

**Intro:**

There are many different versions to choose from.

Some are very good. Many are weak to bad.

The issue we are considering today is this: Which translation is the best for me to use?

The answer to that question lies in knowing something about the translation itself and knowing something about how it was translated and who translated it.

**I. Well known Bible versions reviewed****A. The King James Version (or Authorized Version) [KJV or AV]**

1. 1611 translation authorized by King James I of England (VI of Scotland)
2. Translation pushed for primarily by Puritans to improve upon the English translations available in that day
3. Committee mostly Anglicans, all scholars
4. Became the universal church Bible in the English speaking world for about 300 years
5. Extremely literal translation, high literary value
6. Language somewhat archaic, but not impossible for today's reader
7. Highly recommended

**B. The Revised Version [RV]**

1. Sponsored by the Province of Canterbury in England
2. OT in 1885, NT in 1881
3. Two motivations
  - a. Modernize the English of the KJV
  - b. Use different textual basis than KJV
4. Literary style inferior to KJV
5. Not widely available any longer

**C. The American Standard Version [ASV]**

1. This is the American Version of the Revised Version

2. The American committee that became involved in the process of translating the RV had many disagreements about how the text should be translated
3. Published in 1901
4. No longer in publication, but available electronically
5. Both the RV and ASV are acceptable translations

#### D. Revised Standard Version [RSV]

1. NT 1946, OT 1952
2. Sought acceptability on both sides of Atlantic, note “inclusivism” of name, both “Revised” and “Standard” in title
3. Several significant differences
  - a. Deviates more from Hebrew in OT
  - b. Abandons word-for-word translation
  - c. Liberal translation of some passages, notably Isaiah 7.14
4. Has been fairly successful in English speaking world, but not well accepted by conservative churches
5. Not recommended

#### E. New American Standard Bible [NASB]

1. Reaction to RSV
2. Produced in entirety in 1963 by Lockman Foundation
3. Slightly modernized revision of ASV
4. Very literal, very conservative
5. Differs with KJV on some source text
6. Updated in 1995, gave up “thees and thous” in Psalms, other minor changes [NAU]
7. Highly recommended

#### F. New English Bible [NEB]

1. A version by some who did not think RSV went far enough
2. Sponsored by Church of Scotland in conjunction with others

3. NT 1961, OT 1970
4. Led by liberal scholar C. H. Dodd
5. Tries to translate in idiomatic English
6. Not easy to read because language level too high!
7. Liberal, not recommended

#### G. New International Version [NIV]

1. NT 1973, OT 1978
2. New York Bible Society (now Biblica) for the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals *et al*
3. Licensed to Zondervan in USA and Hodder & Stoughton in the UK
4. All of the NIV translators accept the Bible as the inspired Word of God, but they have chosen to use the freer style of translation.
5. The most popular Bible among evangelicals
6. Not liberal, but loose style – a ‘soft’ form of dynamic equivalence
7. Acceptable, but not highly recommended

#### H. New King James Version [NKJV]

1. Modernization of the KJV
2. Published in 1984
3. Uses slightly different text in OT
4. Retains literary quality and literal translation of KJV
5. Very conservative work
6. Highly recommended

#### I. English Standard Version [ESV]

1. Work begun in the 1990s in response to a call for a new literal translation
2. Work more intense when concerns about the NIV surfaced (*World Magazine* article, “Stealth Bible” – March 29, 1997)
3. Revision of the 1971 RSV
4. Revised about 6% of the text of the RSV

5. First published 2001, minor revisions 2007, 2011
6. Uses an “essentially literal” approach
7. Strong effort to maintain a readable style with literary quality
8. Highly recommended