

Bible Study

Before you can begin to study the Bible, there are some things you need to know about the Bible. The Bible is different than any other book ever written. That should be no surprise because it was written by the Creator of the Universe!

First, the word of God is alive. The word “quick” means “living.” It is the only book that will read you. The writer of Hebrews says that the word of God discerns (knows) your thoughts and intentions.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Second, in our natural state, we cannot understand God.

1 Corinthians 2:14

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto

him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

God must reveal Himself to us by His Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:10-11

But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so **the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**

God's Spirit connects with our spirit when we are believers—children of God.

Romans 8:14-16

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:**

There are many churches that profess to believe the Bible, but say there are errors of

contradictions in it, because it was written by men. Men did write down the scriptures—as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. Peter explains how.

2 Peter 1:19-21

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**

Third, the Bible is where we get our faith. Faith comes when we hear the word of God and we believe it.

Romans 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

When you have faith, you receive the word of God as the word of God, not the word of men. The word of God works in the hearts of believers.

1 Thessalonians 2:13

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, **when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.**

After we believe the word of God, the Holy Ghost seals our hearts until “the redemption of the purchased possession.” We are the purchased possession. Christ has purchased us with His blood. He will redeem us by giving us our resurrection bodies and meeting us in the clouds at the event known as the Adoption.

Ephesians 1:13-14

In whom ye also trusted, **after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the**

redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

You cannot please God if you do not have faith. You must believe Him. God rewards those believers who take the time to believe and study His words.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Another thing you must believe is that the Bible is complete. Contrary to what some religions believe, there is no new information coming from God. Paul was given the responsibility to complete the Bible. Paul's second letter to Timothy was the last book to be written.

Colossians 1:25-26

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from

generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

What God has to say about His word. He has magnified it above His name!

Psalm 138:1-2

(A Psalm of David.) I will praise thee with my whole heart: before the gods will I sing praise unto thee. I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and **for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.**

God's living word will always accomplish what He has sent it to do.

Isaiah 55:10-11

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: **So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.**

God's word will last forever.

Isaiah 59:21

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Isaiah 40:8

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but **the word of our God shall stand for ever.**

Matthew 24:35

Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my words shall not pass away.**

1 Peter 1:24-25

For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. **The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

Jesus compares the importance of God's word to eating—you cannot live without either!

Matthew 4:4

But he answered and said, It is written, **Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.**

Because it is so important, God has promised to preserve His word for us forever!

Psalm 12:6-7

The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.

There are warnings in the Bible against adding anything to God's word, taking anything away from God's word, or changing anything in God's word.

Revelation 22:18-19

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, **If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto**

him the plagues that are written in this book: **And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.**

Deuteronomy 4:2

Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 12:32

What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: **thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.**

Proverbs 30:5-6

Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. **Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.**

Ecclesiastes 3:14

I know that, **whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it:** and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

Paul warned us about people who preach other gospels.

Galatians 1:8-9

But though we, or an angel from heaven, **preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.** As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

There are even people who preach “another” Jesus! Paul calls them false apostles and deceitful workers.

2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-14

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. **For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye**

receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

¹³For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.

Peter writes that no prophecy of the scripture is open for private interpretation. That means that God, while preserving His word, also make sure that it can be understood.

2 Peter 1:19-21

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: **Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.** For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

It is wise to keep the previous passage in mind, whatever Bible you are reading. Study for yourself what the scripture means. Especially do

not let someone tell you that what is written is a mistake and should be changed to something else! If that were true, we would all have to rely on that person to tell us what God really wants us to know! Do you see how dangerous that is?

That begin said, we will look at 3 of the most common Bible translations to get an idea of their differences and why they exist.

King James Bible (KJV)

The source material for the translation of the New Testament was the Textus Receptus version of the Greek compiled by Erasmus; for the Old Testament, the Masoretic text of the Hebrew was used.

New International Version (NIV)

The NIV translation committee decided to use the United Bible Society's Greek text, rather than the received text on which the KJV is based. It was compiled from a comparison of thousands of Greek manuscripts, whereas the KJV was based on a single manuscript called the “received” text.

Revised Standard Version (RSV)

For the New Testament, the RSV followed the latest available version of Nestle's Greek text. The Old Testament was based on the Hebrew Masoretic Text, like the KJV, and also incorporated readings from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Which parts of the Bible are inspired (actually God's word?) The actual text in the original language (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament) given to the original holy men of God is the part that is inspired.

Bible translations try to make sure they are as close as possible to the inspired text, but are not considered inspired themselves. The chapter and verse numbers, and even the names of the books in the Bible, were all added by man, and not inspired. Study notes and anything else was added by men.

Because the starting texts differ, the translations are different. There are verses found in the KJV that are not in some of the newer translations.

Overall, there are 16 verses found in the KJV that are not found in the NIV.

One example of a missing verse is found in the book of Mark. Mark 7:16 is in the KJV.

Mark 7:15-17 (KJV)

There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. **If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.** And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

Mark 7:16 is deleted (but noted) from the NIV.

Mark 7:15-17 (NIV)

¹⁵ Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them." ^[16] ¹⁶

¹⁷ After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. Is this missing verse an error? No, it doesn't really provide new information. However, its deletion and notation, can raise more questions

about, rather than an increased understanding of, the information.

Starting documentation for a translation makes a big difference in the book of Mark. The last 12 verses in Mark 16, found in the KJV, are not found in many later Bibles. The information in those verses can be corroborated in other books in the Bible, but their deletion seems to be a loss, and not an improvement, to the KJV.

Both NIV and RSV have Mark 16:9-20 but include this information in their Bibles after verse 8.

