

# **How Does the EHV Compare to Other Bible Translations?**

**Evangelical Heritage Version  
Wartburg Bible Series**

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In the EHV logo the circle of light or rainbow radiating from the cross is divided into three parts to symbolize the three *solas* of the Reformation: by grace alone, by faith alone, and by Scripture alone. This semi-circle, together with the base, forms the Latin letter D, which means 500 and honors the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, the year in which the first edition of the EHV was published.

Before we consider our primary question “how does the EHV compare to other Bible translations,” we will consider two useful preliminary questions for us to address: “why are there so many Bible translations?” and “why create another one?”

There are a number of reasons people create Bible translations. The most important one is to bring the Word of God into a language in which it has either not been available at all or in which all the existing translations are so far removed from the daily language of the people that people find it hard to understand them. Neither of these problems applies to English Bible translation today. Instead, the great increase in available English Bible translations seems to be due primarily to the following reasons.

- 1) In living languages there is an ongoing need to update any Bible translation to keep pace with linguistic change. For that reason, we have an abundance of “new” and “revised” English Bible translations.
- 2) People prefer different styles of Bible translation for different needs. These range from more literal translations, such as the NASB, to very free paraphrases, such the Message or the New Living Translation.
- 3) People have different preferences in regard to preserving traditional theological terms or coining fresh, new terms.
- 4) There are different opinions about which Greek and Hebrew texts and manuscripts should form the foundation of the translation. Many recent translations follow the latest edition of the Nestle/Aland UBS eclectic text of the New Testament. Others follow a form of the Greek text that is close to the text used for the King James Bible. Most translations of the Old Testament follow the BHS Hebrew text, but differ on how frequently they turn to the Septuagint or other ancient versions, and how willing they are to emend the Hebrew text without manuscript evidence to support changes they make.
- 5) There are doctrinal concerns about some existing translations. During the Reformation era there was concern about doctrinal distortions in the Latin Vulgate such as in Genesis 3:15, which said, “She (Mary) will crush the serpent’s head.” More recently this issue concerning the translation of prophecy came back into prominence when the RSV used the translation “young woman” instead of “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14. Today two of the main doctrinal concerns raised by some translations are their tendency to minimize direct Messianic prophecy and their blurring of gender distinctions which were present in the original text.
- 6) Another issue concerning translations that has emerged recently is control and continued availability of the translation. The withdrawal of NIV 1984 from the market raised concerns that publishers could deny Bible users who had become accustomed to a particular translation the right to continue to use that translation in new or revised works.

- 7) The economic realities of present-day publishing may make publishing companies reluctant to be dependent on Bible translations that are controlled by another publishing house, both in regard to alterations of the text and to the withdrawal of the text from use.
- 8) The joy and benefits of working on a Bible translation is in itself reason enough to do it.

A number of these factors contributed to the decision to produce the EHV. There is no longer a consensus translation, which is accepted as the standard version by the majority of Evangelical Christians, to the same degree that the KJV and NIV 1984 once were. Of the most popular translations, some seem to be moving too far away from a close rendering of the Hebrew and Greek texts. Others seem to be too wooden for contemporary readers. With the EHV we hope to find the happy middle.

## **The EHV's Goals**

For us the key word is “balance”— balance between literal and dynamic equivalent translation practices, balance between old and new theological terminology, balance between preserving the original meaning and using English that sounds natural, and balance between formality and informality of language.

### **Style**

#### *Literal v. Dynamic Equivalent*

The EHV seeks a balance between the poles of so-called *literal* and *dynamic equivalent* theories of translation. A translator should not adhere too closely to any one theory of translation because literalistic, word-for-word translations sometimes convey the wrong meaning, or they do not communicate clearly in the receiving language. Overly free translations deprive the reader of some of the expressions, imagery, and style of the original. In the spectrum of current translations the EHV is attempting to find a spot which is closer to the Hebrew and Greek text than NIV 2011 and which has a more natural, contemporary style of English than the ESV.

Translators will strive for a balance between preserving the *original meaning* of the text and producing *English which sounds natural*, but the preservation of biblical meaning takes priority.

A passage that provides two examples of the perils of overly-literal translation is the KJV translation of Psalm 16:10:

For thou wilt not leave my *soul* in *hell*.

The Hebrew word *nephesh* may be translated *soul*, *life*, or *me*. The Hebrew word *sheol* may be *the grave*, *the condition of death*, or *the place where dead people are*. Jesus' soul was not in hell during the time from Good Friday evening till Easter morning. His body was in the grave. His soul was in heaven. The KJV translation therefore gives a wrong impression on two counts. Neither *soul* or *hell* correctly gives the meaning of the text. How do some recent translations handle the issue?

ESV For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol  
 NKJV For You will not leave my soul in Sheol  
 CSB For you will not abandon me to Sheol  
 NIV84 because you will not abandon me to the grave<sup>a</sup> Note a] Sheol  
 NIV11 because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead.  
 EHV because you will not abandon my life to the grave.

The translations *Sheol* and *the realm of the dead* may incorrectly carry connotations of a shadowy underworld which is the residence of both the blessed and the damned. Only the EHV indicates that the object of the verb is not the pronoun *me* but the noun *life*.

Another term besides *nephesh* (soul, life) that illustrates the need to find balance between literal and more dynamic translation is the word *flesh* (Hebrew *basar*, Greek *sarx*). These terms include the meanings *sinful nature*, *mortality*, *sinfulness*, *mankind*, *meat*, *muscle*, and *genitals*. At times, the context may include enough information to select one of the dynamic equivalents, but if the term *flesh* may allude to both sinfulness and mortality, it is best to retain the literal rendering.

NASB My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.  
 NKJV My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.  
 ESV My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years.  
 NRSV My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh; their days shall be one hundred twenty years.  
 NET My spirit will not remain in humankind indefinitely, since they are mortal. They will remain for 120 more years.  
 NLT Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not put up with humans for such a long time, for they are only mortal flesh. In the future, their normal lifespan will be no more than 120 years.  
 NIV84 My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years.  
 NIV 11 My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal;<sup>b</sup> their days will be a hundred and twenty years. Footnote b Or *corrupt*  
 CSB My Spirit will not remain with mankind forever, because they are corrupt. Their days will be 120 years.  
 EHV My Spirit will not struggle<sup>a</sup> with man forever, because he is only flesh.<sup>b</sup> His days will be 120 years.

Footnote a Or *remain* Footnote b *Flesh* may refer to both sinfulness and mortality.

These translations reflect a different approach not only to the word *flesh*, but also to the use of the words *spirit* and *man* and to the interpretation of the 120 years.

For more information read: FAQ # 11 on our website:  
 “Is the EHV translation of the Bible a literal translation?”

### *Formal v. Informal*

We seek a balance between *formality* and *informality*. The Bible contains many types of literature and different levels of language, from the very simple to the very difficult. For this reason, the translator should not be too committed to producing one level of language but should try to reproduce the tone or “flavor” of the original.

We can start by answering a question we received early in the process of creating the EHV.

