

CHOOSING A STUDY BIBLE
2 Timothy 3:16,17

Introduction:

- 1. The Scriptures were originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.**
 - a. Since few are proficient in these languages, we must rely on translations into English.**
 - b. If all translations were the same, why would new ones be produced?**
- 2. There are hundreds of English translations from which to choose.**
 - a. One estimate says there may be 1,000 English translations.**
 - b. New translations continue to come out regularly.**
- 3. There are two extremes which must be avoided:**
 - a. Some will not accept anything but the KJV of 1611 and are not aware that it has had five major revisions.**
 - b. Some will accept any book that has “Bible” on the cover.**

Discussion:

- I. A GOOD STUDY BIBLE SHOULD HAVE FOUR CHARACTERISTICS.**
 - A. It must be accurate!**
 - 1. We are dealing with the inspired Word of Almighty God.**
 - 2. We must have a safe guide to Heaven.**
 - B. It must be readable!**
 - 1. It needs to be in language the average person understands.**
 - 2. We must be able to easily teach others the Gospel from it.**
 - C. It must be acceptable!**
 - 1. One man translations such as Philips do not qualify.**
 - 2. Paraphrases such as the Living Bible do not qualify.**
 - 3. One church translations such as the Watchtower Bible do not qualify.**
 - D. It must be available!**
 - 1. Some translations have a very limited circulation.**
 - 2. The American Standard Version of 1901 is nearly dead.**

II. A GOOD STUDY BIBLE SHOULD MEET CERTAIN CRITERIA.

- A. It must be translated by a committee of scholars representing a wide variety of religious backgrounds.**
 - 1. This provides checks and balances.**
 - 2. One man translations are often weak or one-sided.**

- B. One needs to know who the translators are.**
 - 1. Are they qualified by education to be competent translators?**
 - 2. The Watchtower Society refuses to release the names of those who made the “New World Translation.”**
 - 3. The Lockman Foundation originally refused to tell the names of the translators of the New American Standard Bible.**

- C. One needs to know the views of the translators toward inspiration.**
 - 1. The Bible claims verbal (word) inspiration (2 Sam. 23:2; Jer. 1:9; Matt. 10:19; 1 Cor. 2:11-13; 1 Thess. 2:13).**
 - 2. Many translations today seek for “thought” rather than “word” translation.**
 - 3. The translators of the KJV, ASV, NKJV and NASB affirmed their belief in verbal inspiration.**
 - 4. The translators of the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible were not believers in verbal inspiration.**

- D. One needs to know the translation philosophy behind the translation.**
 - 1. Formal Equivalence strives as much as possible to have an exact, literal translation.**
 - 2. Dynamic Equivalence strives to give the meaning in today’s language even if the translation is not literally exact (The NIV translators have admitted they strove “for more than a word for word translation”).**

- E. One needs to know the Greek text used in the translation.**
 - 1. There are 5,000 Greek manuscripts, scores of early versions, and numerous quotations in early Christian writings.**
 - 2. The Westcott-Hort text relies heavily on three ancient manuscripts: The Alexandrian, the Vaticanus, and the Siniaticus.**
 - 3. The United Bible Society and Nestle texts follow the Westcott-Hort tradition.**

- a. Most recent versions are from these texts.
 - b. Several verses are left out or put in footnotes.
- 4. The New International Version claims to follow an “eclectic” (pick and choose) text.
 - 5. The Majority Text follow the majority of the manuscripts, ancient versions and quotations from early Christian writings.
 - a. I believe this is the safest, most sensible approach.
 - b. The NKJV is based on the Majority Text.

III. LET’S APPLY THESE PRINCIPLES TO SOME POPULAR TRANSLATIONS.

A. The King James Version for 350 years was the Bible in English.

- 1. it is the best known and best loved book in English history.
- 2. it has shaped our language, literature, and thought patterns.
- 3. It has gone through five major revisions.
- 4. It is falling out of use today for the younger generation neither appreciates or understands its archaic phrases and grammar.

B. The New King James Version is rapidly growing in popularity among conservative Bible believers.

- 1. It is essentially a revision of the old King James Version.
- 2. A committee of 119 scholars, including members of the Lord’s church, produced the NT in 1979 and the OT in 1980.
- 3. “In the New King James Version, you have a Bible that is totally accurate and faithful to the original, beloved King James Version. Not one verse is left out. Nothing is omitted. The only difference is that the language has been revised and updated to reflect changes in English usage over the past 200 years” (About Your New King James, p. 1).

C. The Revised Standard Bible is “the Bible of the liberal Protestant community.”

- 1. H. Leo Boles was invited to be part of an advisory committee; but resigned when he saw their liberal bias.
- 2. The NT came out in 1946; the OT in 1952.
- 3. It has been revised in recent years to accommodate feminists.
- 4. The RSV is known for its effort to deny the divinity of Christ.
 - a. The virgin birth of Christ is weakened by translating “virgin” as “young woman” in Isa. 7:14 (cf Matt. 1:23).

