

Key Passages for a Doctrinal Evaluation of Bible Translations

**Evangelical Heritage Version
Wartburg Bible Series**

Key Passages for a Doctrinal Evaluation of Bible Translations 3rd Edition

Copyright © by the Wartburg Project 2018

The Evangelical Heritage Version ® and EHV ®
are registered trademarks of the Wartburg Project



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, form the Latin letter D, which means 500 and honors the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, the year in which the first edition of the EHV was published.

This list is part of the self-evaluation process of the Evangelical Heritage Version. Before the translation began, we compiled a study of how various translations handle key doctrinal passages, and we used that list as part of our study in developing our translation philosophy. Now we are using this updated version as part of an evaluation of how well we followed that philosophy. In this paper it is not addressed to any specific translation, but is designed as a tool that could be used in evaluating any translation. It is set up as a study document that leaves many of the conclusions to the reader. As such, it is useful for private study or for study by groups such as the study meetings of pastors' circuits.

Because translations are always undergoing revision, and the footnotes are not the same in all editions, the passages cited may not be identical to the translations that appear in every edition of that translation.

Key Passages for a Doctrinal Evaluation of Bible Translations

Many factors are involved in evaluating a Bible translation: readability, style, quality of production, and so on. But of all the factors to be considered, the most important one is the reliability and clarity of the translation's presentation of biblical teaching.

To make a thorough evaluation of a translation one must read through the whole translation at least two or three times. A person can, however, get a general impression of a translation from a sampling of key passages. This is especially true of doctrine, since doctrine in the narrow sense tends to be concentrated in a relatively small percentage of the verses of the total Bible. A sampling of the key passages that teach individual biblical doctrines will provide a pretty good indication of the doctrinal tendencies of a translation, if it has any.

A doctrinal review of a translation necessarily has to operate on two levels:

- 1) the translation itself, including the translation's footnotes;
- 2) the study Bible(s) based on that translation.

Will translators' doctrinal tendencies show up to a greater or lesser degree in their translation, or can translators provide an objective rendering of what the text says?

This presentation does not evaluate any specific translation but gives data for evaluating the renderings of individual passages on the basis of many translations. This is something every responsible pastor does as part of his teaching and preaching. He regularly does it also with the renderings in his favorite go-to translation, and in his preaching and teaching he may comment on renderings in that translation which he feels could be improved. This is quite easy to make such a comparative study with the availability of tools like the NET Bible and BibleGateway.

The list is not aimed to any specific time period. It is essentially the same as a list that would have been used when the RSV was moving in to replace the KJV in the 1950s, when the NIV was coming to the fore in the 1970s, or in the 21st century. The only significant difference to the list is the emergence of the issue of so-called gender neutral language.

The following examples provide raw material for exploring these questions. The document has the nature of a study guide. It provides data and often leaves room for the reader to make evaluations and to draw conclusions. There is a key to the abbreviations at the end of the paper.

Faith, Works, and the Law

Atonement

Romans 3:25 Salvation by grace begins with a payment for all the sins of all the people of the world.

ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι
whom God presented as a *hilasterion* through faith in his blood

NIV84 God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood
Footnote: as the one who would turn aside his wrath, taking away sin.

NIV11 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.

Footnote: The Greek for *sacrifice of atonement* refers to the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant.

NRSV whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith

KJV whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood

NASB whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith

ESV whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith

NKJV whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith

HCSB God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood.

Footnote: a propitiatory sacrifice, an offering of atonement, or a mercy seat

CSB God presented him as an atoning sacrifice in his blood, received through faith

Footnote: *a propitiation, or a place of atonement*

NLT For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.

MSG God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear.

BBE whom God has put forward as the sign of his mercy, through faith, by his blood, to make clear his righteousness

NET God publicly displayed him at his death as the mercy seat accessible through faith.

EHV whom God publicly displayed as the atonement seat* through faith in his blood.

*Footnote: The atonement seat was the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. It served as the footstool of God's throne and was the place where the blood of the sacrifices was offered. Christ is the fulfillment of the function of the atonement seat.

Sometimes the early translators of Latin and English Bibles made a poor choice of words, but long usage sanctified and corrected the meaning of the word. The Greek word *hilasterion* was translated or we could say transliterated into English with the Latin word “propitiation.” In its base meaning “propitiation” emphasizes a change of God’s feelings. While this connotation is contained in the Greek root *hilas*—, and it is true that we escape God’s wrath through Christ’s work, as the name of the cover of the Ark of the Covenant in the Greek Old Testament, the word *hilasterion* was being used to translate the Hebrew *kopheret*. *Kopheret* is based on the root *kaphar* which emphasizes, not a change of feeling, but a complete payment. A better Latin word would have been “expiation,” but over centuries of use in the KJV, “propitiation” gradually took

on the meaning “complete payment.” The context of Scripture made the meaning clear, and the long use of the KJV changed the connotation of the word.

- A side issue here is whether the verse refers to “faith in his blood.”
- Does this make a difference?
- Why might some translations avoid that expression?

1 John 2:2 provides another example of the use of the terms *propitiation* and *atoning*.

- KJV He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.
- ESV He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- NASB He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.
- NKJV He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.
- HCSB He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.
- CSB He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world.
- NIV He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.
- NRSV He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- NLT He himself is the sacrifice that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.
- MSG When he served as a sacrifice for our sins, he solved the sin problem for good—not only ours, but the whole world’s.
- BBE He is the offering for our sins; and not for ours only, but for all the world.
- EHV He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world.

Here the key question is whether readers understand the terms *atoning* and *atonement*.

2 Corinthians 5:19 God the Father credited Christ’s payment for sin to the whole world.

- EHV God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them.
- CSB in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them
- NET in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting people’s trespasses against them
- NIV God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them.
- ESV In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them
- NLT God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them.
- MSG God put the world square with himself through the Messiah, giving the world a fresh start by offering forgiveness of sins.

BBE God was in Christ making peace between the world and himself, not putting their sins to their account
 NKJV God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them
 NRSV in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them
 KJV God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them

- How does the text define reconciliation?
- Do any of the translations lessen the objective nature of the reconciliation?
- Does the position of *in Christ* make a difference?

Matthew 18:18 When is sin forgiven?

NET I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound in heaven, and whatever you release on earth will have been released in heaven.
 NIV I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
 NASB Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.
 ESV Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
 CSB Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will have been bound* in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will have been loosed in heaven.
 *Footnote: Or *will be*
 NLT I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.
 MSG Take this most seriously: A yes on earth is yes in heaven; a no on earth is no in heaven. What you say to one another is eternal. I mean this.
 BBE Truly I say to you, Whatever things are fixed by you on earth will be fixed in heaven: and whatever you make free on earth will be made free in heaven.
 NKJV Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
 NRSV Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
 KJV Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.
 EHV Amen I tell you: Whatever you bind on earth will be* bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
 *Footnote: Or *will have been*

- Why do some translate the verb as a future and some as a future perfect?
- Does it make a difference?
- Is the future perfect still a natural construction in English?