Why does your translation use bad grammar? In the Garden of Gethsemane you twice have Jesus saying, “Who are you looking for?” (John 18:4, 7) It should be “For whom are you looking?” Jesus would not use bad grammar.

Our EHV guidelines that govern this situation are:

Observe distinctions between *who* and *whom*, etc., but try to avoid uses that sound stilted or pedantic in contemporary English. “Who are you looking for?” sounds like normal conversation to most people. “For whom are you looking?” is not common in conversation.

Do the same for the rule “no prepositions last.” In Germanic languages “prepositions” (which often are actually detachable particles that are part of the verb) sound natural at the end of a spoken sentence.

The editors knew this was a no-win situation. Grammatical purists would say that “who are you looking for?” is bad grammar. But just as many people would say that “for whom are you looking?” sounds stuffy. It makes Jesus sound like a book rather than a living speaker. There are strong feelings at both ends of the spectrum. Here is how some translations handle it.

KJV Whom seek ye?  
NASB Whom do you seek?  
ESV Whom do you seek?  
NKJV Whom are you seeking?  
NRSV Whom are you looking for?  
CSB Who is it that you’re seeking?  
NIV Who is it you want?  
NLT Who are you looking for?  
NET Who are you looking for?  
EHV Who are you looking for?

Recent English translations often contain sentences like: *Who is he trying to teach? Who needs his instruction?* Editors realize that they are between a rock and a hard place as to whether they prefer to be thought pedantic or ungrammatical.

Similar dilemmas are caused by

- 1) the disagreement about whether *than* may be used as a preposition followed by the accusative case. “The King will give Vashti’s status as queen to someone *better than she* or *better than her*.”
- 2) the loss of irregular principle parts of verbs.

- a) Can one say “it stunk to high heaven”? This sounds correct to most people, but the classical principal parts are *stink, stank, stunk*.
  - b) Should it be “the light shone in the darkness” or “the light shined in the darkness”? In speech, the second option sounds normal to most people.
  - c) A special case is intransitive *lie, lay, lain* versus transitive *lay, laid, laid*. According to the standard rule, *lie* means *recline*. *Lay* means *place*. The classic rule is that *lie, lay, lain* must be used when there is no direct object (he lay down on the bed). *Lay, laid, laid* must be used when there is a direct object (they laid him in the grave). In reality many, or even most, American speakers say things like, “She went and laid down on the beach blanket and was laying in the sun for an hour.” Of this practice, Garner’s *Modern English Usage* says, “This error is very common in speech from the illiterate to the highly educated. In fact, some commentators believe that people make this mistake more than any other in the English language. Others claim it is no longer a mistake—or even that it never was. But make no mistake—using these verbs correctly is a mark of refinement.” Not wanting to be unrefined, EHV generally follows the classic rule even though it produces some strange-sounding conversation. In short, the correct usage is “Now I lie down to sleep” or “Now I lay me down to sleep.” Though both usages are correct, the first one doesn’t have a prayer.
- 3) The same kind of problem can occur in nouns. The historically correct plural of *hoof* is *hoofs* (like *roofs*). But in recent decades so many people have falsely corrected it to *hooves* that *hooves* is on its way to becoming the common spelling. This is similar to the phenomenon that people have been told so often that it is wrong to say, “You and me are going,” that they overcorrect and say things like, “He gave it to you and I.”

Most recent translations like CSB, NIV, and EHV are cautiously moving toward conversational grammar (*who* replacing *whom*, prepositions last) and limited use of contractions in conversational speech in the Bible. Formal declarations retain more formal speech.

For more information read FAQ # 20: “Would Jesus Use Bad Grammar?” and FAQ #2 “Who and Whom” and the online course *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, which is available in the Wartburg Project online library.

#### *Old v. New*

We seek a balance between *the old* and *the new*. The EHV has a goal of preserving familiar expressions in well-known passages, but if the traditional reading or term is not very precise or clear, we give priority to expressing the meaning of the original text more clearly than to preserving the traditional rendering. We respect and try to preserve traditional terms that are well established in the worship life of the church, but the EHV does introduce some new terms in those places in which a traditional translation no longer communicates clearly.

The EHV makes an effort to retain key terms that appear in the creeds, catechisms, liturgy, and hymnals. We preserve heritage terms like *sanctify, justify, covenant, communion, angels, and saints* (but not to the exclusion of modern explanatory terms like *make holy, declare righteous, holy people, etc.*) The EHV also keeps traditional

names like *the Ark*, *the Ark of the Covenant*, *the manger*, etc. The EHV did not invent any of these translations, but we carry them forward to the next generation as part of our inheritance from the great tradition of English Bible translation, because a translation that moves too far away from the worship life of the church does not serve well as an all-purpose translation.

We also try to reflect common biblical expressions like “the flesh,” “walk with God,” “in God’s eyes,” “set one’s face against,” “burn with anger,” and “listen to the voice.” Our goal is not to preserve Hebrew or Greek grammatical idioms for their own sake, but to preserve important biblical expressions and imagery and, when possible, biblical word-play. We do not, however, slavishly preserve these expressions in contexts in which they sound strange in English.

Here are some examples of points at which the EHV departs from recent tradition:

#### *Amen*

The first EHV distinctive that caught some readers’ attention was how often in the EHV gospels Jesus says “Amen, Amen, I say to you.” Readers were used to reading, “Verily, verily or truly, truly, I say to you.” But the Gospels consistently preserve the Hebrew word *amen* rather than using a Greek word that means *truly*. The EHV respects this literary intent of the Evangelists, which lays the foundation for the use of *amen* in the Epistles and Revelation.

Read FAQ # 1 on our website for a more detailed discussion of this issue.

#### *LORD of Armies*

The Hebrew term *Adonai Sebaoth* has traditionally been translated *LORD of Hosts* or *LORD Sebaoth*. In contemporary English the word *host* usually refers to a party host or a communion host, but the Hebrew term here refers to soldiers engaged in military service. So EHV translates *LORD of Armies*. If the LORD rules the army of heaven (the angels) and the army of the heavens (the stars), he rules everything, so the common translation *Lord Almighty* does not give a wrong idea, but it loses the imagery of the text.

#### *The Dwelling*

The portable sanctuary built by Moses has traditionally been called *the Tabernacle*, but the only tabernacles around today are the Mormon one in Salt Lake City and the containers in which the host is reserved in Catholic churches. The Hebrew word *mishkan* actually means *dwelling place*, so EHV calls the movable sanctuary *the Dwelling (mishkan)* or *the Tent (ohel)* depending on which Hebrew word is used in the original. The term *dwelling* also helps the reader connect God’s presence in the Dwelling with the many New Testament references to God dwelling with us.

#### *Festivals of Shelters*



Israel's autumn festival has traditionally been called the *Feast of Tabernacles*. The word *tabernacle* here is not the same Hebrew word, *mishkan*, mentioned above, but a different Hebrew word, *sukkot*, which means *temporary shelters*. The EHV, therefore, calls the fall festival *Festival of Shelters* (with a footnote: Traditionally, *Tabernacles*).

