

# **REVISED STANDARD VERSION (1946/1952) – NEW ENGLISH BIBLE (1961/1970)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. In 1928, the International Council of Religious Education (45 major denominations were members and formed the National Council of Churches) acquired the copyright of the American Standard Version of the Bible.
  - a. Set up a committee to determine if a revision was possible.
  - b. Because of the Depression years, money was not available until 1937.
  - c. Committee then recommended then that a revision of the American Standard should be undertaken.
2. In 1946, the year the New Testament of the Revised Standard Version was published, the Church of Scotland proposed to Great Britain churches that it was time for a completely new translation.
  - a. Not to be revision of any foregoing translation.
  - b. Not to be a literal translation.
3. Let us observe some characteristics of these two translations of the Bible produced in the middle of the twentieth century.

## **I. THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION (RSV)**

- A. Translation produced by 32 well-known scholars – led by Luther Weigle of Yale Divinity School.
  1. Two groups: one for the Old Testament, and one for the New Testament.
  2. The New Testament appeared alone in 1946.
  3. The Old Testament was published September 30, 1952.
  4. The Apocrypha appeared in 1957 to appeal to both Catholics and Protestants.
- B. Editions Printed
  1. Oxford University Press 1962 – The Oxford Annotated Bible
    - a. Editors: Herbert G. May – Old Testament professor at the Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College; Bruce M. Metzger, professor of New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary.
    - b. Includes brief introductions, essays by various authors and exegetical footnotes.
  2. Roman Catholic edition was published in Great Britain with minor changes in 1965.

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3. Second Edition printed in 1971 – longer ending of Mk. 16:9-20, Jn. 7:53-8:11 were reinserted.
4. Ecumenical Edition printed in 1973 and 1977 entitled: The Common Bible

C. Goal Of Translation

1. “To embody the best results of modern scholarship as to the meaning of the Scriptures, and express this meaning in English diction which is designed for use in public and private worship and preserves those qualities which have given to the King James Version a supreme place in English literature.” (*The Journey From Texts To Translations*, p. 321; quoting from *Annotated Bible* p. X, H. G. May and B.M. Metzger editors).
2. Beginning Preface to the New Testament of RSV:  
“Let it be said here simply that all of the reasons which led to the demand for revision of the King James Version one hundred years ago are still valid, and are even more cogent now than then. And we cannot be content with the Versions of 1881 and 1901 for two main reasons. One is that these are mechanically exact, literal, word-for-word translations, which follow the order of the Greek words, so far as this is possible.”

D. Examples From The Translation:

1. Hebrew word “*almah*” in Isaiah 7:14 is translated “young woman”.
  - a. KJV and ASV translate word “virgin” with “maiden” in footnote.
  - b. RSV puts “virgin” in footnote.
  - c. Matthew quotes the passage in context of emphasizing a “virgin birth.”
  - d. Liberal bias?
2. Greek word, “*apokatastaseos*” translated “establishing” instead of “restoration” of all things in Acts 3:21.
  - a. Millennialism leanings?
3. Adds “only” to “through faith” in Romans 11:20, thus asserting an anti-biblical teaching.

4. Translates “monogenes” translated “only begotten” Son in American Standard Version as “Only” Son in John 3:16.
  - a. Etymology: Does “genos” signify “kind” – hence in this text “one of a kind”?
  - b. Etymology: Does “genos” signify “of the same nature”? (cf. John 1:18)
  - c. Etymology: Does “genos” signify “begotten”- only one born ?
  - d. “monogenes” is rendered “only” on two occasions in KJV – Lk. 7:12, 8:42.
5. Translates Acts 10:43 as “*does what is right*” instead of “*works righteousness*”.
  - a. Many do ‘what is right’ according to their standard but do not submit to God’s plan for man to be righteous.
  - b. Romans 1:16-17 – Gospel standard for Righteousness.
6. Translates present participle form ,” hyparchon” (“*existing*”) as a past tense in Philippians 2:6
  - a. Could imply that Jesus was no longer in the “form of God”.
  - b. Same “past tense” mistake found in NASB; ESV.

## **II. THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE (NEB)**

- A. The translation was sponsored by Oxford and Cambridge University Presses.
  1. New Testament was published in 1961
  2. Entire Bible was published in 1970
- B. About 26 British scholars were divided into three groups to translate the Old Testament, New Testament and the Apocrypha.
  1. C.H. Dodd (Cambridge) headed the entire project He was among the New Testament translators, serving as chairman.
  2. Old Testament scholar, G.R. Driver (Cambridge) was chairman of the Old Testament translators.
  3. W.D. McHardy (Oxford) was chairman of the Apocrypha translators.
  4. Used eclectic Greek text/
- C. Editions Printed
  1. The New English Bible with Apocrypha: Oxford Study Edition. – This work is similar to the New Oxford Annotated Bible which was based upon the RSV.

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- D. Goals of translation:
1. Produce a translation that was genuinely English in idiom.
  2. “Dodd believed that it was better to translate the original texts in a thought-for-thought rendering rather than a word for word” (The Journey From Texts to Translations, p. 367).
  3. “We have conceived our task to be that of understanding the original as precisely as we could (using all available aids), and then saying again in our own native idiom what we believed the author to be saying in his” (The Origin of the Bible, Philip W. Comfort editor, p. 279).
  4. One scholar has said the translation “represented ‘the freest tampering’ with the biblical text of any major version yet to appear” (The Bible Translation Controversy, Expanded Edition, Wayne Jackson, p. 19)
- E. Examples from NEB
1. In the Beginning translated “In the Beginning of Creation” in Genesis 1:1, and “the Sprit of God” (ruah elohim) is translated “a mighty wind”.
  2. Gen. 11 begins the historical account of the tower of Babel as “once upon a time...”
    - a. Trying to alert the reader that “Babel account was never understood by biblical men as a historical fact” ?
  3. Woman’s “seed” is removed from Genesis 3:15, and the promised “Shiloh” is deleted from Gen. 49:10.
    - a. Two important prophesies pointing to Jesus Christ.
  4. “Before they came together” is translated “before their marriage” in Matthew 1:18.; and “virgin” in Luke 1:27 is translated “girl” twice.
    - a. Virgin birth avoidance?
  5. “the first day of the week” in Acts 20:7 is changed to “Saturday night”
  6. In Romans 11:26, “and so all Israel shall be saved” is changed to “the whole of Israel will be saved”.
    - a. Verse emphasizes “manner- ‘so’”, not scope.
    - b. Accommodating Premillennialists?

7. The “tongues” of I Corinthians 12:10 become “ecstatic utterances”
  - a. Pentecostalism?
  
8. Makes no distinction between “daimonion”- *demon*, and

**CONCLUSION:**

1. With these two translations, new ground for English translations was being unearthed.
  
2. The Revised Standard Version was produced as a literal, but not word-for –word translation.
  
3. The New English Bible was more a British Bible than one for American readers – one needs sometimes a British dictionary to understand certain passages.
  - a. A product of “dynamic equivalence” translating technique.