Faith

We receive the benefit of the payment which Christ made for us, through the faith which the Holy Spirit creates in us through the means of grace

Habakkuk 2:4 How do translations view the nature of faith in the Messiah?

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

The Hebrew word order allows *the righteous will live by faith* or *the righteous by faith will live*. The Hebrew punctuation supports *the righteous will live by faith*.

- Is there a difference in connotation between living by *faith* or by *faithfulness*?

Romans 1:17

NET The righteous by faith will live.
 NIV The righteous will live by faith.
 NASB THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.
 ESV The righteous shall live by faith.
 NLT It is through faith that a righteous person has life.
 MSG The person in right standing before God by trusting him really lives.
 BBE The man who does righteousness will be living by his faith.
 NKJV The just shall live by faith.
 NRSV The one who is righteous will live by faith.
 KJV The just shall live by faith.
 CSB The righteous will live by faith.
 EHV The righteous will live by faith.

Any interesting translations here?¹

The Relationship of Faith and Works

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.
 NASB You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.
 ESV You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.
 NKJV You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.
 NRSV You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.
 KJV Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.
 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.

¹ Check NET.

MSG Is it not evident that a person is made right with God not by a barren faith but by faith fruitful in works?
 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.
 NKJV Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect?
 NRSV You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works.
 KJV Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?
 NLT You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete.
 BBE You see that his faith was helping his works and was made complete by them.
 MSG Isn't it obvious that faith and works are yoked partners, that faith expresses itself in works? That the works are "works of faith"?
 Beck His faith was active by works and by works faith reached its goal.
 Luther Durch die Werke ist der Glaube vollkommen geworden
 EHV You see that his faith was working together with his works, and by his works his faith was shown to be complete.

- Do any of the translations unintentionally give a Catholic slant to the relationship of faith and works? Which do not?

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.
 Beck Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead
 NKJV For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.
 NRSV For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is also dead.
 Mess The very moment you separate body and spirit, you end up with a corpse. Separate faith and works and you get the same thing: a corpse.
 BBE For as the body without the spirit is dead even so 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*

Any “Protestant” translations here? ²

Luke 7:47 Does love produce forgiveness or does forgiveness produce love?

NIV Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

NASB For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.

ESV Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.

NLT I tell you, her sins—and they are many—have been forgiven, so she has shown me much love. But a person who is forgiven little shows only little love.

MSG Impressive, isn't it? She was forgiven many, many sins, and so she is very, very grateful. If the forgiveness is minimal, the gratitude is minimal.”

BBE And so I say to you, She will have forgiveness for her sins which are great in number, because of her great love: but he who has small need of forgiveness gives little love.

NKJV Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.

NRSV Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.

KJV Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

CSB Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that's why she loved much. But the one who is forgiven little, loves little.

EHV Therefore I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; that is why she loved so much. But the one who is forgiven little loves little.

- Which do you like? Why?
- Any you do not like? Why?

Justification means to declare or to show someone or something to be right or righteous. When God and his plan are the ones who are “justified,” should translations retain the term “justify” to make the declaratory sense of that word clear, or should they offer a different rendering?

Luke 7:29 & 35

NIV All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, *acknowledged that God's way was right*, because they had been baptized by John.

NASB When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they *acknowledged God's justice*, having been baptized with the baptism of John.

ESV When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they *declared God just*, having been baptized with the baptism of John,

CSB When all the people, including the tax collectors, heard this, they *acknowledged God's way of righteousness*, because they had been baptized with John's baptism.
Note in HCSB: *they justified God*

NET All the people who heard this, even the tax collectors, *acknowledged God's justice*, because they had been baptized with John's baptism.

² NLT, KJV footnote, and EHV. Why?

- NLT When they heard this, all the people—even the tax collectors—*agreed that God’s way was right*, for they had been baptized by John.
- MSG The ordinary and disreputable people who heard John, by being baptized by him into the kingdom, are *the clearest evidence that* the Pharisees and religious officials would have nothing to do with such a baptism, wouldn’t think of giving up their place in line to their inferiors.
- BBE And all the people, and the tax-farmers, to whom John had given baptism, when they had knowledge of these things, gave glory to God.
- NKJV And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors *justified God*, having been baptized with the baptism of John.
- NRSV And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, *acknowledged the justice of God*, because they had been baptized with John’s baptism.
- KJV And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, *justified God*, being baptized with the baptism of John.
- EHV When all the people (including the tax collectors) heard this, they declared that God was just, since they were baptized with the baptism of John.
- NIV But wisdom is proved right by all her children.
- NASB Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.
- ESV Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.
- CSB Yet wisdom is vindicated by all her children.
- NLT Wisdom is shown to be right by the lives of those who follow it
- MSG Opinion polls don’t count for much, do they? The proof of the pudding is in the eating.
- EHV Yet wisdom is declared right by all her children.

Other Meanings of “Faith”

Sometimes exegetical tradition as reflected in the Lutheran Confessions differs from the interpretation or application of a passage that is offered in most commentaries. An example is in **Romans 14:23**, “whatever is not of faith is sin.” The Lutheran Confessions use this verse to show that the “good works” of unbelievers are sin. This interpretation understands the “faith” in the passage to be saving faith in Christ. Of the translations surveyed, most kept the literal translation “faith” which allows this interpretation. The context of Romans 14, however, suggests that the “faith” in question is confidence in the use of adiphora. The EHV adds a footnote to clarify the issue. Two of the more periphrastic translations gave these interpretations.

- NLT But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.
- MSG But if you’re not sure, if you notice that you are acting in ways inconsistent with what you believe—some days trying to impose your opinions on others, other days just trying to please them—then you know that you’re out of line. If the way you live isn’t consistent with what you believe, then it’s wrong.
- EHV Everything that does not proceed from faith* is sin.
*Or confidence, or conviction

Another instance in which “faith” has a special meaning is **1 Timothy 5:12**. This passage concerns widows who enlist to serve the church but then change their mind and get married. What wrong impression might be given if the special nuance of “faith” is not picked up?

KJV having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith
 ESV and so incur condemnation for having abandoned their former faith
 BBE they are judged because they have been false to their first faith
 NKJV having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith
 NET they incur judgment for breaking their former pledge
 NIV they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge
 NASB thus incurring condemnation, because they have set aside their previous pledge
 CSB receive condemnation because they have renounced their original pledge
 NLT they would be guilty of breaking their previous pledge
 NRSV so they incur condemnation for having violated their first pledge
 MSG by breaking their word, they're liable to go from bad to worse
 EHV they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge

Christians and the Law

Sometimes none of our test translations get it right. In **1 Corinthians 9:20-21** Paul says Christians do not live *under* the law (ὕπὸ 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 distinctions 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.
 Also ESV NASB and NET have: *under* the law of Christ; NRSV: *under* Christ's law
 BBE: *under* law to Christ; NKJV: *under* law toward Christ; KJV: *under* the law to Christ
 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.
 MSG meticulous moralists, loose-living immoralists [A swing and a miss!]
 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. ²¹To 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. ²¹To 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. ²¹To 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?