#### *Atonement Seat*

Concerning the name of the lid over the Ark of the Covenant, there are two competing traditions. The most recent one is "atonement cover." The traditional translation, "mercy seat," is based on Luther's *Gnadenstuhl*, "throne of grace." Luther's translation was theologically brilliant, because he recognized that this object was more than a lid or cover for a box—God was enthroned above it, and the blood of atonement was being presented there at the foot of his throne of grace. But "mercy" is not a very precise rendering of the Hebrew *kopher*. "Atonement" is better. "Cover," on the other hand, misses an important point. The atoning blood was being presented to the LORD at the foot of his throne. The EHV combines the best of the old and new traditions into "atonement seat," since this most clearly brings out the meaning of the text and gets the reader looking in the right direction—not down at the tablets of the law, but up to the throne of the gracious God.

#### *Seren*

Most translations call the rulers of the five Philistine city states the *lords* of the Philistines, but the word used in the original is not a Hebrew word meaning *lord*. *Seren* is a special word used only of the rulers of the five Philistine city states. It seems to be a Philistine term. It may be related to the Greek word *tyrant*, an autocratic ruler of a city state. (One Philistine inscription, in fact, spells it *trn*.) *Seren* is a title like pharaoh or czar, which is applied to one specific class of rulers. Since *seren* is a unique title, the EHV uses the transliteration *seren* rather than the traditional rendering *lord*. If it makes sense to call a *pharaoh* a *pharaoh*, it is consistent to call a *seren* a *seren*. The Bible uses a unique word here, so we do too, since this honors and more accurately reflects the historical accuracy of the Hebrew text.

### **The Biblical Text**

One of the more sensitive and emotional issues in Bible translation today is the issue of textual variants. Bible readers notice that many recent translations have a shorter text than the King James Bible, and some suspect that editors are subtracting from the Word of God. Especially noticeable are the omission or the bracketing of the conclusion of Mark and the pericope about the adulterous woman in John's Gospel.

Recent English translations fall into two general camps in their approach to the text of the New Testament. Some translations closely follow the so-called *Textus Receptus* (TR, Received Text) which was the basis of the King James Version. The so-called *Majority Text* (MT) is not identical to the *Textus Receptus*, but both reconstructions of the text rely heavily on late

medieval manuscripts and are sometimes also called the Byzantine text type. If a translation closely follows this textual tradition, the result is a longer text of the New Testament.

The second major approach follows a critically reconstructed text which relies much more heavily on older Greek manuscripts with an emphasis on texts from Egypt, where more old texts have survived because of the dry climate. This text type is sometimes called the Alexandrian text. This tradition is summarized in the critical editions of the New Testament known as the UBS/Nestle editions. Overall, this tradition results in a somewhat shorter text of the New Testament.

The NIV, ESV, and CSB generally follow the UBS/Nestle tradition. These translations may occasionally follow a Greek text different from the text given preference in the UBS/Nestle text.

The King James and some of its children and grandchildren are examples of translations that follow the *Textus Receptus* tradition.

The EHV's approach to the text of the New Testament is to avoid a bias toward any one textual tradition or group of manuscripts. An objective approach considers all the witnesses to the text (Greek manuscripts, lectionaries, translations, and quotations in the church fathers) without showing favoritism for one or the other. As we examine significant variants, the reading in a set of variants that has the earliest and widest support in the textual witnesses is the one included in the EHV text. The other readings in a set of variants may be included in a footnote that says: *many, some, or a few witnesses to the text have this reading.*

The net result is that some readings and verses which are omitted from many recent versions of the New Testament, but which have textual support that is ancient and widespread, are included in the EHV translation. If there are passages in which the evidence is not clear-cut, our "bias," if it can be called that, is to include the longer reading in the main text of the EHV, along with a footnote that states that not all manuscripts have this reading. The result is that the EHV New Testament is slightly longer than many recent translations of the New Testament, because those translations tend to focus on certain parts of the manuscript evidence rather than the whole range.

Examples of a longer EHV text:

The last phrase of John 3:13 is included in the text of the EHV:

<sup>13</sup>No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>Footnote a</sup><sup>13</sup> A few witnesses to the text omit *who is in heaven.*

Most modern translations omit the last phrase, "who is in heaven," but it has good manuscript support, and it was included in the King James Version and the New King James Version. The longer reading is a striking testimony to orthodox Christology and to the union of the two natures in Christ. It is easy to see why some scribes might have omitted it. It is hard to see why some would have added it.

The EHV also includes Mark 16:9-20 in the text without raising questions about its place in Scripture. These verses are included in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts that have been handed down to us. Evidence for the existence of this long ending extends back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

EHV also notes that a few early manuscripts and early translations omit verses 9-20, and a few manuscripts have a different ending. Strong subjective arguments can be made against inclusion of the long ending of Mark, but the EHV's default setting is to go with the manuscript evidence rather than subjective opinions.

Unlike the KJV and the NKJV, the EHV does not include the so-called *comma Johanneum* of 1 John 5:7-8, because the longer reading lacks early, widespread textual support in Greek manuscripts.

In the Old Testament, the Masoretic Hebrew Text as exemplified by the BHS text is given preference unless there is good, objective evidence for another reading. We consider significant Hebrew variants as well as variants from other ancient versions, especially the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint), which was the Bible of the early Christian church.

When there is textual evidence that words which may have been lost from the Hebrew text have been preserved in an ancient version or in a parallel passage of the Masoretic text, the accidental omission may be restored to the EHV translation. A footnote reports the source of the added words. The most common type of evidence that would justify the inclusion of a longer reading is when the longer reading occurs between two occurrences of the same Hebrew word, and the shorter reading still makes good sense without the missing words (this would make the proofreader less likely to notice that words were missing). We will illustrate the problem with just one example.

In 1 Samuel 13 the Hebrew text of verse 15 reads:

Samuel went up from Gilgal <> to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.”

The Greek Old Testament reads:

Samuel went up from Gilgal. <The rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the army. They went up from Gilgal> to Gibeah of Benjamin. And Saul counted the people who were present with him, about six hundred men.

It appears that the eye of the scribe of the Hebrew manuscript skipped from one occurrence of “from Gilgal” to the next. It is Saul and the people, not Samuel, who go to Gibeah in Benjamin. This reading clarifies the subsequent battle scene, whereas the Hebrew reading does not.

For more examples read FAQ # 10 “Textual Criticism” on our website; the article *Excavating a Battle: The Intersection of Textual Criticism, Archaeology, and Geography* in our Wartburg Project online library; or the book *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament* by John Brug

## Prophecy

The EHV places a *priority on prophecy*, so our translation and notes strive to give clear indications of Messianic prophecy. Here are a few comparisons of the treatment of Messianic prophecy in the EHV and other popular translations.

