine

Jane Doe coming up to you, very excited, and telling you about Bob and Sue. Jane might well say, “So Bob says to Sue,...then Sue tells him,...then Bob calls Bill and talks to him,...” and so forth. She is speaking in the present tense. Had Jane not been excited, and reported the situation factually, she would have used the past tense and said, “So Bob said to Sue,...then Sue told him...then Bob called Bill and talked to him,...” This latter rendition is grammatically correct because the event happened in the past, but it does not have the emotional impact of the present tense. So too, narrative in the Bible often has the powerful emotional impact of the present tense even though the events happened two millennia ago, and we have tried to represent that in this version.

Vocabulary: The Bible has a rich vocabulary that is a window into the Biblical culture. When we felt it appropriate, we left that intact even though we realize it will produce a learning curve for the reader. For example, a “denarius” is a coin that is a day’s wage for a fieldworker or soldier. Translating that as a “penny” (KJV) causes obvious problems. A “yod” is the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and when Christ said that not one yod would pass from the Law (Matt. 5:18), his hearers understood how important each letter in the OT was. Translating that as “jot” (KJV), “dot” (NJB), etc. is misleading. Simultaneous with the development of the REV is a commentary, and those terms are explained in the commentary. Eventually we hope to have an “REV Study Bible,” and unfamiliar terms will be explained in the margin.

Masculine vocabulary: The culture of the Bible was dominated by men. Hence, the general tenor of the biblical text is male. Also, God is portrayed as a male (Gen. 18; Ex. 24:10; Dan. 7:9, 10), and masculine pronouns are used of God. We do not wish to be insensitive to women’s rights and issues in the modern world, but we believe that part of understanding the Bible is understanding the culture in which it was written, and so while we have translated many masculine nouns and pronouns in a way that includes both men and women (such as often using “people” for *anthropos*), we have also worked not to twist the text just to avoid any singular reference to the male gender.

Brackets: Until the printing press was invented, every manuscript of the Bible was copied by hand from other manuscripts. As a result, changes were introduced into the biblical text. Thankfully, because of the hard work

of scholars through the years, and especially in the 1900's with the discovery of more manuscripts and applying computer technology to the thousands of biblical texts, the Greek text we have today is believed to be more than 99% correct. Due to the accuracy of the Greek text we have and the way God states and restates things in many ways, scholars testify that there is no major doctrine of the Church that is in doubt because of textual variants. Nevertheless, there are some verses whose inclusion in the original text we doubt, and these we put in brackets.

Will the REV be a perfect version? No, there is no such thing. We are imperfect people, translating from an imperfect Greek text, doing our best to bring the sense of the Greek text into English, something that can only be imperfectly done. However, our prayer is that the REV will be a version that will help people come nearer to God, the Author of the perfect original text. We pray that you find the REV a blessing, and helpful in building your relationship with God.

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