Another interesting passage that may reflect on a translation's understanding of the Christian and the law is **1 Timothy 1:9**.

NET law is not intended for a righteous person, but for lawless and rebellious people
 NIV law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels

NASB law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious
 ESV the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient
 CSB the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious
 NLT the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is for people who are lawless and rebellious
 MSG the law code isn't primarily for people who live responsibly, but for the irresponsible
 BBE the law is made, not for the upright man, but for those who have no respect for law and order
 NKJV the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate
 NRSV the law is laid down not for the innocent but for the lawless and disobedient
 KJV the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient
 EHV the law is not laid down for a righteous person, but for lawless and rebellious people.

The Greek verb is οὐ κείται. Is there any significance to the different translations?

Galatians 3:24 How does this passage describe the function of the law for Old Testament Christians?

NIV84 So the law was *put in charge to lead us to Christ* that we might be justified by faith.
 NIV11 So the law was our *guardian until Christ came* that we might be justified by faith.
 ESV So then, the law was *our guardian until Christ came*, in order that we might be justified by faith.
 CSB The law, then, was *our guardian until Christ*, so that we could be justified by
 NET Thus the law had become *our guardian until Christ*, so that we could be declared righteous by faith.
 NLT Let me put it another way. The law was *our guardian until Christ came*; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith.
 NASB Therefore the Law has become *our tutor to lead us to Christ*, so that we may be justified by faith.
 NKJV Therefore the law was *our tutor to bring us to Christ*, that we might be justified by faith.
 MSG The law was like those *Greek tutors*, with which you are familiar, *who escort children to school* and protect them from danger or distraction, making sure the children will really get to the place they set out for.
 BBE So the law has been *a servant to take us to Christ*, so that we might have righteousness by faith.
 NRSV Therefore the law was *our disciplinarian until Christ came*, so that we might be justified by faith.
 KJV Wherefore the law was our *schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ*, that we might be justified by faith.
 EHV So the law was our *chaperone*^{*} until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith.

* Footnote: The Greek term for *chaperone* referred to a man who was to supervise, discipline, and watch out for a student.

- Which do you like best? Why?
- What is potentially misleading with “guardian”?
- Why does “tutor” work well for some people but not for others?
- Is anything missing from the word “chaperone”?

“Pedagogue” is a very literal rendering of the Greek term for the office of the man who attended the student on the way to school, but in modern English this term means “teacher.” In ancient Greece, however, the man’s function was different, and a correct understanding of the term is essential to understanding the point of the passage. Is this a case in which it is very hard to find one English term that says it all? “Crossing guard” isn’t quite right either.

Conversion

In **Matthew 21:32** which do you like best? Why?

- ESV For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward *change your minds* and believe him.
- CSB For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you didn’t believe him. Tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him, but you, when you saw it, didn’t even *change your minds* then and believe him.
- NIV11 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not *repent* and believe him.
- NLT For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn’t believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and *repent* of your sins.
- MSG John came to you showing you the right road. You turned up your noses at him, but the crooks and whores believed him. Even when you saw their changed lives, you didn't care enough to *change* and believe him.
- EHV For John came to you in the way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. However, the tax collectors and prostitutes did believe him. Even when you saw this, you did not *change your mind* and believe him.

In what sense do we accept or receive Christ? In **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*).³ Is there a reason to use different verbs in this context?

- 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
- NET He came to what was his own, but his own people did not *receive* him. But to all who have *received* him – those who believe in his name– he has given the right to become God’s children
- NASB He came to His own, and those who were His own did not *receive* Him. But as many as *received* Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name

³ For an example of the use of *lambano* as passive reception of a gift see 1 Cor 4:7. In Colossians 2:6 *paralambano* is used for receiving Christ.

- NKJV He came to His own, and His own did not *receive* Him. But as many as *received* Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
- 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.
- BBE He came to the things which were his and his people did not *take him to their hearts*. To all those who *did so take him*, however, he gave the right of becoming children of God—that is, to those who had faith in his name:
- 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
- NLT Turn me again to you and restore me
- MSG Now put me, trained and obedient, to use
- 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

- Which translations best reflect the construction of the Hebrew verbs?

1 John 3:19-20 Where do we look for our ultimate assurance—to our life or to God’s verdict?

1 John 3:18 defines a general instruction for the believer: “Little children, we must not love with word or speech, but with truth and action.”

Verses 19 and 20 then point to our ultimate source of comfort:

HCSB This is how we will know we belong to the truth and will convince our conscience in His presence, ²⁰even if our conscience condemns us, that God is greater than our conscience, and He knows all things.

- CSB This is how we will know that we belong to the truth and will reassure our hearts before him ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows all things.
- NIV This then is how we know that we belong to the truth, and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence ²⁰whenever our hearts condemn us. For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.
- ESV By this we shall know that we are of the truth and reassure our heart before him; ²⁰for whenever our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and he knows everything.
- NLT Even if we feel guilty, God is greater than our feelings, and he knows everything.
- NKJV For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things.
- KJV For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.
- EHV This is how we know that we are of the truth and how we will set our hearts at rest in his presence: ²⁰If our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

The question is whether there is a strong stop at the end of verse 19. Many translations connect our assurance in verse 20 with the preceding description of works in verse 19. NLT, translations of the KJV tradition, and EHV, connect our assurance with God's verdict, not with our feeling about our works. ESV seems to be in the middle.

A translation problem that has a bearing on the issue of perfectionism is John's vocabulary for sin. He speaks of "sinning," "having sin," and "doing sin." In **1 John 3:4**, is there a difference between sinning and doing sin? Some translations recognize a difference, some don't.

Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

NIV Everyone who *sins* breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.

ESV Everyone who *makes a practice of sinning* also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

NASB Everyone who *practices sin* also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

NET Everyone who *practices sin* also practices lawlessness; indeed, sin is lawlessness.

HCSB Everyone who *commits sin* also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law.

CSB Everyone who *commits sin* practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

NKJV Whoever *commits sin* also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

NRSV Everyone who *commits sin* is guilty of lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.

KJV Whosoever *committeth sin* transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

NLT Everyone who *sins* is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.

MSG All who *indulge in a sinful life* are dangerously lawless, for sin is a major disruption of God's order.

BBE Everyone *who is a sinner* goes against the law, for sin is going against the law.

EHV Everyone who *commits sin* also commits lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness.

- Do you like some better than others? Why?

This issue is more pronounced in **1 John 3:6** where the first verb is a simple present tense. A special problem is whether the participle in the second half should be translated as a continuous or persistent action.

πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν

NIV No one who lives in him *keeps on sinning*. No one who *continues to sin* has either seen him or known him.