Isaiah 7:14

- NASB Behold, a virgin\* will be with child and bear a son \*Or *maiden*<sup>1</sup>  
NKJV Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son  
NLT The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son  
NRSV Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son  
MSG A girl who is presently a virgin will get pregnant. She'll bear a son  
NIV84 The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son  
NIV11 The virgin\* will be with child and will give birth to a son  
\* Footnote: Or young woman  
ESV The virgin shall conceive and bear a son  
CSB See, the virgin will conceive, have a son  
EHV Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son

Psalm 2:2

- NIV84 against the LORD and against his Anointed One A footnote has *anointed one*  
NIV11 against the LORD and against his anointed  
NASB against the LORD and against His Anointed  
CSB against the LORD and his Anointed One A footnote has *anointed one*  
ESV against the LORD and against his Anointed  
EHV against the LORD and against his Anointed One. A footnote has *Messiah*

Are these differences of style or differences of interpretation? According to the NIV's stated principle of capitalization, NIV 2011 by its switch to lower case intends to remove Psalm 2 from the category of direct prophecy. NASB with its double capitalization places Psalm 2 into the category of direct prophecy. CSB's capitalization seems to point in the direction of a direct prophecy, but it hedges with its translators' note, and the notes of the *HCSB Study Bible* take the passage as typical. ESV capitalizes "Anointed" as a title, but *ESV Study Bible* indicates that Psalm 2 is typical.

Psalm 110:1

- NIV84 The LORD says to my Lord  
NIV11 The LORD says to my lord  
ESV The LORD says to my Lord  
CSB This is the declaration of the LORD to my Lord  
NKJV The LORD said to my Lord  
KJV The LORD said unto my Lord  
NRSV The LORD says to my lord  
NET Here is the Lord's proclamation to my lord  
EHV The decree of the LORD to my lord:<sup>a</sup>  
With the note: <sup>a</sup>The second *lord* in verse 1 is not one of the divine names that are usually rendered LORD or

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<sup>1</sup> "Maiden" includes "virgin" as one of its meanings. "Virgin" is *Jungfrau* and "maiden" is *Magd*. Luther uses both to refer to Mary.

Lord. It is the common noun for *lord* (*adoni* not *Adonai*).  
It does refer to Christ but as a description, not a title.

Psalm 45:6/7

NIV84 Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever

NIV11 Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever

Footnote: Here the king is addressed as God's representative.

CSB Your throne, God, is forever and ever

Footnotes: Or *your divine throne is*, or *Your throne is God's*

ESV Your throne, O God, is forever and ever

NRSV Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever

RSV Your divine throne endures forever and forever

MSG Your throne is God's throne, ever and always

EHV Your throne, O God, is forever and ever

The issue is whether the Messiah is addressed as God. In the RSV, MSG, NIV 11 footnote, and CSB footnotes he is not.

Micah 5:2

Lit. his goings out from before, from the days of eternity (*'olam*)

NIV whose origins are from of old, from ancient times

ESV whose origin is from of old, from ancient days

HCSB His origin is from antiquity, from eternity

CSB His origin is from antiquity, from ancient times.

NASB his goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity

NLT one whose origins are from the distant past

MSG his family tree is ancient and distinguished

BBE whose going out has been purposed from time past, from the eternal days

NKJV whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting

NRSV whose origin is from of old, from ancient days

KJV whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting

EHV his goings forth are from ancient times, from eternity.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Or *from days of old*; literally *from days of eternity*

The most traditional interpretation is that this passage is a reference to Christ's eternal generation from the Father, but would that be expressed by a plural, "goings out"? The explanation commonly offered for this plural is "majestic plural." Many recent translations, on the other hand, take this passage as a reference to the Messiah's descent from the patriarchs and kings. But is a third option better? Does the plural "goings out" actually refer to Messiah's many appearances as the Angel of the Lord? Compare John 1:10-11: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not receive him." All three interpretations are doctrinally correct: 1) The Messiah had many distinguished ancestors; 2) King Messiah was begotten in eternity; and 3) As the Angel of the LORD, King Messiah appeared throughout the Old Testament era. Which seems to fit the context best?

Psalm 8:4-6

- NIV84 what is *man* that you are mindful of him, the *son of man* that you care for him? <sup>5</sup>You made him a little lower than the *heavenly beings* and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet
- NIV11 what is *mankind* that you are mindful of *them*, *human beings* that you care for *them*? <sup>5</sup>You have made them a little lower than the *angels* and crowned them with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet  
[Translators' footnotes include the singular: Or *what is a human being that you are mindful of him, / a son of man that you care for him?*]
- HCSB what is *man* that You remember him, the *son of man* that You look after him? <sup>5</sup>You made him little less than *God* and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You made him lord over the works of Your hands; You put everything under his feet.
- CSB what is a *human being* that you remember him, a *son of man*\* that you look after him. <sup>5</sup>You made him little less than *God*\* and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:
- ESV what is *man* that you are mindful of him, and the *son of man* that you care for him? <sup>5</sup>Yet you have made him a little lower than the *heavenly beings* and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet.
- EHV what is *man* that you remember him, the *son of man*\* that you pay attention to him! <sup>5</sup>Nevertheless, you make him suffer need, apart from *God* for a while,<sup>#</sup> but you crown him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You make him the ruler over the works of your hands. You put everything under his feet.

Because of the importance of the passage two footnotes are added:

\*Or *the Son of Man*, or *the son of Adam*. Hebrews 2:6 makes it clear that Jesus is the Son of Adam who fulfills this prophecy. Jesus' title, the Son of Man, however, is based on Daniel 7:13 rather than on this verse. Here and in Daniel 7:13, it seems that the term *son of man* is not yet a formal title. It is the poetic parallel of the term *man*.

#This very important verse is difficult and has been the subject of a number of interpretations. A literal rendering of the Hebrew reads: *You made him lack-God-a little*. This could be paraphrased with Luther: *You let him be forsaken by God for a little while*. The translation above follows Luther in understanding this as a reference to Jesus' humiliation. The Greek translation of the Old Testament interprets the Hebrew word *elohim*, which usually means *god*, as a reference to godlike beings, namely, the angels: *You made him a little lower [or lower for a little while] than the angels*. Hebrews 2:7 quotes this translation. In either interpretation the point is the same: Jesus endured humiliation while he was on earth acting as our Savior. The fact that he needed help from the angels is one evidence of this.

NASB, NKJV, KJV, NIV84, HCSB, and EHV refer to “man” and “the son of man.”

NET, NLT, MSG, and NRSV agree with NIV11 with renderings like “the human race,” “mankind,” “my micro-self,” “us,” “mortals,” and “human beings.” CSB aligns with the first view in its translation with the second view in its notes.

Genesis 3:15

- NIV I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your *offspring* and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.
- ESV I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your *offspring* and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.
- HCSB I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your *seed* and her seed. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.  
[The term “seed” is explained in a footnote.]
- CSB I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your *offspring* and her offspring. He will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.
- NKJV I will put enmity between you and the woman, And between your *seed* and her *Seed*; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.
- NRSV I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your *offspring* and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.
- EHV I will put hostility between you and the woman, and between your *seed* and her seed. He will crush your head, and you will crush his heel.  
With this footnote: In the promises of Genesis and in their fulfillment, the EHV retains the literal expression *seed* rather than *offspring* or *descendants* to keep the imagery of the Messiah as the Seed of the Woman.

For more examples and for detailed discussion of the principles read the article *Principles of Bible Translation—Applied to Prophecy* in our online library and FAQ # 3 “Capitalization of Pronouns That Refer to God.”

