

REASON TOGETHER CHURCH

THE BIBLE TRANSLATION QUESTION

A TEN-PART SERIES | PART FOUR OF TEN

KJV AND NKJV: HOW DIFFERENT ARE THEY?



DR. THOMAS W. HAWKSLEY

TRUSTING GOD'S WORD THROUGH CAREFUL EXAMINATION

KJV and NKJV: How Different Are They?

Sermon Transcript

Part Four of The Bible Translation Question

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Reason Together Church

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Aloha.

Welcome to Reason Together Church.

Whether you have attended church for many years, whether you have only recently begun opening a Bible or whether you are still trying to determine what you believe, you are an honored guest here today.

You are not expected to pretend that you have no questions.

Our invitation is simple: Bring your questions. Open your Bible. Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Let us pray.

Father, thank You for preserving Your Word and placing it within our reach. Give us humility when we are certain, courage when we need to investigate and charity when faithful Christians reach different conclusions. Protect us from fear, pride and careless accusations. Teach us to love truth more than rumor and obedience more than argument. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Our Scripture reading is 1 Thessalonians 5:21:

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

And Proverbs 18:13 says:

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

Before we begin, let me briefly explain giving at Reason Together Church.

We do not pass a plate and guests are never expected to give.

If you are a member of another church, we encourage you to support your home church.

For those who consider Reason Together Church their church home, a giving box is available in the back. Give only as the Lord leads, remembering that God loveth a cheerful giver.

Now let us move from what we place in the giving box to what many of us carry in our hands every Sunday.

If I place a King James Version beside a New King James Version, they immediately look like close relatives.

The King James Version says, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."

The New King James Version says, "Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name."

That certainly sounds familiar.

But what exactly happened between those two sentences?

Did somebody merely remove which art, thy and a few old verb endings?

Did an entirely new translation borrow the King James name for marketing purposes?

Or is the truth somewhere between those descriptions?

That is our question today: KJV and NKJV, how different are they?

This is Part Four of our ten-part series, The Bible Translation Question.

In Part One, we asked whether there are translation errors in the KJV.

In Part Two, we asked whether the KJV we read today is the same as the 1611 KJV.

In Part Three, we investigated why modern Bibles leave out, bracket or footnote certain verses.

Today we place the KJV beside the major modern translation that most deliberately tried to remain in its family.

We are going to follow the command we just read.

We will prove all things and hold fast that which is good.

We will not declare the NKJV innocent before hearing the evidence.

We will not declare it guilty before hearing the evidence either.

Imagine that a family has lived in the same house for generations.

The house is strong. It is beautiful. It carries memories that cannot be replaced.

But the wiring was installed for another age. Some fixtures are no longer understood. A few doors stick because the house has settled.

A careful renovation begins.

The family does not tear down the house and build a different one.

Neither do they merely apply fresh paint.

They preserve the foundation and recognizable design, but they also return to the plans, inspect the wiring and repair what no longer serves its purpose clearly.

That is a useful picture of the NKJV.

It is not a completely different house.

It is not simply the old house with new paint.

The project began in 1975 when Thomas Nelson commissioned a new revision in the King James tradition.

Approximately 130 Bible scholars, pastors and Christian communicators participated during a seven-year process.

The New Testament appeared in 1979. The Psalms followed in 1980. The complete Bible was published in 1982 and a smaller review produced revisions in 1984.

Arthur Farstad served as executive editor.

The participating scholars came from several conservative Protestant traditions.

They were required to affirm verbal and plenary inspiration and the inerrancy of the original writings.

That fact does not prove that every decision they made was correct.

Sincere and believing translators can still make debatable decisions.

But it does answer the accusation that the project was secretly designed by people who did not believe the Bible.

Their stated purpose was continuation rather than innovation.

They wanted to preserve the dignity, theological vocabulary, literary character and essentially literal method of the KJV while removing language that modern readers no longer understood.

They called their approach complete equivalence.

The phrase meant that they intended to preserve the information of the original text while presenting it in readable English.

But here is the first fact we must understand.

They did not simply open a KJV and exchange old words for new ones.

They worked with Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Once translators return to the original languages, they must sometimes decide whether an old English sentence still communicates the original meaning accurately.