- ESV No one who abides in him *keeps on sinning*; no one who *keeps on sinning* has either seen him or known him.
- CSB Everyone who remains in Him does not *sin*; everyone who *sins* has not seen him or known him.
- MSG No one who lives deeply in Christ *makes a practice of sin*. None of those who do *practice sin* have taken a good look at Christ.
- NASB No one who abides in Him *sins*; no one who *sins* has seen Him or knows Him.
- NET Everyone who resides in him does not *sin*; everyone who *sins* has neither seen him nor known him.
- NLT Anyone who continues to live in him will not *sin*. But anyone who *keeps on sinning* does not know him or understand who he is.
- BBE Anyone who is in him *does no sin*; anyone who *is a sinner* has not seen him and has no knowledge of him.
- NKJV Whoever abides in Him does not *sin*. Whoever *sins* has neither seen Him nor known Him.
- NRSV No one who abides in him *sins*; no one who *sins* has either seen him or known him.
- KJV Whosoever abideth in him *sinneth* not: whosoever *sinneth* hath not seen him, neither known him.
- EHV Anyone who remains in him does not *sin*. The person who *keeps on sinning* has not seen him or known him.

- Are any of the translations susceptible to a perfectionist interpretation?

Predestination

Is Jesus a stone that causes men to stumble or a stone over which they stumble?

Are people destined (ἐτέθησαν) to fall?

1 Peter 2:8

- 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.
- NASB a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.
- 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 *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.

- Are any more prone to a Calvinist understanding?

Exodus 9:16 says God “caused Pharaoh to stand.” Does this refer to predestination, to bringing Pharaoh to power, or to preserving him? Do the translators’ choices reflect a theological leaning?

NIV But I have *raised you up* for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.

NIV11 has “*or spared you*” in the footnote.

ESV But for this purpose I have *raised you up*, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

NKJV “But indeed for this purpose I have *raised you up*, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.

KJV And in very deed for this cause have I *raised thee up*, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth.

Note on *raised*: Heb. *made thee stand*.

CSB I have *let you live* for this purpose: to show you my power and to make my name known on the whole earth.

NASB “But, indeed, for this reason I have *allowed you to remain*, in order to show you My power and in order to proclaim My name through all the earth.

NLT But I have *spared you* for a purpose—to show you my power and to spread my fame throughout the earth.

MSG But for one reason only I’ve *kept you on your feet*: To make you recognize my power so that my reputation spreads in all the Earth.

BBE But, for this very reason, I *have kept you from destruction*, to make clear to you my power, and so that my name may be honored through all the earth.

NRSV But this is why I have *let you live*: to show you my power, and to make my name resound through all the earth.

EHV for this very reason, I *caused you to stand*:* so that I could show you my power, and that my name would be made known over the entire earth.

*Footnote: The literal rendering of the Hebrew, *caused you to stand*, may mean “raised you to power” or “let you remain for so long.” Verse 15 suggests the latter.

In the corresponding passage in **Romans 9:17** the tendency toward “raised you up” is more pronounced. All our test translations have “raised you up” except EHV which has:

EHV For this very purpose I caused you to stand, that I may demonstrate my power in how I deal with you, and that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

and the interpretive translations which say:

NLT For the Scriptures say that God told Pharaoh, “I have appointed you for the very purpose of displaying my power in you and to spread my fame throughout the earth.”

MSG The same point was made when God said to Pharaoh, “I picked you as a bit player in this drama of my salvation power.”

BBE For the holy Writings say to Pharaoh, For this same purpose did I put you on high, so that I might make my power seen in you, and that there might be knowledge of my name through all the earth.

Jude 4 Does God prophesy the coming of false teachers or foreordain it?
οἱ πάλαι προγεγραμμένοι literally “the long-ago written-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
- NASB For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were *long beforehand marked out* for this condemnation
- 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

- Which are most prone to a Calvinist understanding?
- Which do you like best?
- Is the choice of *men* or *people* an issue here?
- What writing might Jude be referring to?

Romans 9:22 Who makes unbelievers ready for destruction (κατηρτισμένα εἰς ἀπόλειαν)?
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*

- What form is *κατηρτισμένα*?
- Which translations do you like? Why?

Do some translations reflect a “once saved, always saved” view? In **Luke 8:13** all our resource translations including EHV have “believe for a while” or something similar. That is what the text says. Two interpretive translations veer off the road.

- MSG The seeds in the gravel are those who hear with enthusiasm, but the enthusiasm doesn’t go very deep. It’s only another fad, and the moment there’s trouble it’s gone.
- LB The stony ground represents those who enjoy listening to sermons, but somehow the message never really gets through to them and doesn’t take root and grow. They know the message is true, and sort of believe for a while; but when the hot winds of persecution blow, they lose interest.

2 Peter 2:1 delivers a powerful blow against limited atonement, when it says that the Master bought the false teachers who are on their way to destruction. Only the paraphrases challenge this.

- MSG But there were also [lying] prophets among the people then, just as there will be lying religious teachers among you. They’ll smuggle in destructive divisions, pitting you against each other—biting the hand of the One who *gave them a chance* to have their lives back! They’ve put themselves on a fast downhill slide to destruction
- BBE But there were false prophets among the people, as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly put forward wrong teachings for your destruction, even turning away from the Lord *who gave himself for them*; whose destruction will come quickly, and they themselves will be the cause of it.

2 Peter 1:10 Can we make our election sure? How? Is this assurance subjective or objective?

σπουδάσατε βεβαίαν ὑμῶν τὴν κλήσιν καὶ ἐκλογήν ποιῆσθαι

- NIV84 my brothers, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure.
- NIV11 my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election.
- ESV brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure
The latest revision has: to confirm your calling and election.
- CSB brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election
- NASB brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you
- NET brothers and sisters make every effort to be sure of your calling and election.
- NLT brothers and sisters, work hard to prove that you really are among those God has called and chosen.
- MSG friends, confirm God’s invitation to you, his choice of you. Don’t put it off; do it now.

BBE my brothers, take all the more care to make your selection and approval certain
 NKJV brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure
 NRSV brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to confirm your call and election
 KJV brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure
 EHV brothers,* be more eager to make your calling and election sure for yourselves.

*Footnote: When context indicates it, the Greek word for *brothers* may refer to all fellow believers, male and female.

- Do you prefer “make sure” or “confirm”? Why?
- Any other translations you like? Dislike?
- Why does EHV have the words *for yourselves*? What form and voice is ποιῆσθαι?

The Lord’s Supper

Any competent linguist, regardless of his or her doctrinal convictions, can correctly translate the words, “this is my blood.” The interpretation of those words may differ, but in most cases the translation will be the same. But is it possible that different views of the Lord’s Supper may be reflected in the translation of other passages?

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*

Luther *Gemeinschaft des Blutes*; GW: *sharing* the blood; GWN: *a communion with* the blood

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?

AB The cup of blessing of wine at the Lord’s Supper upon which we ask God’s blessing, does it not mean that in drinking it we *participate in and share a fellowship (a communion)* in the blood of Christ (the Messiah)? The bread which we break, does it not mean that in eating it we *participate in and share a fellowship (a communion)* 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.”⁴
- Do any of the translations above give a false view of the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper?
- Do “participation” and “sharing” focus more on the action of the recipients?
- Does “communion” keep the sacramental union more in the picture?
- Does the term “blessing” keep the consecration in the picture more strongly than “thanksgiving”?
- Is there a difference between “sharing in the blood” and “sharing the blood” and between “communion with the blood” and “communion of the blood”?