### **Background Information**

The EHV is committed to using *archaeology*, *geography*, and *history* to provide a clearer understanding of the original meaning of the biblical text, and this will be reflected both in the translation and the footnotes.

That being the case, what are some examples of specific cases in which we feel clear communication and a closer reflection of the emphasis of the biblical text requires a change of the traditional terms?

The EHV parts company with many or even most recent translations with the renderings *bronze* rather than *copper* or *brass*, *hand drums* rather than *tambourines*, *beer* rather than *strong drink*, and *charioteers* rather than *horsemen* in accounts of battles before the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC.

For more information read FAQ # 16 “Archaeology and Translation.”

### **Doctrinal Issues**

Do translations sometimes reflect different doctrinal perspectives?

Habakkuk 2:4 compared with Romans 1:17

- NIV the righteous will live by his faith Or *faithfulness*  
NASB the righteous will live by his faith  
ESV the righteous shall live by his faith Or *faithfulness*  
CSB the righteous one will live by his faith Or *faithfulness*  
NET the person of integrity will live because of his faithfulness  
NLT the righteous will live by their faithfulness to God  
MSG the person in right standing before God through loyal and steady believing is fully alive, really alive  
BBE the upright man will have life through his good faith  
NKJV the just shall live by his faith  
NRSV the righteous live by their faith  
KJV the just shall live by his faith  
EHV the righteous one will live by his faith

Is there a difference between *faith* and *faithfulness*?

James 2:24 In what sense is a person justified by works?

- NET You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.  
HCSB You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.  
CSB You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.  
ESV You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.  
NIV84 You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.  
NIV11 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.  
NLT So you see, we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone.  
BBE You see that a man's righteousness is judged by his works and not by his faith only.  
EHV You see that a person is shown to be righteous by works and not by faith alone.

Which do you like? Why?

James 2:22 Do any of these translations unintentionally support the Catholic idea that faith is made saving by the addition of works?

- NIV You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.  
NASB You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected.  
ESV You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works.  
CSB You see that faith was active together with his works, and by works, faith was perfected.  
NRSV You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works.  
NLT You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.



Beck His faith was active by works and by works faith reached its goal.  
EHV You see that his faith was working together with his works, and by his works his faith was shown to be complete.

James 2:26—Do works give life to faith, or do works provide evidence of faith?

NIV As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.  
NASB For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.  
ESV For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.  
CSB For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.  
NLT Just as the body is dead without breath, so also faith is dead without good works.  
KJV For as the body without the spirit\* is dead, so faith without works is dead also.  
\*Footnote: Or *breath*  
EHV For just as the body without breath\* is dead, so also faith without works is dead.  
\*Footnote: Or *the spirit*

1 Corinthians 9:20-21 Paul says Christians do not live *under* the law (ὐπὸ νόμου), they do not live *without* law (ἄνομος), but they live *in* Christ's law (ἐννομος). By saying that Christians live *under* Christ's law many translations blur the three-fold distinction which Paul is making.

NIV To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.  
NLT When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ.  
HCSB To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law—though I myself am not under the law—to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those who are without that law, like one without the law—not being without God's law but *within* Christ's law—to win those without the law.  
CSB To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win Jews; to those under the law, like one under the law — though I myself am not under the law, to win those under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those who are without the law, like one without the law though I am not without God's law but *under* the law of Christ to win those without the law.  
EHV To the Jews, I became like a Jew so that I might gain Jews. To those who are under the law, I became like a person under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might gain those who are under the law. <sup>21</sup>To those who are without the law, I became like a person without the law (though I am not without God's law but am within the law of Christ).

- Which translation reflects Paul's three-fold distinction?

- Which translation had it but changed it?

John 1:11-12 John uses two closely related and sometimes interchangeable words to distinguish those who do not accept Christ (*paralambano*) from those who do receive Jesus (*lambano*). Is there a reason to use different verbs in this context? In what sense do we accept or receive Christ?

- NIV He came to that which was his own, but his own did not *receive* him. Yet to all who *received* him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—
- CSB He came to his own, and his own people did not *receive* him. But to all who did *receive* him, he gave them the right to be children of God.
- ESV He came to his own, and his own people did not *receive* him. But to all who did *receive* him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God
- NLT He came to his own people, and even they *rejected* him. But to all who believed him and *accepted* him, he gave the right to become children of God.
- MSG He came to his own people, but they *didn't want him*. But whoever *did want him*, who believed he was who he claimed and would do what he said, He made to be their true selves, their child-of-God selves.
- NRSV He came to what was his own, and his own people did not *accept* him. But to all who *received* him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.
- EHV He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not *accept* him. But to all who did *receive* him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Of the more literal translations only the NRSV and EHV distinguish the two verbs. The more dynamic translations, NLT, MSG, and BBE, interpret the verbs wrongly.

Jeremiah 31:18 Do we turn to God?

הַשִּׁיבֵנִי וְאָשׁוּבָה The first verb is hiphil. The second is emphatic or cohortative qal.

- NIV Restore me, and I will return
- NET Let us come back to you and we will do so
- NASB Bring me back that I may be restored
- HCSB Restore me, and I will return
- CSB Take me back, so that I can return
- ESV Bring me back that I may be restored
- BBE Let me be turned and come back
- NKJV Restore me, and I will return
- NRSV Bring me back, let me come back
- KJV Turn thou me, and I shall be turned
- EHV Cause me to turn, and I will turn

1 Peter 2:8 Is Jesus a stone that causes men to stumble or a stone over which they stumble?

Are people destined (ἐτέθησαν) to fall?

- NET a stumbling-stone and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.
- NIV a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.
- ESV a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.
- CSB a stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this.
- HCSB a stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over  
Footnote: Or a *stone causing stumbling*
- NLT He is the stone that makes people stumble, the rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they do not obey God’s word, and so they meet the fate that was planned for them.
- MSG It’s a stone to trip over, a boulder blocking the way. They trip and fall because they refuse to obey, just as predicted.
- BBE a stone of falling, a rock of trouble; the word is the cause of their fall, because they go against it, and this was the purpose of God.
- NKJV a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.
- NRSV a stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.
- EHV a stone over which they stumble and a rock over which they fall. Because they continue to disobey the word, they stumble over it. And that is the consequence appointed for them.

Jude 4 Does God prophesy the condemnation of false teachers or foreordain it?  
οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι literally “the long-ago written-about-ahead-of-time-ones”

- NIV For certain men whose condemnation was *written about long ago* have secretly slipped in among you. Footnote: *marked out for condemnation*
- ESV For certain people have crept in unnoticed who *long ago were designated for* this condemnation.
- HCSB For some men, who were *designated* for this judgment long ago
- CSB For some people, who were *designated* for this judgment long ago
- MSG What has happened is that some people have infiltrated our ranks (our *Scriptures warned us* this would happen)
- BBE For certain men have come among you secretly, *marked out before in the holy Writings* for this evil fate
- NKJV For certain men have crept in unnoticed, *who long ago were marked out* for this condemnation
- NRSV For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who *long ago were designated* for this condemnation as ungodly
- KJV For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were *before of old ordained* to this condemnation

EHV For certain individuals slipped in secretly, *about whom it was written some time ago* that they are condemned

Romans 9:22 Who makes unbelievers ready for destruction God or the unbelievers themselves?