That is why the NKJV is both a revision and a translation.

It is a revision because the KJV supplied its English framework, literary tradition and normal wording.

It is a translation because the revisers sometimes made a fresh decision from the original language.

The most obvious changes involve English grammar.

Thee, thou, thy and thine became you and your.

Ye also became you.

Hath became has. Doth became does. Saith became says. Believeth became believes.

Punctuation and sentence structure were modernized.

Names such as Isaiah and Elijah were made consistent between the Old and New Testaments.

Pronouns referring to God were capitalized.

Some repeated uses of and became but, then, so or however when the original language permitted it.

Most of that helps the modern reader.

But modernization can also lose something.

The old pronouns were not merely formal religious words.

Thou addressed one person. Ye addressed more than one person.

Modern English uses you for both.

The NKJV is easier to read, but the KJV sometimes tells us whether one person or a group is being addressed without requiring a note.

So even a simple modernization involves a tradeoff.

There is another problem that is less obvious.

Some KJV words look familiar but no longer mean to us what they meant to the translators.

Conversation often meant conduct or manner of life.

Prevent could mean to come before.

Quick could mean living.

Peculiar could describe something specially possessed, not something strange.

Meat could refer to food in general, not only animal flesh.

When a word looks completely unfamiliar, we know we need help.

When it looks familiar, we may confidently give it the wrong definition.

The KJV was not unclear when it was translated.

English continued changing after the translation was completed.

Now we must go below the English and ask which Hebrew and Greek texts stand behind the NKJV.

Let us begin with the Old Testament.

Both the KJV and NKJV stand within the Masoretic Hebrew tradition.

The KJV translators principally worked with the Jacob ben Chayyim Hebrew edition published by Daniel Bomberg in 1524 and 1525.

The NKJV translators principally used the 1967 and 1977 Stuttgart edition of Biblia Hebraica, based on the Leningrad Codex.

They frequently compared the older Bomberg edition.

They also consulted the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, the Dead Sea Scrolls and other ancient witnesses.

Does that mean the NKJV abandoned the Masoretic Text?

No.

Both printed Hebrew editions represent the broad ben Asher Masoretic tradition.

But it would also be inaccurate to say that the two translation committees worked from precisely the same printed Hebrew edition.

The fair conclusion is that the KJV and NKJV Old Testaments come from the same broad Masoretic family while sometimes making different choices within that tradition.

Now we come to the New Testament.

This is where one of the most common accusations appears.

Some people say the NKJV claims to follow the Textus Receptus while secretly following the modern critical text.

Let us open the Bible and test that claim.

The NKJV generally retains the Textus Receptus in the main body of its New Testament.

That is why it retains Matthew 17:21, Matthew 18:11, John 5:4, Acts 8:37, Acts 28:29, Romans 16:24 and the longer wording of 1 John 5:7 and 8.

It also retains the traditional ending of Mark and the account of the woman taken in adultery.

We examined the manuscript evidence for disputed verses in RTS-102, so we will not repeat that complete discussion today.

For our purpose, notice Acts 8:37.

The KJV reads, “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.”

The NKJV reads, “Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may.”

The wording has been modernized, but the disputed verse remains in the main text.

What, then, are all those notes at the bottom of an NKJV page?

The letters NU identify a reading found in the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies critical editions used by the translators.

The letter M identifies a reading found in the published Majority Text.

The unmarked reading in the main text normally represents the Textus Receptus.

Suppose the NKJV prints a traditional reading in the verse and then tells us in a note that the NU-Text omits certain words.

Some critics point at the note and say, There is the critical text.

Yes, it is in the note.

That normally means it is not in the NKJV main text.

The note is not a secret substitution. It is an open disclosure.

A person may prefer a Bible without those notes.

A person may believe the notes create unnecessary doubt.

That is a legitimate pastoral concern to discuss.

But we should describe what the notes actually do.

They allow a reader who does not know Greek to see where the three printed textual traditions differ.

Now let us examine several places where the NKJV changes more than an archaic pronoun.

Second Timothy 2:15 in the KJV says, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed."

The NKJV says, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed."

Somebody may say, The NKJV removed studying from the Bible.

But the Greek word is spoudazo.