A passage which has been drawn into the discussion of the Lord’s Supper is **Acts 3:21**.

HCSB Heaven must welcome* Him until the times of the restoration of all things
*Or *receive, or retain*

CSB Heaven must receive him until the time of the restoration of all things

NIV84 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything

NIV11 Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything,

ESV whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things

EHV He must receive heaven* until the times when everything will be restored

*Or *Heaven must receive him*.

- Evaluate the changes in CSB and NIV.
- Is the passage relevant to the doctrine of the Lord’s Supper?

Baptism

In **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*

⁴ Chrysostom on *koinonia*: Why did [Paul in 1 Co 10:16] not say “participation” (*metalepsis* or *metoche*)? Because he intended to express something more, and to point out how close the union (*henosis*) was. We communicate not only by participating and partaking, but also by being united. For as that body is united with Christ, so we are also united with him by this bread” (*A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. XII, p 139.) See also D. Kuske, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Fall 2004, p 284-286.

EHV John appeared and was baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a *baptism of repentance* for the forgiveness of sins.

NIV, ESV, and CSB all stay literal here, except that HCSB adds a Baptist note. A Lutheran translator should in this case stay with the literal translation and not try to import a full Lutheran interpretation of “a baptism of repentance” into the translation. All the interpretive translations are wrong:

NLT This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be *baptized to show that they had repented* of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven.

MSG John the Baptizer appeared in the wild, preaching a *baptism of life-change that leads to forgiveness of sins*.

BBE John came, and gave baptism in the waste land, preaching *baptism as a sign of forgiveness* of sin for those whose hearts were changed.

1 Peter 3:21 is a passage in which the translator’s view of baptism may potentially influence the translation. It is hard to evade the text’s statement that baptism saves, but 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? What is suggested by the following translations?

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

NET The flood prefigured baptism, which now saves you not the washing off of physical dirt but the *pledge* of a good conscience to 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 there 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*
Luther: *der Bund eines guten Gewissens* GWN: guaranteeing us a good conscience

Eperotema is admittedly a challenging word to translate, but in this context “claim” would be better than “appeal,” “answer,” or “pledge,” which are more open to making baptism our pledge to God.

Ministry

Another interesting doctrinal study would be the rendering of terms for ministry. In the KJV it was very clear that “ministry” (*diakonia*) referred to many forms of service in the church and outside of the church. Many more-recent translations obscure the biblical usage by using “ministry” for public ministry of the Word and “service” for other forms of ministry in and outside of the church. This topic could be a study in itself,⁵ but here we can give just two illustrations of the issue.

1 Corinthians 12:5 διαρέσεις διακονιῶν

- NIV There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.
- NASB there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord.
- ESV there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;
- CSB There are different ministries, but the same Lord.
- NLT There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord.
- NET there are different ministries, but the same Lord.
- MSG God's various ministries are carried out everywhere
- BBE there are different sorts of servants, but the same Lord.
- NKJV There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.
- NRSV there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;
- KJV And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.
(administrations: or, ministries)
- EHV There are different kinds of ministries, and yet the same Lord.

Ephesians 4:12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας

- NIV to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up
- NASB for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ;
- ESV to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ
- HCSB for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ
- CSB equipping the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ

⁵ See J. Brug, *The Ministry of the Word*, p 3-32.

NLT	Their responsibility is to equip God’s people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ.
NET	to equip the saints for the work of ministry, that is, to build up the body of Christ
MSG	to train Christians in skilled servant work, working within Christ’s body, the church,
BBE	For the training of the saints as servants in the church, for the building up of the body of Christ:
NKJV	for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,
NRSV	to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ,
KJV	For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
EHV	for the purpose of training the saints for the work of serving,* in order to build up the body of Christ
	*Or ministry

A similar situation exists with various offices of ministry. The New Testament has two clear classes of ministers, the *diakonoi*, who waited on tables, and the *episkopoi* / *presbyteroi*, who served in the same office, an office which approximates our office of pastor. A shift in the meaning of these terms over the centuries led to confusion. *Presbyteroi* originally meant “elders”, but the English derivative is “priest.” *Episkopoi* meant “overseers,” but the English derivative is “bishop.”

Philippians 1:1 mentions two offices *episcopoi* and *diakonoi*.

NIV NET NASB ESV CSB EHV:	overseers and deacons
NKJV BBE NRSV KJV:	bishops and deacons
NLT:	elders and deacons.
MSG:	pastors and ministers

Evaluate each approach. Pros and cons of each?

A comparison of **Titus 1:5-7** shows that one ministerial office, which approximates “pastor,” had two names used interchangeably: *presbyteroi* and *episcopoi*

NIV NASB ESV CSB EHV:	elders and overseers
NKJV NRSV KJV:	elders and bishops
NLT:	elders and elders
MSG:	leaders and church leaders
BBE:	men in authority over the churches and bishops

Evaluate each approach. Pros and cons of each?

Hell and Sheol

The Hebrew word *sheol* creates translation issues that have doctrinal implications. *Sheol* may refer to the grave, to the condition of death, and to the place of spiritual death, namely, hell.

An overly literal translation, which follows the form of the original too woodenly, may communicate a wrong meaning. An example of such an overly literal translation which communicates the wrong meaning occurred in the KJV in **Psalms 16:10**:

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

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. In this passage "soul" is an emphatic, emotional way of saying "me." "Sheol" here refers to the condition of death or the grave. How do translations resolve this problem? Many bypass the issue by transliterating.

CSB For you will not abandon me to Sheol

NRSV For you do not give me up to Sheol

NET You will not abandon me to Sheol

NASB For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol

ESV For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,

NKJV For You will not leave my soul in Sheol

MSG You canceled my ticket to hell—that's not my destination!

BBE For you will not let my soul be prisoned in the underworld

NIV 1984 caught the right connotation:

because you will not abandon me to the grave^a Note a] Sheol

NIV 2011 introduces a strange connotation with its rendering of *sheol*:

because you will not abandon me to the *realm of the dead*.

This can carry overtones of the mythical kingdom of the shades.

EHV because you will not abandon my life to the grave.

You will not let your favored one see decay.

How does this translation sync with the parallelism and with the use of the passage in Acts?

The variety of renderings for *sheol* is shown in **Deuteronomy 32:22**, one of the OT passages where the rendering "hell" is most possible.

NIV For a fire has been kindled by my wrath, one that burns to the realm of death below

NASB For a fire is kindled in My anger, And burns to the lowest part of Sheol

ESV For a fire is kindled by my anger, and it burns to the depths of Sheol

NLT For my anger blazes forth like fire and burns to the depths of the grave

MSG My anger started a fire, a wildfire burning deep down in Sheol

BBE For my wrath is a flaming fire, burning to the deep parts of the underworld

NKJV For a fire is kindled by my anger, And shall burn to the lowest hell

NRSV For a fire is kindled by my anger, and burns to the depths of Sheol

CSB For fire has been kindled because of my anger and burns to the depths of Sheol

KJV For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell

EHV For a fire has been ignited by my anger, and it burns to the depths of hell.