NKJV What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath *prepared for destruction*

NIV What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—*prepared for destruction?*

NASB What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath *prepared for destruction?*

ESV What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath *prepared for destruction,*

HCSB And what if God, desiring to display His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath *ready for destruction?*

CSB what if God, wanting to display his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath *prepared for destruction?*

NLT In the same way, even though God has the right to show his anger and his power, he is very patient with those on whom his anger falls, who are *destined for destruction.*

MSG If God needs one style of pottery especially *designed* to show his angry displeasure

BBE What if God, desiring to let his wrath and his power be seen, for a long time put up with the vessels of wrath which were *ready for destruction:*

NRSV What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience the objects of wrath that are *made for destruction;*

KJV What if God, willing to show [his] wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath *fitted to destruction*

EHV What if God, although he wanted to demonstrate his wrath and make his power known, endured with great patience the objects of wrath—*ripe* for destruction?

Footnote: Or *who had prepared themselves for destruction*

1 Corinthians 10:16 is a key passage concerning the nature of the Lord's Supper.

Literal: The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a *koinonia* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a *koinonia* of the body of Christ.

KJV The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not *the communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

NKJV The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not *the communion* of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

- EHV The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *communion*\* of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a communion\* of the body of Christ?  
\*Or *joint partaking*
- NIV Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a *participation in* the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?
- ESV The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *participation in* the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?
- HCSB The cup of blessing that we give thanks for, is it not a *sharing in* the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?
- CSB The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a *sharing in* the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ?
- MSG When we drink the cup of blessing, aren't we *taking into ourselves the blood, the very life, of Christ?* And isn't it the same with the loaf of bread we break and eat? Don't we take into ourselves the body, the very life, of Christ?
- LB When we ask the Lord's blessing upon our drinking from the cup of wine at the Lord's Table, this means, doesn't it, that all who drink it are sharing together *the blessings of Christ's blood?* And when we break off pieces of bread from the loaf to eat there together, this shows that we are *sharing together in the benefits of his body.*

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the translations “communion,” “participation,” “sharing,” and “fellowship.”

Mark 1:4 The literal translations are fine, regardless of the translator's doctrinal view of baptism. All the interpretive translations (NLT, MSG, BBE) are misleading.

- NASB John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.
- NRSV John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.
- NIV John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.
- ESV John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.
- CSB John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.
- HCSB John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.  
Footnote: *a baptism based on repentance*
- EHV John appeared and was baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.

1 Peter 3:21 What is the relationship of baptism to a good conscience? Is baptism the result of a good conscience or the cause of a good conscience?

- NIV this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also— not the removal of dirt from the body but the *pledge* of a good conscience towards God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- HCSB Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the *pledge*\* of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.  
\*Or *the appeal*.
- CSB Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you (not as the removal of dirt from the body, but the *pledge* of a good conscience toward God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- ESV Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an *appeal* to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- NASB Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an *appeal* to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- NRSV baptism, which this prefigured, now saves you—not as a removal of dirt from the body, but as an *appeal* to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- NKJV here is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer* of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ
- KJV the like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the *answer* of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:
- NLT that water is a picture of baptism, which now saves you, not by removing dirt from your body, but as a *response* to God from a clean conscience. It is effective because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- MSG The waters of baptism do that for you, not by washing away dirt from your skin but by *presenting you through Jesus' resurrection before God with a clear conscience*.
- BBE baptism, of which this is an image, now gives you salvation, not by washing clean the flesh, but by *making you free from the sense of sin* before God, through the coming again of Jesus Christ from the dead;
- EHV corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the body but the *guarantee*\* of a good conscience before God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.  
\*Or *legal claim* or *assurance*

For a much more detailed study see the article *Key Passages for a Doctrinal Evaluation of Bible Translations* on the Wartburg Project website.

## Gender Issues

So-called “gender accurate” language is one of the most controversial issues in contemporary Bible translation. It has led to conflict between some supporters of NRSV, TNIV, and NIV 2011 toward one end of the spectrum, some supporters of ESV and CSB toward the middle, and the King James and NKJV toward the other end. Some of the main points of the controversy include: whether “man” can still be used in a generic sense to refer to “human beings” and whether singulars should be changed to plurals to avoid masculine pronouns. In this article we cannot do more than outline the issues by providing examples from various translations and suggesting topics for further study.

The principle followed by the EHV is rather simple to say:

In trying to produce gender accurate language the translator will strive to be inclusive where the original is inclusive and exclusive where the original is exclusive.

It is less easy to put into practice.

### *Man*

The Hebrew term *adam* includes a person of each gender in Genesis 1:27 (See also 1:26; 5:1-2).

- NIV84 So God created *man* in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- HCSB So God created *man* in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- CSB So God created *man* in his own image; he created him in the image of God; he created them male and female.
- ESV So God created *man* in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.
- TNIV So God created *human beings* in his own image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
- NIV11 So God created *mankind* in his own image, in the image of God he created *them*; male and female he created them.
- NRSV So God created *humankind* in his image, in the image of God he created *them*; male and female he created them.
- EHV God created *the man*\* in his own image. In the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them.  
\* Hebrew *ha-adam*

### *Children of Adam*

A complicating factor is the use of *Adam* as the proper name of the first male. Does the term “sons of *adam*” merely mean “humans,” or does it remind us of our descent from the man who came from the earth and who will return to it? In passages that focus on original sin and its effects, can “sons of *adam*” be translated “children of Adam” rather than “human beings”?

The Hebrew *BneAdam* (*sons of adam/Adam*) often simply refers to mankind in general, but *children of Adam* may be appropriate in some contexts, such as those alluding to original sin. It is true that all sinners are properly called *mankind* or *humans*, but that is because they are all *children of Adam*. The EHV uses the term *children of Adam* more frequently than other translations.

### *Singular and Plural Problems*

Revelation 3:20

NIV84 If *anyone* hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with *him*, and he with me.

TNIV If *anyone* hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with *them*, and they with me.

NIV11 If *anyone* hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with *that person*, and they with me.

HCSB If *anyone* hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with *him*, and he with Me.

CSB If *anyone* hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with *him*, and he with me.

NRSV If *you* hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with *you*, and you with me.

EHV Look, I stand at the door and I am knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in with him and dine with him, and he with me.

How does NRSV escape the dilemma?

### *Avoiding gender stereotypes*

NIV11 created an issue in Nahum 3:13 where it translates “women” as “weaklings.”

Look at your troops—they are all *weaklings*!

instead of the more literal:

“Look at your troops—they are all *women*!”

EHV reads: The warriors among you are *women* in the face of your enemies.

The opposite case of trying to avoid sexual stereotypes is found in 1 Corinthians 16:13.

NIV84 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be *men of courage*; be strong.

NIV11 Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be *courageous*; be strong

HCSB Be alert, stand firm in the faith, *act like a man*, be strong.

CSB Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be *courageous*, be strong.