It means to be diligent, to make every effort or to apply oneself earnestly.

In older English, study could describe earnest effort.

Paul certainly expected Timothy to learn Scripture, but this particular command is broader than sitting with books.

The NKJV did not remove diligence. It translated the older sense of study for a modern reader.

First Thessalonians 5:22 says in the KJV, "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

The NKJV says, "Abstain from every form of evil."

Modern readers sometimes interpret the KJV to mean we must avoid anything another person might think looks questionable.

Christian testimony matters, but the older word appearance could mean form or manifestation.

The command is to abstain from evil in every form.

The NKJV prevents a modern definition from narrowing or redirecting Paul's command.

Acts 12:4 gives us a stronger example.

The KJV says that Herod intended "after Easter" to bring Peter before the people.

The NKJV says "after Passover."

The Greek word is pascha, the regular word for Passover.

That is not merely updated grammar.

It is a fresh translation decision and Passover is the more direct rendering.

Hebrews 2:16 in the KJV says, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham."

The NKJV says, "For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham."

The difference is substantial.

The Greek verb means to take hold of someone and can carry the sense of taking hold to help.

The KJV wording has commonly been understood as referring to the nature Christ assumed in the incarnation.

The NKJV understands the immediate sentence as describing those Christ helps.

The doctrine that Christ truly became human remains clear elsewhere in the same chapter.

But this verse proves that the NKJV is not only the KJV with archaic endings removed.

Acts 17:22 provides another example.

The KJV has Paul tell the Athenians, "I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious."

The NKJV says, "I perceive that in all things you are very religious."

Is Paul praising pagan worship?

No.

He immediately exposes their ignorance and proclaims the God they do not know.

The Greek expression can recognize that they are unusually devoted to religious things without settling in that opening sentence whether their devotion is true or false.

The NKJV allows Paul's sermon to deliver the correction rather than placing the entire correction in his first adjective.

These examples establish the important middle position.

The NKJV is not an unrelated translation, but it sometimes translates afresh.

Now we come to the question that concerns many sincere Christians most.

Does the NKJV weaken doctrine?

We will not answer with a slogan.

We will place the words beside one another.

First, the deity of Christ.

Titus 2:13 in the KJV speaks of "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

The NKJV speaks of "the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ."

Both identify Jesus Christ with the divine title.

The NKJV wording may make the grammatical relationship even clearer to a modern reader.

There is no weakening of Christ's deity there.

Consider Daniel 3:25.

Nebuchadnezzar sees four figures walking in the fire and says in the KJV that "the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

The NKJV retains "the Son of God" in the main text and adds a note reading, "a son of the gods."

Why include that note?

Because the Aramaic expression can be rendered that way and Nebuchadnezzar was a pagan king speaking from within a pagan culture.

The note does not remove the Son of God from the text.

Neither does the verse by itself settle whether the fourth figure was an angel or a preincarnate appearance of Christ.

Daniel 3:28 records Nebuchadnezzar calling the figure God's angel or messenger.

We should build our doctrine of Christ's deity on the many passages that state it directly, not on what a pagan king may have understood while staring into a furnace.

Second, salvation.

First Corinthians 1:18 says in the KJV, "but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

The NKJV says, "but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Some critics claim that being saved changes a completed salvation into a process of earning salvation.

But Paul used a present passive participle.

The people are not saving themselves.

God is acting upon them.

The Bible speaks of salvation in more than one tense.

We have been justified through faith in Christ.

We are being transformed as God works within us.

We shall be delivered completely when we are with the Lord.

None of those truths makes salvation a reward for human works.

Ephesians 2:8 and 9 remains unmistakable in the NKJV: "For by grace you have been saved through faith ... not of works, lest anyone should boast."

The NKJV retains John 3:16, Acts 4:12, Acts 16:31, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23 and Romans 10:9 through 13.

It does not replace salvation by grace with salvation by works.

Third, repentance.

Matthew 3:8 in the KJV says, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

The NKJV says, "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance."

The word meet in the KJV meant suitable, fitting or appropriate.

The NKJV does not remove repentance.

It explains what fruits meet for repentance meant when the KJV was written.

Fourth, hell.

The KJV sometimes uses the English word hell for the Hebrew Sheol, the Greek Hades and the Greek Gehenna.