- Which translations take this passage as a reference to the grave?
- What is "the realm of death below"?

A similar situation arises in the New Testament where *hades* serves as the equivalent of *sheol*. In **Matthew 11:23** is the contrast between the sky and the ground or heaven and hell?

NIV84 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths.

NIV11 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades. Note: That is, the realm of the dead.

ESV And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades.

- NASB And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades;
- NET And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be thrown down to Hades!
- NLT And you people of Capernaum, will you be honored in heaven? No, you will go down to the place of the dead.
- MSG And Capernaum! With all your peacock strutting, you are going to end up in the abyss.
- BBE And you, Capernaum, were you not to be lifted up to heaven? you will go down into hell:
- NKJV And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades;
- NRSV And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.
- KJV And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell:
- EHV You, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to heaven? No, you will go down to hell.

Why is Hades capitalized, but not heaven? Are they different kinds of places?

Is the idea of a temporary hell introduced into any translations? In **Isaiah 24:22**, the Hebrew says that the spirits imprisoned by God will be “visited” after many days. Is this a “visitation” of continued punishment or a gracious release from punishment? All of our reviewed translations have “punished,” but the NIV has a footnote “released.”

They will be herded together like prisoners bound in a dungeon;
they will be shut up in prison and be punished^a after many days.

^aOr *released*

Does this note lend itself to a temporary hell, or does it refer to the loosing of Satan in Revelation 20?

Roles of Men and Women

Passages relating to the roles of men and women will have their own separate study guide, “Passages Concerning the Nature of Gender Roles and Marriage.” Here are a few of the passages pertinent to such a study. See that study for the data.

- 1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-10
- 1 Corinthians 14:26, 33-35
- 1 Timothy 2:8-15
- Galatians 3:26
- Galatians 4:4-6
- 2 Peter 1:21
- 1 Peter 3:7
- 1 Corinthians 16:13
- Philippians 1:14-15
- 1 Corinthians 14:39
- Acts 1:16
- Acts 6:3
- Deuteronomy 15:12

See that study for the data on these passages. Here we will consider only two passages which reflect one of the most discussed issues, the rendering of *adelphoi* as “brothers and sisters.” The heart of the

problem is that *adelphoi* is not strictly equivalent to the English “brothers” since it may include females in some contexts, but *adelphoi* is not strictly equivalent to the English “brothers and sisters” or “siblings” since those expressions explicitly include females, whereas *adelphoi* does not. This is a complicated issue which requires its own article and there is a more detailed study of it in the attached article on gender roles. We will here look at some verses that are pretty good indicators of a translation’s tendency in regard to so called gender neutral or gender accurate language.

One such passage is Acts 1:16, in which those who are to participate in choosing a replacement for Judas, are addressed as *andres adelphoi*, “men, brothers,” It is very likely that women were present, but were they asked to participate in the selection of the apostle?

NET has “Brothers” with the note: *Grk* “Men brothers.” In light of the compound phrase ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί Peter’s words are best understood as directly addressed to the males present, possibly referring specifically to the twelve.

NIV84, ESV, NLT, BBE, HCSB are among the other translations that read “brothers.”

NASB has “brethren”

KJV and NKJV read “men and brethren.”

MSG and NRSV have “friends.”

NIV11 and CSB: “brothers and sisters.”

NIV11 has the note: The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 6:3; 11:29; 12:17; 16:40; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14. CSB also has “brothers and sisters” in Acts 2:29; 6:3, 13:26, 38; and 15:7, 26.

In Acts 6:3 the same pattern holds. NET has the note: “It is not clear from a historical standpoint (but it is unlikely) that women would have been involved in the selection process too. For this reason the translation “brothers” has been retained, rather than “brothers and sisters” (used in contexts where both male and female believers are clearly addressed).

ESV has the note “brothers and sisters.”

Acts 22:1 has the triple masculine ἄνδρες ἀδελφοὶ καὶ πατέρες for which all the translations retain the masculine.

Marriage Issues

Passages relating to the nature of marriage will have their own separate study guide, “Passages Concerning the Nature of Gender Roles and Marriage.” Here we give just three examples.

In **Genesis 2:24** many translations have something like “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and be united with his wife, and they will become one flesh.” But the Hebrew verb means *cling to*, and the New Testament rendering reflects the same idea. So the EHV translation, “For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will *remain* united with his wife, and they will become one flesh” is more precise than the translation *be united with his wife*. It more clearly reflects the permanent nature of marriage, which is Jesus’ point in quoting this passage in Matthew 19.

NIV For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife

CSB This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife

EHV For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will remain united with his wife

The nature of marriage as an institution of God is the same throughout history, but the way of establishing marriage as a civil contract has taken on various forms in different cultures. Do translations express this clearly?

Matthew 1:18

- NIV His mother Mary was *pledged to be married* to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.
- CSB After his mother Mary had been *engaged** to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit.
*Or *betrothed*
- NASB when His mother Mary had been *betrothed* to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.
- ESV When his mother Mary had been *betrothed* to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
- NLT His mother, Mary, was *engaged to be married* to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- MSG His mother, Mary, was *engaged to be married* to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.)
- BBE When his mother Mary was *going to be married* to Joseph, before they came together the discovery was made that she was with child by the Holy Spirit.
- NKJV After His mother Mary was *betrothed* to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.
- NRSV When his mother Mary had been *engaged* to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
- KJV When as his mother Mary was *espoused* to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.
- EHV His mother, Mary, was *pledged in marriage** to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.
*Or *betrothed*

- Were Mary and Joseph married?
- What are the pros and cons of “pledged to be married,” “pledged in marriage,” “engaged,” and “betrothed”?
- What is the difference between “pledged to be married” and “pledged in marriage”?

1 Corinthians 7:39 Must a Christian marry only other Christians? What does *only in the Lord* mean?

- HCSB if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord.*
*Footnote: *Only a believer*
- CSB if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants — only in the Lord.
- NLT if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord.
- MSG if he dies, she is free to marry anyone she chooses. She will, of course, want to marry a believer and have the blessing of the Master.
- BBE when her husband is dead, she is free to be married to another; but only to a Christian.
- NKJV if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.
- NRSV if the husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, only in the Lord.
- KJV if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.

EHV if the husband has died, she is free to be married to any man she wishes, only in the Lord.

How might some of these translations burden consciences?

Sexual Morality

Homosexuality has become a controversial issue in the church today. Do translations clearly reflect the biblical teaching? In light of the contemporary situation, an issue that must be weighed is whether the translation accurately deals with the passages that refer to the sin of homosexuality, for example **1 Corinthians 6:9**, in which two forms of homosexual practice are among the sins which bring damnation, but which can be forgiven.