NASB Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, *act like men*, be strong.

ESV Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, *act like men*, be strong.

NET Stay alert, stand firm in the faith, show *courage*, be strong.

MSG Keep your eyes open, hold tight to your convictions, *give it all you’ve got*, be resolute,

BBE Be on the watch, unmoved in the faith, and *be strong like men*.

NKJV Watch, stand fast in the faith, be *brave*, be strong.



- NRSV Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be *courageous*, be strong.  
 KJV Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, *quit you like men*, be strong.  
 EHV Keep alert. Stand firm in the faith. Demonstrate manly courage. Be strong.

1 Corinthians 11:3 provides an example of the “woman” or “wife” issue.

- NIV Now I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.  
 ESV But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.  
 CSB Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of the woman, and God is the head of Christ.  
 EHV Christ is the head of every man, and man is woman’s head, and God is Christ’s head.

Here the ESV adopts a translation that establishes a limitation that is not expressed in the text.

### *Can sons include both genders?*

Luke 20:34 is a clear case in which it can, since the reference includes both men, who marry, and women, who are given in marriage.

- ESV And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.”  
 NASB Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.”  
 BBE And Jesus said to them, “The sons of this world are married and have wives”  
 NKJV And Jesus answered and said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage.”  
 NET So Jesus said to them, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.”  
 NIV Jesus replied, “The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.”  
 NLT Jesus replied, “Marriage is for people here on earth.”  
 MSG Jesus said, “Marriage is a major preoccupation here”  
 NRSV Jesus said to them, “Those who belong to this age marry and are given in marriage.”  
 KJV And Jesus answering said unto them, “The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage.”  
 CSB The children of this age marry and are given in marriage.  
 EHV The people of this age marry and are given in marriage.

### *Men and Brothers*

Does the term *men and brothers* include men and women when it is addressed to decision-making bodies in the church? In Acts 1:16, those who are to participate in choosing a replacement for Judas, are addressed as *andres adelphoi*, “men, brothers,” but NIV11 translates *men, brothers* as *brothers and sisters*. The ESV has this questionable translation *brothers and sisters* in a footnote. CSB also has *brothers and sisters* in this verse as well as in Acts 2:29; 13:26,38; and 15:7,26. It is very likely women were present in Acts 1, but were they asked to participate in the selection of the apostle?

## *Fathers*

*Father* and *fathers* (*pater, ab*) are not changed to *parents* or *ancestors* without some indication from the context that both men and women are referred to. This may occur when the sins or the blessings of the whole nation are referred to. When the general heritage of the whole people of Israel is referred to, the terms *ancestors* and *ancestral* may be used, but *fathers* is often appropriate in genealogical contexts that stress the line of descent of tribes and clans through their named patriarchs. The terms *fathers* also is a title used regularly used of clan leaders. The terms *fathers' houses* and *father's houses* should be kept in most cases as a name for the political/social units.

1 Chronicles 7:2 The sons of Tola were Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam, and Samuel, *heads of their fathers' houses*. In the days of David the number of powerful warriors written in the genealogies of the family of Tola was 22,600 (EHV).

NET leaders of their families  
NIV heads of their families  
NASB heads of their fathers' households  
HCSB heads of their ancestral houses  
CSB heads of their ancestral families  
ESV heads of their fathers' houses  
NLT leader of an ancestral clan  
MSG chiefs of their families  
BBE heads of their families  
NKJV heads of their father's house  
NRSV heads of their ancestral houses  
KJV heads of their father's house

For a much fuller discussion of the issue see the booklet *Gender Issues in Bible Translation* on the Wartburg Project web site and the large section on gender issues in our EHV rubrics, which are available on the Wartburg Project website.

## **The EHV Method**

The base of our translation is provided by the standard Greek and Hebrew texts, but we gladly stand on the shoulders of giants by consulting the full tradition of English Bible translation and the church's rich heritage of commentaries on the text. The most valuable resources vary for each biblical book. As mentioned above, we try to preserve heritage terms like justification, saints, and so on, and we try to be preserve terminology widely used in worship and in the creeds of the church. Obviously we did not invent these terms but inherited them from the church.

There are many steps of review for each biblical book, involving a large number of people. These are standard procedures in the process of developing each book of the EHV.

1. A translator prepares a draft of the book based on the Hebrew or Greek text. The translator may choose to use a public domain, no-copyright translation, descended from the King James Bible, such as the World English Bible, as a starting point, but the translation does

not remain close to this or any other translation. The EHV is not a revision in the sense that NKJV, ESV, NIV11, and CSB are. Recent, copyrighted translations were never used as templates. In fact, a conscious attempt was made to avoid co-incidental similarities with them.

There is already a lot of review built into this first step. The translators consult many resources from across the span of the Christian church, using the collective knowledge of the church that has been accumulated in translations, commentaries, and other resources. In some books, a particular commentary or group of commentaries was especially helpful. The translators sometimes invited further evaluation by including several options in the translation for editors and reviewers to consider.

2. The testament editor reviews the draft, checking it against the EHV rubrics. (This constantly growing document is now nearly 50 pages long.) He corrects typos and other mistakes and may mark additional passages in red in order to draw reviewers' attention to them, and he may offer more options for certain translations.
3. Four technical reviewers evaluate the translation by comparing it with the Hebrew or Greek text. The reviewers work independently, so we receive four separate evaluations of the translation. Reviewers state their preference of options offered by the translator and offer corrections and their own suggestions for improvements. Attention is also given to readability.
4. The editor enters data from all the tech reviews into the master. Some suggested improvements are accepted immediately without further discussion. Where there are different options suggested or even contrasting opinions, options are left for further discussion with the reviewers.
5. When there is a marked difference of opinion (whether it involves substance or style) the specific issue may be submitted to a panel of reactors in order to gather a wider cross-section of opinions. In a few cases, the issue may be submitted to all the followers of our WP newsletter.
6. We are always checking for the desired level of consistency of translation across books, but in the case of parallel book like Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, there is special attention to a process of harmonization of translations across books. "Harmonization" does not mean that the two translations must be identical.
7. When this process has been completed, the translation is sent to a larger number of popular reviewers. They read the translation largely for clarity and readability, but they are free to raise questions about issues of substance.
8. Again, all the information is collated in the master and decisions are made.
9. An English professor critiques the translation for correctness and clarity, including the clarity and helpfulness of the footnotes, and further changes are made to the text.
10. Proof-readers/popular reviewers (often ten or more per book) read the text for errors but also make comments on clarity. Some focus on professional-quality proofreading of the mechanics of the text. Others read the text as part of their devotions and focus on the clarity of the text.
11. The translation is submitted to the publisher for set up. It receives additional proofreading, both by the staff of the publisher and by additional volunteer proofreaders from the Wartburg Project.
12. Our review process includes pastors, teachers, and laypeople, the future users of EHV.

13. We plan a revision three to five years down the road, after input has been gathered from use of the EHV in the church. After the initial review, we intend to have a fairly stable text.

Many published reviews of Bible translations seem to be based on having one person read and report on a portion of the text. Their suggestions are then sifted by a small committee, and evaluations and recommendations are issued. In our internal review a minimum of ten people review every section of the text.