The NKJV often leaves Sheol and Hades transliterated while continuing to translate Gehenna as hell.

That distinction can help a careful student see that the underlying terms are not identical.

Does it deny final punishment?

No.

Mark 9:43 in the NKJV still warns of going “to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched.”

The outer darkness remains.

The final judgment remains.

The lake of fire remains.

Changing a broad English label into a more precise source-language term is not the same as removing the doctrine.

Fifth, the worship of Christ.

I found the claim that the NKJV changes worshipped him to knelt before him in Matthew 8:2.

So I opened Matthew 8:2.

The KJV says, “there came a leper and worshipped him.”

The NKJV says, “a leper came and worshiped Him.”

The claim is simply false.

Perhaps somebody confused the NKJV with another translation.

Perhaps somebody copied a list without opening a Bible.

Whatever the explanation, we must not repeat a false accusation merely because it supports our preferred conclusion.

If somebody sends you a list of shocking changes, choose two or three and look them up.

Read the whole verse.

Check whether the list quoted the KJV accurately.

Check whether it quoted the NKJV accurately.

Ask whether the difference comes from Greek, translation or changed English meaning.

Truth does not need careless evidence to defend it.

Sixth, the Holy Spirit.

The NKJV normally uses Holy Spirit where the KJV uses Holy Ghost.

Both translate the same Greek expression.

Ghost once had a broader meaning that English speakers now normally express with spirit.

Romans 8:16 in the KJV says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit."

The NKJV says, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit."

Far from denying the Spirit's personality, the NKJV makes the personal reference unmistakable.

After these comparisons, the charge of systematic doctrinal corruption does not survive examination.

That does not mean every NKJV decision is beyond criticism.

A fair investigation must acknowledge contrary evidence too.

Second John 7 gives us a real qualification.

The KJV says, "For many deceivers are entered into the world."

The NKJV says, "For many deceivers have gone out into the world."

The Textus Receptus reads entered.

The modern critical text reads went out.

The NKJV wording agrees with the critical reading in this instance.

That is a genuine departure from the simple claim that the NKJV always follows the Textus Receptus without exception.

We should acknowledge it.

But what does it prove?

It proves that we should not say never.

It does not prove that an entire New Testament which retains the traditional verses and normally places critical readings in notes is secretly translated from the critical text.

One exception does not become the rule simply because it is useful in an argument.

Here is the balanced conclusion.

The evidence does not permit us to say the NKJV never departs from the traditional reading.

The evidence also does not permit us to say that the NKJV secretly replaced the Textus Receptus with the critical text.

Honesty does not hide an exception.

Honesty does not misrepresent an exception as the whole translation either.

That brings us to the symbol printed on many NKJV covers.

It is commonly called a triquetra, an interwoven three-part design.

Similar forms have appeared in Christian art and have been used to symbolize the Trinity.

Similar forms have also appeared in pre-Christian art, occult settings and modern entertainment.

Some critics look at its three curves and see three number sixes.

But resemblance is not proof of intention.

Many symbols have been used by more than one culture or movement.

The rainbow has been used in ways that do not erase its meaning in Genesis.

A star, a circle or even a cross can appear in honorable and dishonorable settings.

We may personally dislike the logo.

We may choose a Bible cover without it.

But a publisher's artwork cannot tell us which Greek word was translated in 2 John 7 or whether Titus 2:13 calls Jesus God.

We evaluate a Bible translation by examining its words, its sources and its translation decisions.

We do not attempt to translate the artwork on its cover.

Now we are ready to answer our title question.

How different are the KJV and NKJV?

They are not identical.

The NKJV changes grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, pronouns and some sentence structures.

It makes fresh translation decisions.

Its Old Testament committee used a different principal printed edition within the Masoretic tradition.

A few New Testament details complicate the claim of absolute identity with the Textus Receptus.

But the KJV and NKJV are not substantially unrelated translations.

The NKJV retains the King James literary tradition, traditional theological vocabulary, an essentially literal method, the broad Masoretic Old Testament tradition and the Textus Receptus as its normal New Testament base.

It retains the verses disputed in modern critical-text translations.

The KJV and NKJV are not identical twins.