NIV	nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders
TNIV	nor male prostitutes nor practicing homosexuals
NLT	are male prostitutes or practice homosexuality
NRSV	male prostitutes, sodomites
NASB	nor effeminate, nor homosexuals
ESV	men who practice homosexuality
HCSB	anyone practicing homosexuality Note: <i>passive homosexual partners, active homosexual partners</i>
CSB	males who have sex with males Note: Both passive and active participants in homosexual acts
NIV11	men who have sex with men
MSG	those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex
BBE	less than a man or makes a wrong use of men
KJV	nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind
NKJV	nor homosexuals, nor sodomites
NET	passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals
EHV	nor males who have sex with males Footnote: The Greek text here has two distinct terms to identify passive partners and active partners in a homosexual relationship.

Here is the NET note on the two key Greek terms, much abbreviated:

- *μαλακός* : pertains to being passive in a same-sex relationship, *effeminate*, esp. of *catamites*, of men and boys who are sodomized by other males in such a relationship; the passive male partner in homosexual intercourse.
- *ἀρσενοκοίτης* “a male who engages in sexual activity with a person of his own sex, *pederast* ...of one who assumes the dominant role in same-sex activity, opposite *μαλακός*.”
- As in Greek, a number of other languages also have entirely distinct terms for the active and passive roles in homosexual intercourse. See also the discussion in G. D. Fee, *First Corinthians* (NICNT), p 243-44. BDAG 135.
- On the basis of these definitions evaluate the choices made by the various translations. Do some limit the application of the prohibition too narrowly?
 - Does the term “male prostitutes” impose a limit on the application which is not included in the Greek word?
 - Does “effeminate” refer to mannerisms rather than conduct. “Practicing homosexuals” is undoubtedly right in the context,
 - None of the translations or notes explicitly explain the difference between the two categories of homosexual conduct. Should they?

Another passage is **1 Timothy 1:10** (πόρνοις ἄρσενοκοίταις):

- NIV84 adulterers and perverts
- NIV11 the sexually immoral, those practicing homosexuality
- ESV the sexually immoral, men who practice homosexuality
- CSB the sexually immoral and homosexuals
- NASB immoral men and homosexuals
- NET sexually immoral people, practicing homosexuals
- NLT people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality
- MSG sex, truth, whatever!
- BBE those who go after loose women, those with unnatural desires
- NKJV for fornicators, for sodomites
- NRSV fornicators, sodomites,
- KJV for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind
- EHV for sexually immoral people, for homosexuals

- Are some of the translations too narrow in their renderings of the terms?

Romans 1:26-27 deals with the unnatural nature of homosexuality.

- NET For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged the natural sexual relations for unnatural ones, and likewise the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed in their passions for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.
- NIV Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.
- NASB For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
- ESV For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.
- NLT That is why God abandoned them to their shameful desires. Even the women turned against the natural way to have sex and instead indulged in sex with each other. And the men, instead of having normal sexual relations with women, burned with lust for each other. Men did shameful things with other men, and as a result of this sin, they suffered within themselves the penalty they deserved.
- MSG Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either—women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men. Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it—emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches.

- BBE For this reason God gave them up to evil passions, and their women were changing the natural use into one which is unnatural, And in the same way the men gave up the natural use of the woman and were burning in their desire for one another, men doing shame with men, and getting in their bodies the right reward of their evil-doing.
- NKJV For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.
- NRSV For this reason God gave them up to degrading passions. Their women exchanged natural intercourse for unnatural, and in the same way also the men, giving up natural intercourse with women, were consumed with passion for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the due penalty for their error.
- KJV For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.
- CSB For this reason God delivered them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. The men in the same way also left natural relations with women and were inflamed in their lust for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in their own persons the appropriate penalty of their error.
- EHV For this reason God handed them over to disgraceful passions. Even their females exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones.²⁷ And, in the same way, their males, after abandoning natural sexual relations with females, were consumed by their lust for one another. Males perform indecent acts with males and receive in themselves the penalty that is fitting for their perversion.

- Evaluate the translations “error” and “perversion.”

Messianic Prophecy

Because of the topic and the shifting views in Evangelicalism, this topic has its own study guide, “Principles of Bible Translation—Applied to Prophecy.” Among the passages studied in the paper are Isaiah 7:14, Psalm 16:10, Psalm 72, Psalm 45:6, Psalm 8, Psalm 68:18, and Micah 5:2. Here we will consider only these three especially important passages.

Isaiah 7

We begin with Isaiah 7:14, which is usually regarded as the most crucial test of a translation’s view of prophecy.

- 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 * Note: *Or* young woman
- ESV The virgin shall conceive and bear a son
- CSB See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel
- NASB Behold, a virgin* will be with child and bear a son *Or maiden⁶
- NKJV Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son
- NLT The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son

⁶ “Maiden” includes “virgin” as one of its meanings. “Virgin” is *Jungfrau* and “maiden” is *Magd*. Luther uses both to refer to Mary.

- 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
 EHV Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and call his name Immanuel.

Evaluate NIV 2011, NRSV, NASB, and MSG. When is “young woman” a viable translation?

Two factors involved in the translation are whether this is a direct prophecy and the meaning of ‘*almah*. The full paper on prophecy has considerable discussion of this.

Psalm 45

Another key test is Psalm 45, a wedding song for Christ and the church. The key issue is the address to the king as God in verse 6/7.

The Hebrew reads “your throne, God, forever” (כִּסֵּאֲךָ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם). This construction with the suffix on כִּסֵּאֲךָ does not permit such renderings as “the eternal and everlasting God has enthroned you” (this reads כִּסֵּאֲךָ as a verb, which it never is in Hebrew) or “your throne which God has given you will last forever” (reading “your throne of God,” using כִּסֵּאֲךָ as a construct in spite of the suffix). Such translations ignore the simplest sense of the Hebrew text and the renderings of the ancient translations (the Septuagint has ὁ θρόνος σου, ὁ θεός, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος). These verses are quoted in Hebrews 1:8 as a testimony of Christ’s divine superiority to the angels.

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

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

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

CSB Your throne, God, is forever and ever

Notes: Or Your divine throne is, or Your throne is God's

ESV Your throne, O God, is forever and ever

NASB Your throne, O God, is forever and ever

NLT Your throne, O God, endures 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

What is the effect of the NIV11 and CSB notes? What is notable about the RSV and NRSV?

Psalm 8:4-6

A problem arises from a shift of number and gender in the translation of Psalm 8:4-6. These are the key verses of this psalm, which are recognized by the letter to the Hebrews and by traditional Lutheran interpretation as an important prophecy of Christ.

How do recent translations agree or disagree with this approach?

NIV84 what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? ⁵You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.

⁶You 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?

⁵You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.

⁶You 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? ⁵You made him little less than God and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You 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.

⁵You made him little less than God* and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet:

* Footnotes: ⁴ Or *a mere mortal*; ⁵ LXX reads *angels*; ⁵ Or *heavenly beings*; Hb Elohim

ESV what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? ⁵Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶You 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!

⁵Nevertheless, you make him suffer need, apart from God for a while,[#] but you crown him with glory and honor.

Because of the importance of the passages 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, and KJV agree with NIV84 and HCSB in referring to “man” and “the son of man”

NET, NLT, MSG, and NRSV agree more with NIV11 with renderings like “the human race”, “mankind” “my micro-self”, “us”, “mortals”, and “human beings.”