We have noticed many review processes in which reviewers and even translators do not have a detailed set of principles and rubrics that expresses a unified philosophy of translation and a set of guidelines to assist all reviewers. At every stage of the process, EHV reviewers have a 50-page set of rubrics to aid them (or burden them) in their review. The latest edition of the rubrics is always posted on our web site. (Our reviewers of course are welcome to challenge any guidelines or rubrics with which they disagree.) When the EHV translation has been completed, users will have a lengthy handbook which explains the philosophy and the individual decisions underlying the translation.

We regularly receive helps and evaluation from outside our immediate circle. When the translation is complete, we will welcome suggestions from external reviewers.

This process assures that none of the books of the EHV are the work of one translator, nor are any of them a revision of any other translation. They are all composite works shaped by many contributors.

This whole process produced a collected record of successive generations of translation for each book. This accumulated file of translations consists of about 4200 files amounting to almost 1.5 GB (about 65,000 pages in MS Word format). This file could be used to retrace the translation process.

### **The Results of Comparisons**

The Evangelical Heritage Version is a balanced translation, located near the middle of the spectrum of translations. It aims to be a translation that remains closer to the Hebrew and Greek than such translations as NIV 2011 and that offers more idiomatic contemporary readings than translations like the ESV.

The EHV is not a revision of any existing translation and is not close to any other translation in its wording. It is relatively easy to make computer comparisons of the similarity of two Bible translations. These comparisons show that the EHV is different from any other translation.

Naturally, in comparing any two translations made from the same original text, there will be some sentences that are very similar or even occasionally identical. This happens most often when the Hebrew and Greek are very simple, and there is one natural way to translate the text into English. This happens most often in books like John's Gospel where the Greek is very simple (yet very profound). Close similarity may also occur in passages that are very familiar

memory passages, with roots that stretch back to the King James. Jesus says, “God so loved the world” in many translations.

Some passages lend themselves only to one English translation with little room for variety. First Corinthians 1:1 is identical or nearly identical in all translations regardless of their translation philosophy, though the paraphrases spin a couple of the phrases. In this passage there are not many opportunities to be different except by tweaking word order.

EHV Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes

NIV Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes

NRSV Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

NASB Paul, called as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother

KJV Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ\* through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother  
\*Some Greek manuscripts have *Jesus Christ*

ESV Paul, called by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and our brother Sosthenes

CSB Paul called as an apostle of Christ Jesus by God’s will, and Sosthenes our brother

NKJV Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother

NET From Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Sosthenes, our brother

NLT This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus, and from our brother Sosthenes

BBE Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the purpose of God, and Sosthenes the brother

MSG I, Paul, have been called and sent by Jesus, the Messiah, according to God’s plan, along with my friend Sosthenes.

A computer comparison of 1 Corinthians 1 and 2 shows no other verses (among 47 verses) in which EHV and NIV are the same, although there is one that has only one word that is different. There are naturally many similar phrases which are common to many translations, such as *the church of God in Corinth* and *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*, etc.

In another Epistle of Paul which has over 400 verses there are about 10 short verses or sentences in which the EHV and NIV are the same. There are, of course, occasional matches with other translations.

Genesis 1-3 provide an interesting basis for comparison, since it contains many familiar traditional renderings that go back to the King James, as well as some more difficult words and expressions that give translators some opportunity for originality. In many translations the language is very similar because they all flow from the King James tradition of this very familiar section of the Bible.

In a computer comparison of Genesis 1-3 between the EHV and NIV, among 80 verses, there are no identical verses except verse 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This translation is common to nearly all translations, with the only significant debate being whether or not to put a comma after “in the beginning.” There are many other traditional renderings that appear in many translations: “there was evening, there was morning,” “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,” “let there be light,” “after their kinds,” “the image of God,” “etc.

There are also many places in which the EHV and NIV have distinct terminology:

EHV=earth was undeveloped	NIV=earth was formless.
EHV=expanse of the sky	NIV=vault of the sky.
EHV=the waters swarm with life	NIV=the waters teem with life.
EHV=multiply	NIV=increase in number.
EHV= account about the development of the heavens and the earth;	NIV=account.
EHV= remain united with his wife	NIV=be united with his wife.
EHV= the serpent is clever	NIV=the serpent is crafty
EHV= You certainly will not die	NIV= You will not certainly die.
EHV= hostility	NIV=enmity.
EHV= seed	NIV=offspring.

And many others.

In some cases the EHV is closer to the traditional wording flowing from the KJV; in other cases the NIV is. The NIV begins many more sentences with *And* to represent the Hebrew *vav*. The EHV more often starts new sentences. In one case the EHV adopts a variant from the Greek which the NIV does not. In one case the NIV adopts a variant from the Syriac which the EHV does not.

In this section both the EHV and NIV carry on the KJV tradition, and both make their own upgrades (at least they hope they are upgrades).

In the library on the WP website you can find these six documents that compare passages of the EHV with other translations.

- The Christmas Story From Five Translations
- Psalm 23 From Five Versions
- Comparison of Genesis 1-3 in the EHV and NIV
- Passages for a Doctrinal Evaluation of Bible Translations
- Principles of Bible Translation—Applied to Prophecy
- Gender Issues in Bible Translations

## Conclusions

The Evangelical Heritage Version is a translation that hopes to preserve the best from the long heritage of English Bible translation, as well as providing some fresh insights. Preservation of heritage terms from the King James tradition is balanced with providing readability in contemporary English.

We hope the Evangelical Heritage Version will prove to be very readable to a wide range of users, but the EHV is designed with learning and teaching in mind. We assume that our readers have the ability and the desire to learn new biblical words and to deepen their understanding of important biblical terms and concepts. Translators should be dedicated to helping their readers grow. The Bible was written for ordinary people, but it is a literary work with many figures of speech and many rare words. The Bible is a book to be read, but it is also a book to be studied. Our footnotes are designed to assist in the process of learning and teaching. Our translation is

in that sense a textbook. This concept will, of course, be much more fully implemented in our planned study Bible.

The EHV is a grass-roots translation, which makes extensive use of parish pastors and lay people in the editing and evaluation of the translation. We want to keep the Bible close to the church and involve the church in the evaluation and refining of our translation. Congregations can make free use of the weekly readings for the church year, which can be downloaded from our Wartburg Project website. We try to answer questions about the EHV in the FAQ section of our website and provide more in-depth studies in the library section of our website.

The EHV is a gift to the church. It is being translated at very low cost because of the abundance of volunteer labor. We have also promised that people who have obtained rights to use the EHV in derivative works, such as commentaries or study Bibles, will not be denied the right to continue to use the version of the EHV which they have adopted, even if new versions of the EHV appear someday.

The Evangelical Heritage Version is a Bible for the people, which will be made available at very reasonable terms for secondary works like commentaries, catechisms, and musical compositions. Our theme and goals are expressed by the hymn:

God's Word is our great heritage and shall be ours forever.  
To spread its light from age to age shall be our chief endeavor.  
Through life it guides our way. In death it is our stay.  
Lord, grant, while worlds endure, we keep its teaching pure  
throughout all generations.