They are not strangers.

They are close relatives.

The NKJV is more than the KJV in modern English, but it remains a conservative revision within the King James tradition.

The KJV has remarkable strengths.

Its literary majesty has shaped English-speaking Christianity for centuries.

Its cadences are memorable.

Its theological vocabulary is rich.

Its older pronouns sometimes preserve grammatical distinctions.

It is in the public domain and it remains the ordinary preaching and quotation Bible of Reason Together Church.

It also presents challenges to modern readers.

Some vocabulary is obsolete.

Some familiar words have changed meaning.

Its grammar can create an unnecessary barrier for a new reader or child.

The NKJV has genuine strengths too.

It remains exceptionally close to the KJV.

It offers contemporary grammar while retaining the traditional New Testament readings.

Its textual notes give English readers unusual access to manuscript differences.

It can clarify older English and serve as a valuable parallel study Bible.

The NKJV also has limitations.

It loses the singular and plural distinction of thou and ye.

Capitalizing divine pronouns requires editors to interpret the antecedent.

Some translation decisions are debatable.

Some familiar cadence is lost.

Second John 7 shows that its textual practice is not described perfectly by an absolute slogan.

So what should we do?

At Reason Together Church, we can continue using the KJV for ordinary Scripture quotation, preaching, public reading and memorization.

We can also use the NKJV responsibly to clarify old English, assist a reader who struggles with the KJV, compare translations and consult textual notes.

If a person understands the KJV well and loves reading it, there is no need to abandon it.

If another person can understand the Word more readily in the NKJV, we should not tell that person that he has been handed an occult counterfeit Bible.

We should help one another hear what God has said.

There is a spiritual danger on both sides of this debate.

A KJV reader can become proud of possessing the right Bible while neglecting what it commands.

An NKJV reader can become impatient with the historic language and fail to appreciate what earlier generations preserved.

Both can spend more time arguing about translations than reading any translation.

A defended Bible can still be a neglected Bible.

A beautifully bound Bible can remain spiritually unopened.

A translation debate cannot substitute for obedience.

God did not preserve His Word merely so we could defend our preferred English Bible.

He preserved His Word so we could read it, believe it and obey it.

When the Bible says forgive, the question is not whether forgive appeared in a sentence with thee or you.

The question is whether we will forgive.

When the Bible says flee fornication, the question is not which edition uses the most familiar punctuation.

The question is whether we will flee.

When the Bible says love one another, the question is not whether the publisher placed a symbol on the cover.

The question is whether the love of Christ is visible in us.

When the Bible says all have sinned, the KJV reader and NKJV reader stand under the same verdict.

When the Bible says Christ died for our sins and rose again, both readers are offered the same Savior.

When the Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," it does not ask which translation you carried into the room.

It asks whether you have trusted Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Jesus died on the cross in our place.

He bore the judgment our sins deserved.

He was buried and rose bodily from the dead.

Salvation is not earned by church attendance, good works, religious knowledge or owning the correct edition of a Bible.

Ephesians 2:8 and 9 says, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

If you have never trusted Christ, you can do that today.

You do not need perfect vocabulary.

You need an honest heart that turns to the Savior.

You may pray with me now.

Father, I know that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from trusting myself and place my trust in Jesus Christ. Forgive me, save me and help me follow You according to Your Word. I ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer sincerely, please speak with me after the service.

If you have questions about the KJV, the NKJV or any other part of today’s study, bring those questions to the Reason Together Café.

The coffee is free and so are the refills on conversations.

Take your Bible with you this week.

Read it consistently.

When somebody makes a frightening claim, open the passage and investigate it.

Do not repeat what you have not tested.

Do not treat another believer’s faithful translation as evidence that the believer does not love God.

Hold fast to what is good.

Most importantly, allow the Word of God to hold fast to you.

Bring your questions.

Open your Bible.

Let's Reason Together the Word of God.

Aloha Nui Loa.

KJV and NKJV: How Different Are They?

Detailed Commentary

Part Four of The Bible Translation Question

Dr. Thomas W. Hawksley

Reason Together Church

www.ReasonTogether.Church

Commentary Overview

This commentary supports the sermon manuscript by explaining the historical setting, textual foundations, original-language questions and pastoral judgments behind its principal claims. Ordinary Scripture quotations in the sermon use the King James Version. Direct comparisons identify both translations.

