

Emmaus Equipping College

2024

Panom Top

1. **Select five Bible translations we've discussed. Select a passage from the Bible (it must be at least two verses long) and write out how the translations render this passage.**

Answer:

1 John 3:8-9

English Standard Version (Very Good)

8 Whoever **makes a practice of sinning** is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

9 No one born of God **makes a practice of sinning**, for God's seed abides in him, and **he cannot keep on sinning** because he has been born of God.

King James Version (Okay)

8 He that **committeth sin** is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever is born of God **doth not commit sin**; for his seed remaineth in him: and **he cannot sin**, because he is born of God.

The Message Bible (Best)

8 Those **who make a practice of sin** are straight from the Devil, the pioneer in the practice of sin. The Son of God entered the scene to abolish the Devil's ways.

9 People conceived and brought into life by God **don't make a practice of sin**. How could they? God's seed is deep within them, making them who they are. It's **not in the nature of the God-begotten to practice and parade sin**.

New International Version (Alright)

8 The one **who does what is sinful** is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

9 No one who is born of God **will continue to sin**, because God's seed remains in them; they **cannot go on sinning**, because they have been born of God.

New Revised Standard (Bad)

8 Everyone **who commits sin** is a child of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God was revealed for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

9 Those who have been **born of God do not sin**, because God's seed abides in them; **they cannot sin**, because they have been born of God.

It is quite interesting and eye opening to read how different Bible versions rendered the passage cited above. The differences in their translations of the Greek text are quite obvious. I have rated them from bad to best. I felt like the Message Bible version has the best translation as it captures the spirit of the text and author's intent.

KJV and NRS's translations appear to be misleading and contradictory when compared to the rest of the Bible. They use of "**who commits sin is of the devil**". Paul states in Romans 3:23 that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". The rendering in those translations would mean everyone is of the devil. In verse 9, it says "**Those born of God do not sin...[and] cannot sin**". This would mean no one is truly born of God, and it would contradict with John's earlier statement in 1 John 1:8-10, which states: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. [9] If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

The NIV translation has a similar rendering with KJV and NRS with verse 8. It states "**who does what is sinful (all of us do)**", however, in verse 9, NIV reflects the author's intents stating "**will continue to sin**" and "**cannot go on sinning**".

What makes us to become or begotten of the Devil is the habitual lifestyle of sin. A truly begotten child of God will have God's seed - the Holy Spirit in him, which will eventually transform him from within. But if a person continually show the works of the devil in his life, it will be evidenced that he is not begotten of God, but is of the devil.

The ESV and the Message captured John's intent in the best way. What makes us the children of God or children of the devil is how we live our day-to-day. The Message added "parade sin". We all commit sins of weaknesses, but if make it a lifestyle to the point that we are celebrating sinful behaviours, then we have identified ourselves as children of the devil.

2. What is textual criticism? How is it possible to have a high view of the authority of Scripture and a positive view of textual criticism at the same time?

Answer:

Textual criticism refers to the scholarly work dedicated to the critical analysis of the numerous biblical manuscripts in their original languages. These scholars analyse and compare text variants between the manuscripts to reach the closest and best reading of the original text. The work of these scholars does not undermine scriptural authority, but elevates it. It is a proof the Christians are striving to ensure the current translations are as close to the original autographs of the New Testament authors.

Textual criticism should be understood within its proper context. The variants between manuscripts which are under criticism only make up less than 1% of the entire New Testament, and basically are "non-essentials" to the faith. Christians need not to be alarmed by the work of textual criticism.

Whatever is the outcome of these scholarly works will never undermine the Christian faith or any of its core doctrines. Christians can have a full assurance that they have the word of God as God wanted it. Besides, the modern-day disciples of Christ should know that the current accessibility and availability of the Scriptures is a kind of "luxury". Most of the faithful servants of God throughout the ages never had the opportunity to have the Scriptures in its entirety. The Old Testament saints surely did not have the New Testament. And yet their salvation was sure. Their salvation will not be undermined by any absence of certain books of the Bible. We should be grateful for what we have - the entire word of God in a book. God has given us all we need to know for this life and for the life to come.

The textual variants under criticism are known; make up less than 1% of the entire New Testament; do not affect any core Bible teachings or the biblical authority, inspiration, or inerrancy. This should give Christians all the trust and confidence in the word of God.

3. Do you agree that the Bible is a divine-human book? Why or why not?

Answer:

The Bible is a divine-human book as it contains both the fingerprints of God and man in its pages. You can see God's inspiration where the authors wrote down prophetic words or where God rebukes the author. Men cannot predict the future, only God can and is the only one able to bring to pass the prophetic events. If the Bible was a mere work of men, it would lack the records of the sins committed by its authors. However, the Bible condemns its human authors proving that God was guiding the overall work of the Scriptures. The human authors did not tamper with the word of God.

However, the inputs of men under God's guidance are evidence as the books of the Bible differ in their writing structures, styles, containing different thought patterns and construction of words. God values these differences among His people. This makes the Bible a universal book that all people with different backgrounds could relate to.

4. What is a Bible translation? Why is translation not a simple exercise?

Answer:

A Bible translation refers to the conversion of God's words written in the original ancient texts of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek to other common languages for the purpose of understanding God's word by those who do not speak the original languages of the Bible. Without a translation, a person who desire to learn God's word would have to either become a linguist in the ancient languages or simply rely on others - the learned, to convey the word of God to him. Translation allows the word of God to be accessible and available to all people enabling God to speak directly to each individual.

However, Bible translation is complex task beyond mere defining and translating of words into another language. This is because: (1) the word usage in ancient languages have changed; (2) word rendering is challenging when translating from

one language to another as there are no two words with one-to-one correspondence in different languages. The translators often struggle in finding the best words; and (3) grammar rules differ in different languages. These make the task of Bible translation a major challenge.

5. Describe the two main approaches to translation as discussed.

Answer:

Two main approaches to translations are: (1) literal (word-for-word) also known as formal approach, (2) and idiomatic (thought-for-thought) translation also known as the functional approach. NASB and ESV are literal translations.

Formal approach of word for word tries to stay close to the original structure and word in the original text, but can be insensitive and awkward to those reading in receptor language. It sacrifices meaning for structure.

Functional approach, on the other hand, sacrifices structure over meaning. NLT and GNB are functional. But they can risk distorting the meaning of the true text for personal bias of the translator.

I personally prefer the word-for-word translations over the functional approach as it is more flexible. It allows me think more about what I am reading and meditate on it than relying on the translator's understanding of the original authors' intents.