

'THE B.I.B.L.E.'
('Yes, That's The Book For Me!')
Studies in Psalm 119 / 'The Alphabet Psalm'

Why So Many Translations?

There are more than 50 English translations of the Bible. And the question begging to be asked is: **"Why?!"** With hundreds of languages in the world that haven't been translated at all, what point is there to the continuous flow of more and more English translations? Whether it makes sense to do so or not doesn't change the fact that it continues and although it isn't really necessary for all preachers and organizations to have an English language Bible with their name on it, a new translation can shed light on words and phrases for new generations of English speaking Christians. One good reason for new translations is that over time languages and word meanings change from old definitions and connotations of the past. For example, most people today would barely be able to read, let alone comprehend, the original *1611 King James Version* translation of the Bible.

Although many people become fiercely loyal to a particular version like the *KJV*, they should recall that their loyalty should be to the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (*autographs* / which, by the way do not exist). Furthermore, they should recall that the Bible was originally written in the common, everyday language of the people at the time. Clear understanding should continue to be the goal of all translation work today, not mere perpetuation of a version whether people today understand it or not! Getting the Word of God into a written form using clear, easy to understand words, good grammar and sentence structure contemporary readers can easily comprehend and apply has to be the goal, as well as precise faithfulness the ancient biblical manuscripts.

Another reason so many different versions are available today is that translators use two different approaches in their translation work: **1) Formal equivalence** or **2) Dynamic equivalence**. In *formal equivalence*, the effort is to be *word for word* from Hebrew and Greek into English. In *dynamic equivalence*, there is less concern about exact literal translation and more of a general *thought for thought* sort of approach. The *King James Version (NKJV)* and *New American Standard Version* are examples of *formal equivalence* translation. While the *Living Bible* or *Good News for Modern Man* are examples of *dynamic equivalence* to the point they aren't really translations, but more like paraphrases. With these examples at opposite ends of the spectrum, there are many other English language Bibles somewhere in between, such as the *New International Version* or the *New Living Translation*, etc. At CBF we use the *New King James Version* as the primary Bible version used in Bible teaching and preaching. It adheres to the faithfulness of translation used in the *King James Version*, while adapting sentence structure and archaic *Elizabethan Era* vocabulary to what can be easily understood today, while retaining the literary integrity of the *KJV*. However, we see benefits to be found in using other essentially reliable translations to shed new light on words and phrases for Bible study, comparing other versions with the *NKJV* Bible used in church.

CBF is not part of the *King James Only (KJO)* movement that considers anything other than the original *KJV* heretical and wrong. This movement fiercely insists that only the *KJV* is faithful to what is called *The Received Text (an AD 1500s compilation of Greek manuscripts)*. This group believes that God led a scholar named Erasmus to compile the *Textus Receptus* and that he is the only person to compile manuscripts that perfectly conform to the original *autographs* of Scripture. Consequently all *KJO* adherents are more loyalists to a particular translation method employed, than to the message of the texts found in manuscript copies of the original writings. At CBF we highly respect the *KJV* and the *NKJV* but are not loyalists to the *KJV* translation of the Bible, as the one and only *perfect* translation. Only the *autographs (original drafts of the authors)* were perfect, not the copies nor the copyists. Comparing trustworthy manuscripts and translating them carefully leads us to the perfect One, Christ (*not to a particular translation*). What we are called to be fiercely loyal to is the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures defending the doctrines pertaining to Him. ***"To Him, alone be the glory" (Romans 9:5) (Next time – Which 'Biblical Manuscripts'?)***

PtL

‘Read My Lips!’

(Paying close attention to the ‘Words’ from God’s mouth)

Psalm 119:129-136

17th Hebrew letter ‘*Peh*’ / functions as the letter ‘*p*’ / word meaning: ‘**mouth**’ (*as in speaking*)
Possible historic incident in David’s life corresponding to this section of verses: **2 Samuel 6**. After the capture of the city of Jerusalem to be the new capital of the United Kingdom of Israel, David defeated the Philistines pushing them back westward to the Mediterranean coastal plain (*2 Samuel 5:17-25*). Then, having secured that area, which included Kirjath Jearim (*15 miles northwest of Jerusalem*), a town where the ark which had been taken captive by the Philistines/ *1 Samuel 6:20-7:1*, King David decides to bring the ark into the tabernacle in Jerusalem (*2 Samuel 6*). After 20 years without the ark, David plans a grand parade and installation to bring the ark back into a permanent place within a new tabernacle. Since the precise wording of *how* to transport the ark was not followed (*Exodus 25:10-15*), a fatal disaster happened for not doing it God’s way. David learned that even if we have good intentions, *the words of God’s mouth* need to be studied prayerfully and carried out precisely (*Proverbs 14:12*). As the Lord Jesus said as He was moving into public ministry for the Father: *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God”* (*Matthew 4:4*).

God’s Testimonies Enlighten My Soul

(Acquiring Understanding – What God Means)

Psalm 119:129-130

*“Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore **my soul keeps them.***

The entrance of Your words give light; it gives understanding to the simple.”

- Talk about David’s prayerful approach to Bible study. How do you pray prior to reading the Bible?
- Compare letting God’s Word enter the windows of your eyes with letting sunlight into a room. Do you see Bible study like this, as letting spiritual light shine in your mind and soul?
- Share about a recent time when, as you studied the Bible, understanding about something happened.

God’s Commandments Redirect My Steps

(Acquiring Guidance – What God Wants)

Psalm 119:131-134

*“I opened my mouth and panted, for **I long for Your commandments.***

Look upon me and be merciful to me, as Your custom is toward those who love Your Name,

***Direct my steps by Your Word** and let no iniquity have dominion over me.*

Redeem me from the oppression of man, that I may keep Your precepts.”

- The psalmist talks like he has exhausted himself with other sources before finally turning to the Bible for answers. What about our flesh seems to want to do it our way or some other way before turning to Scripture for God’s way? In finally discovering God’s way in Scripture, David sees his problem needing *mercy, redirection* and *deliverance* from *oppressors* he has offended.
- This may be in regard to the wrong transportation of the ark, but how can we apply what he does to rectify the situation the best he can, to our study of God’s Word?
- Do you confess sin, change your mind and talk to God about fixing what you need to address as you study? Discuss how to turn Bible study into ‘dialogue with God’ and not just reading.

God’s Statutes Improve My Sight

(Acquiring Holiness – What God Feels)

Psalm 119:135-136

*“**Make Your face to shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes.***

Rivers of water run down from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law.”

- David’s devotions in Bible study and praise (these musical verses) have brought a new sense of God’s presence and God’s heart about what has happened. He feels God’s look of love and blessing as well as God’s grief over those who disobey His Word. What is happening to him?
- What is happening to you lately, both spiritually and emotionally, through your Bible study?