Purpose and Pastoral Direction

The title asks for a measurement rather than a verdict. The teaching should resist two easy answers. The NKJV is not simply a KJV with pronouns exchanged, because its revisers worked from the original languages and sometimes selected new renderings. It is not a substantially unrelated modern translation, because the KJV remains its literary framework and the Textus Receptus normally remains its New Testament base.

The pastoral objective is not to persuade every listener to change translations. It is to demonstrate how a Christian can investigate a disputed claim without fear or contempt. The KJV remains the ordinary preaching text of Reason Together Church. The NKJV is evaluated as a close comparative resource, not proposed as a replacement church Bible.

First Thessalonians 5:21 and Proverbs 18:13

Prove in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 means test or examine. The command appears in a context dealing with prophetic utterances. Believers are not instructed to believe everything or reject everything. They are to test and retain what survives examination.

Proverbs 18:13 identifies a moral fault in premature judgment. Answering before hearing is not merely an intellectual mistake. The proverb calls it folly and shame. Together these passages establish the study's method: hear the claim, inspect the evidence and hold fast to what is good.

The sermon should clarify that the Word of God is not placed on trial by human pride. Translation decisions are human work and may properly be examined because the goal is to hear the inspired text accurately.

The Renovated House Illustration

The house represents continuity. The foundation and recognizable structure correspond to the KJV's textual tradition, syntax, cadence and theological vocabulary. Rewiring corresponds to returning to the original languages where old English no longer communicates clearly. Fresh paint corresponds to spelling, punctuation and pronoun changes.

The illustration should not suggest that the KJV is unsafe or defective. Its point is classification. A renovation is neither a newly constructed house nor a merely cosmetic change. This captures the middle position more naturally than technical labels alone.

The NKJV as Revision and Translation

A revision begins with an existing translation and retains a substantial portion of it. A new translation may still consult predecessors but does not bind itself to their wording in the same way. The NKJV begins with the KJV and deliberately conforms to its thought flow and literary style.

The term partial retranslation is important. When the committee decided that the KJV's wording no longer represented the source clearly, it could translate the Hebrew or Greek afresh. This accounts for Acts 12:4, Hebrews 2:16 and many smaller changes.

The sermon uses conservative revision within the King James tradition as its principal description. This is understandable to a congregation and precise enough for the evidence.

Masoretic Text and Printed Editions

Masoretic Text does not name one modern printed volume. It identifies a transmitted Hebrew textual tradition preserved with consonants, vowel pointing and marginal apparatus. Different printed editions can represent that broad tradition while differing in a limited number of readings and editorial choices.

The Bomberg ben Chayyim edition and the Stuttgart Biblia Hebraica are therefore related but not identical. The NKJV's use of Stuttgart does not make its Old Testament a critical reconstruction comparable in every respect to modern eclectic New Testament editions. It does mean the simple phrase same Hebrew text requires qualification.

The consultation of the Septuagint, Vulgate and Dead Sea Scrolls should not be presented as though consultation automatically means adoption. Translators routinely compare witnesses. The relevant question in any passage is which reading entered the main translation.

Textus Receptus, Majority Text and NU Text

The Textus Receptus is a family of printed Greek New Testaments associated with Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza and the Elzevirs. Scrivener later reconstructed the Greek readings underlying the KJV. The Majority Text is an edited text based on the reading supported by the numerical majority of Greek manuscripts at each variation unit. They often agree but are not identical.

The NU designation combines N for Nestle-Aland and U for United Bible Societies. It reflects the critical editions available during the NKJV project, not one ancient manuscript. The critical text is eclectic, meaning editors weigh multiple kinds of evidence.

The NKJV notes are reporting devices. A note saying NU omits does not itself say the omission is correct. Likewise an M-Text note does not imply that numerical majority is always decisive.

Acts 8:37 and Retained Verses

Acts 8:37 is strategically useful because it contains a clear confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God and is absent from the main text of many critical-text translations. Both the KJV and NKJV

retain it. This directly contradicts the claim that the NKJV simply follows the same main Greek text as most modern translations.