[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

Some translations have changed verses, which change fundamental beliefs!

We'll start with one example of a changed verse, found in the RSV. The KJV version of Isaiah 7:14 prophesied that Jesus' mother would be a virgin. It is a sign, a miracle!

Isaiah 7:14 (KJV)

Therefore **the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**

The Revised Standard Version Bible in Isaiah tells us only that Jesus' mother will be a young woman. All of us could have "prophesied" that!

Isaiah 7:14 (RSV)

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman[a] shall conceive and bear[b] a son, and shall call his name Imman'u-el.[c]

Can we say that we have found an "error" in the Bible? No, Mary was a young woman, but RSV seems to miss the miracle, the sign from God, that a *virgin* would conceive a child!

Importantly, the RSV misses the impact of the accuracy of Bible prophecy, simply noting it was prophesied, but not matching the actual prophecy.

Matthew 1:22-23 (RSV)

All this took place to fulfil what **the Lord had spoken by the prophet: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emman’u-el”** (which means, God with us).

A changed verse causes very important concept, the Trinity, to be missing in newer translations. The Trinity, God being “Three-In-One,” is a foundational concept for our faith, but only one translation really explains it. In fact, many people do not believe in the Trinity because the word does not appear in any translation, including the KJV. But the Trinity is defined very specifically in the KJV in 1 John 5:7.

1 John 5:7 (KJV)

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

It is impossible to get this concept of the Trinity from any of the verses from the other translations! Try to understand any of the following verses!

1 John 5:7 (RSV)

And the Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is the truth.

1 John 5:7 (NIV)

For there are three that testify:

Are these errors in other translations? No, there is nothing “wrong” with these translations, but they appear to be incomplete, and the depth of understanding is not there.

Another concept that is impossible to get from any translation but the KJV, is dispensational Bible study, or right division of God’s word. The other translations do not explain the concept of right division, nor do they use the word dispensation.

Not everything in the Bible applies to us today. We know that Paul is our apostle and he wrote 13 epistles in the New Testament, Romans through Philemon, specifically for us in the dispensation of God’s grace. Jesus Christ dispensed new information to Paul to give to Gentiles, us.

Paul tells us to study God’s word, rightly divided, in his second letter to Timothy.

2 Timothy 2:15

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

How do we know that Paul is talking about the Bible? God’s word is the word of truth.

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.**

How do other translations explain how to study the Bible? Instead of rightly dividing, these translations tell us to rightly “handle” the word of truth, with no explanation about how to do it.

2 Timothy 2:15 (NIV)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and **who correctly handles the word of truth.**

2Timothy 2:15 (RSV)

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

Again, are these 2 translations errors? No, but the KJV is more specific about how to “handle the word of truth.” When you rightly divide scripture, you divide God’s word into that which applies to you and that which does not. Many things God required of others He does not require of us today. For example, the people in Jesus’ day were required to follow the Law to show their faith. Today, we simply must believe that Christ died to pay for our sins...BIG difference!

God dispensed different information to different people throughout the Bible. God gave Adam and Eve different information than he gave Noah, who got different information than Abraham, then Moses, and finally Paul, our apostle.

We already know when our dispensation will end, and another one, for a different group of people will begin. It will end in an event known

as the Rapture, or the Adoption. After the Adoption, a different dispensation will begin for the people left on earth, waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to set up His Kingdom of Heaven on the earth. The information for this dispensation is found in the books of the Bible from Hebrews to Revelation.

The RSV and the NIV do not use the word “dispensation” at all. The KJV uses it 4 times. Each time provides valuable information.

1 Corinthians 9:17

For it I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, **a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.**

Other translations of Bible use instead:

- “commission” RSV
- “trust” NIV
- “stewardship” NKJV (New KJV)
- “duty” NCV (New Century Version)

Ephesians 1:10

That **in the dispensation of the fulness of times** he might gather together in one all things in

Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Other translations of the Bible, use instead:

- “His plan of the fullness of times” NASB
- “when the times reach their fulfillment” NIV
- “a plan for the fullness of time” NRSV, RSV
- “His goal was to carry out His plan when the right time came” NCV

Ephesians 3:2

If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

Other translations use instead:

- “God gave me this work” NCV
- “Administration of God’s grace” NIV
- “Commission of God’s grace” NRSV
- “Stewardship of God’s grace” RSV

Colossians 1:25

Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

Other translations use instead:

- “stewardship from God” NKJV
- “commission God gave me” NIV
- “God’s commission that was given to me” NRSV
- “the divine office which was given to me” RSV
- “special work to do” NCV

Choosing a Bible is a very personal decision. The best Bible for you is the one that you feel the most comfortable with. God has promised to preserve His word for us (Psalm 12:7 on page 12) and God is not a man that He should lie. God works through His word, wherever it is.

Numbers 23:19

God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent: Hath he said and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?

Every English Bible today is a translation from the Hebrew of the Old Testament and Greek of the New Testament. It cannot reasonably be said that any of the English language version Bibles

are “inspired,” that is, spoken directly to the translators by the Holy Ghost along the model Peter describes. We can trust that God has preserved His word as He has promised.

There are many starting manuscripts that translators have to choose from. Some choose the oldest manuscripts available, thinking they are closer in time to the original writers. Others use only those manuscripts that are verified by a number of other tests. Still others find new manuscripts to try.

A Bible student’s needs change as he/she grows in understanding. It may be that, to start, you need an easy-to-read version. As you progress, you may understand why a lot of dispensational students and teachers gravitate toward the King James Version. There are a lot of the more advanced concepts in the KJV are not found in other, more recent, translations.