CSB seems to align with the first view in its translation with the second view in its notes.

If the text said *bnei-Adam* this would be a more natural way to refer to people of both genders. The text says *ben-Adam*, which is a more natural way to refer to a single male person, as *bat-Adam* is a natural way to refer to a single female person (though in contemporary Hebrew even an individual woman can be called a *ben-adam*: *היא בן אדם מִשְׁכִּיל* *she is an educated person*).

Christ Begotten

Sometimes changes in traditional translations, even if they may be correct, raise suspicions among some readers. Consider **John 1:14**. The Greek *monogenes* has traditionally been translated “only begotten,” and this became a standard way of referring to Christ as the only divine Son of the Father. The term *monogenes*, however, does not always imply divinity, since it can also refer to a human only-child. Some translators think that the connotation of the Greek word is “one and only” or “one of a kind.” Notice how various translations handle the issue. (A side issue here is the verb for “dwelling.” Literally, ἐσκήνωσεν is “tented” among us. In biblical usage this does not imply a temporary residence. Formerly, the NIV [1978] had this rendering: “lived for a while among us.” Today, of the translations surveyed, only BBE retains this connotation.)

- NIV The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- NET Now the Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We saw his glory—the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father.
- ESV the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- MSG The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.
- NLT So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.
- BBE So the Word became flesh and took a place among us for a time; and we saw his glory—such glory as is given to an only son by his father—saw it to be true and full of grace.
- NRSV The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.
- CSB The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- NASB The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- NKJV The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- KJV The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.
- EHV The Word became flesh and dwelled* among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- *Literally *tented*.

This sampling of passages along with those in the two more detailed studies gives a pretty good cross-section of passages for comparing various translations.

This paper provides the data for an analysis of the doctrinal tendencies of many of the most popular Bible translations. It does not score or rate the translations, but serves as a study resource.

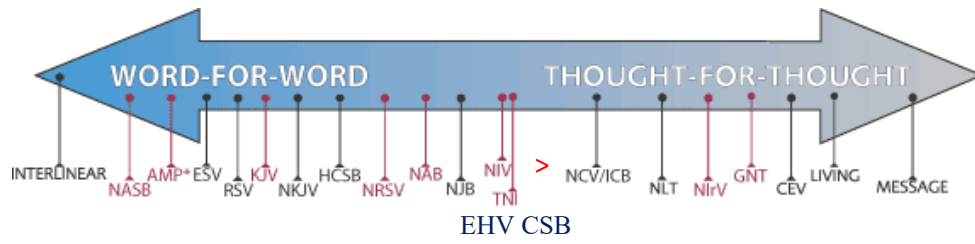
Abbreviations

NIV84	New International Version, moderate dynamic equivalent, Evangelical
TNIV	Today's New International version, failed revision of NIV 1984
NIV11	Shifts toward the "gender-neutral" end of the spectrum
NIV	No significant difference between NIV 84 and 11
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Bible, more in the middle, Southern Baptist origin
CSB	Christian Standard Bible, 2017 revision of HCSB
ESV	English Standard Version, revision of the RSV, toward the more literal end of the spectrum
NET	NET Bible, free online Bible with extensive notes, used by both TNIV and ESV translators. The philosophy is closer to TNIV.
NASB	New American Standard Bible, one of the most literal.
NKJV	New King James Version, quite literal and the fullest text
AB	Amplified Bible
NLT	New Living Translation. Rather free paraphrase, Evangelical
LB	Living Bible, predecessor of NLT, very free, Evangelical
MSG	The Message. Too free to be called a translation.
BBE	Bible in Basic English, British style.
NRSV	New Revised Standard Bible. Main line. Moderately literal. Gender inclusive.
EHV	Evangelical Heritage Version, translators are Lutherans, balanced
GW	God's Word, Lutheran origin
GWN	God's Word for the Nations, Lutheran origin
Beck/AAT	Lutheran

Appendix: Charts of Bible Translations

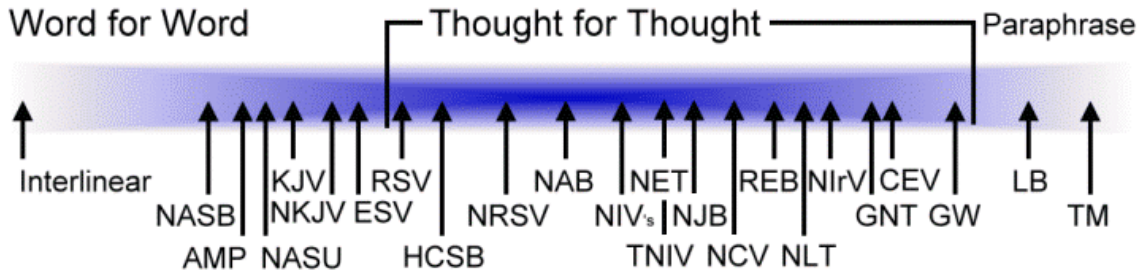
Charts placing Bible translations on a spectrum ranging from most literal to most free are often very subjective because they are made by parties who are placing their own translation in the middle. For that reason we offer charts from two perspectives and a blank spot where you can make your own.

- 1) This chart was published by Zondervan, publishers of the NIV. We would not position every translation as they do, but the chart gives a relative comparison of the translations from one perspective. I would move NIV somewhat to the right and TNIV even farther to the right. Also, is the ESV really more word-for-word than the KJV? I would not call Living Bible and the Message dynamic equivalent translations—they are paraphrases off the end of the arrow. Since they label their translation "optimal," CSB would probably place themselves in the middle, where we would place the EHV.



2) A more neutral chart, not produced by one translation, but with a concern for the treatment of gender in translations.

English Bible Translation Comparison



NASB / NASU - New American Standard (11)
 AMP - Amplified Bible (12)
 ESV* - English Standard Version (8)
 KJV* - King James Version (13)
 NKJV - New King James Version (9)
 RSV* - Revised Standard Version (11)
 HCSB - Holman Christian Standard (8)
 NRSV** - New Revised Standard (10.5)
 NAB* - New American Bible (7)
 NIV - New International Version (8)
 NIV[^] - NIV [UK only, 1996 edition] (8)
 NIV2011^{^^} - NIV Revision (8)

TNIV[^] - Today's NIV (7.5)
 NJB* - New Jerusalem Bible (7.5)
 NCV (ICB)[^] - New Century Version (3.5)
 REB (NEB)^{^^} - Revised English Bible (7)
 NLT[^] - New Living Translation (6.5)
 NirV - New International Reader's (3)
 GNT (GNB/TEV)* - Good News Translation (6)
 CEV^{^^} - Contemporary English (5)
 GW - God's Word (4.5)
 LB - Living Bible (8.5)
 TM - The Message (4.5)
 NET^{^^} - NET Bible (7)

^{^^} No gender neutral language for God, careful/moderate inclusive language regarding mankind.
[^] Gender neutral language
^{*} Apocrypha available or included

(c) 2007/2011 Brent MacDonald, Version 4c
www.NotJustAnotherBook.com



3) **Make your own.**