The sermon should not attempt to prove the originality of Acts 8:37. That question belongs to RTS-102. Here the passage demonstrates the NKJV's published textual policy.

Second Timothy 2:15

The Greek imperative spoudason is the aorist active imperative of spoudazo. Its semantic range includes make haste, be zealous, take pains and be diligent. The object of diligence is to present oneself approved to God as an unashamed worker who handles the word of truth correctly.

In older English, study could mean to endeavor diligently. A modern reader may reduce the command to academic reading. Be diligent is therefore not a weakening. It broadens the command back toward the Greek while the remainder of the verse still requires careful handling of Scripture.

The KJV phrase rightly dividing has become a technical slogan in some systems. The NKJV accurately handling differs, but RTS-103 need not enter that separate interpretive debate.

First Thessalonians 5:22

The noun eidos can mean visible appearance, outward form, kind or form. The KJV's appearance was capable of carrying this objective sense. Contemporary readers often hear a subjective sense: something that only seems evil to an observer.

The wider context contrasts what is good with every form of evil after testing prophetic claims. The NKJV's every form communicates that contrast effectively. Christian concern for reputation is taught elsewhere, but that should not be made the exclusive meaning of this verse.

Acts 12:4 and Easter

Pascha is derived from the Hebrew term associated with Passover and consistently names Passover in the New Testament. The KJV uses Easter only in Acts 12:4 and Passover elsewhere.

Historical explanations have been offered for Easter, including a distinction between Jewish Passover days and a later Christian observance. The Greek word itself does not encode that distinction. Passover is the straightforward translation and should be treated as an example where the NKJV improves the English rendering.

Acknowledging a better rendering does not require rejecting the KJV as a whole. Translation faithfulness is not protected by refusing to compare individual decisions.

Hebrews 2:16

The verb epilambanomai literally describes taking hold. In contexts such as Matthew 14:31 and Acts 9:27 it describes physically taking someone. It can also convey taking hold to help.

The immediate argument in Hebrews 2 concerns Christ's solidarity with Abraham's seed, His merciful priesthood and His help for those who are tempted. The NKJV's give aid fits this context.

The KJV's supplied phrase the nature of is italicized in traditional editions because those English words do not directly represent Greek words.

The incarnation remains explicit in Hebrews 2:14, which says that Christ likewise took part of flesh and blood. The translation difference should not be framed as belief versus unbelief in the incarnation.

Acts 17:22

Deisidaimonesterous is a comparative form related to fear or reverence toward divine beings. Depending on context it can mean very religious or overly superstitious. Paul begins with an observation calculated to gain a hearing, then identifies the altar to an unknown god and corrects Athenian ignorance.

Very religious leaves the opening description relatively neutral while the sermon supplies the condemnation of idolatry. Too superstitious states the negative evaluation immediately. Both are defensible contextual interpretations. This is a good example of translation involving tone, not merely dictionary substitution.

Titus 2:13 and the Deity of Christ

The Greek construction links the titles great God and Savior to Jesus Christ. The NKJV's our great God and Savior Jesus Christ makes the single referent clear. The KJV can and historically has been read the same way, although its placement of our may sound less explicit to a modern reader.

This passage is valuable because the NKJV does not merely preserve Christ's deity. Its modern syntax makes the testimony particularly direct. It counters the method of collecting only verses where a critic believes the NKJV sounds weaker.

Daniel 3:25

The Aramaic phrase bar elahin can be rendered a son of the gods, a son of God or the Son of God depending on definiteness, theology and the speaker's perspective. Aramaic does not use English capitalization. Nebuchadnezzar's later reference to God's angel in verse 28 is relevant.

The NKJV main text preserves the traditional Christological wording and supplies the alternative in a note. A note is not a denial. The preacher may present the Christophany interpretation as possible or probable without making the pagan king's grammar a primary proof of Christ's eternal Sonship.

First Corinthians 1:18 and Salvation

The two participles are present tense and passive voice: those who are perishing and those who are being saved. The parallel depicts two groups moving under the consequences of their relation to the message of the cross.

Paul can also speak of believers as already saved, as in Ephesians 2:8, and as awaiting salvation, as in Romans 5:9 and 13:11. These are not competing gospels. Justification is complete, sanctification is experienced and glorification is future.

The NKJV wording should not be used to teach that believers earn final salvation through an incomplete process. The passive form and Paul's larger theology rule out that conclusion.

Matthew 3:8 and Repentance

Meet is an adjective in the KJV phrase, not a verb. It means suitable, fitting or corresponding to. Worthy in the NKJV does not mean meriting forgiveness. It means conduct appropriate to professed repentance.

John the Baptist confronts religious presumption. Descent from Abraham does not substitute for repentance and its fruit. Both translations preserve that message.

Hell, Sheol, Hades and Gehenna

Sheol is the Hebrew term for the realm of the dead or grave. Hades is its frequent Greek counterpart. Gehenna is associated with final punitive judgment. The KJV sometimes renders more than one of these terms as hell, while the NKJV often transliterates Sheol and Hades.

Translation choices in this area can affect how readers construct the intermediate state, but the NKJV does not erase final punishment. Matthew 10:28, Mark 9:43, Matthew 25:46 and Revelation 20:10 through 15 remain explicit.

The sermon should avoid attempting a complete doctrine of the afterlife. Its limited purpose is to show that a terminology change must be examined before it is labeled doctrinal removal.

Matthew 8:2 and Worship

The Greek verb proskyneō has a range that includes prostration, homage and worship. Context determines whether the act is directed toward God, a king or another superior.

The NKJV uses worshiped Him in Matthew 8:2, Matthew 9:18 and Matthew 15:25. Therefore, the specific claim that it removes worship in those verses is factually wrong. The example teaches the congregation to verify quotations directly.

Romans 8:16 and the Holy Spirit

Greek grammatical gender does not determine personal or impersonal nature. Pneuma is grammatically neuter, which contributed to the older English itself. The Holy Spirit's personal actions throughout Romans 8 include bearing witness, helping, interceding and willing.

Modern English normally uses Himself for a personal male referent in Trinitarian usage. The NKJV makes the doctrine of the Spirit's personhood clearer. Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit translate the same phrase, with ghost reflecting an older English sense of spirit.

Second John 7

The difference between eiselthon and exelthon is a genuine textual difference, not a semantic modernization. The former means entered and the latter went out. Scrivener's TR and the Robinson-Pierpont Majority Text support entered while the Nestle-Aland tradition supports went out.

The NKJV reads went out without a textual note in many editions. This is a legitimate inconsistency to acknowledge. Possible explanations include an editorial lapse, influence from 1 John 4:1 or a deliberate but undocumented preference. Without direct committee records, motive should not be asserted.

The doctrine remains the same: deceivers are active in the world and deny Jesus Christ coming in the flesh. The verse is evidence against absolute claims, not evidence of doctrinal conspiracy.

The Triquetra

Triquetra is a descriptive term for a three-cornered or three-looped figure. Interlaced examples appear in medieval Insular ornament and Christian manuscripts. Later Christians used the threefold unity as a Trinitarian symbol. Similar designs also appear outside Christianity.

Symbolic meaning arises from form, history, stated use and community context. Finding the same form in an occult setting does not prove that every use communicates occult allegiance. The alleged 666 reading is visually possible only after the interpreter decides to treat each curve as a numeral six.

The sermon wisely allows personal discomfort while refusing to make artwork a substitute for textual evidence.

Practical Use of Both Translations

The KJV remains suitable for public worship, memorization and continuity within a congregation that understands its language. It also preserves literary and grammatical features that a modernization can flatten.

The NKJV is especially useful for a person who wants contemporary English while remaining close to the KJV and traditional New Testament text. Its notes can introduce textual evidence, but inexperienced readers may need guidance.

Parallel reading is often more productive than adversarial comparison. When wording differs, the reader can ask whether the cause is changed English, translation philosophy or textual base. This habit turns controversy into study.

Pastoral Application and Invitation

The final application moves from possession to obedience. A correct translation left unread does not form a faithful disciple. Translation loyalty can become a substitute identity that produces pride rather than holiness.

The invitation uses ordinary KJV quotations according to Reason Together Church practice. The gospel is not made secondary to the translation debate. Both KJV and NKJV clearly proclaim human sin, Christ's atoning death, bodily resurrection and salvation by grace through faith.

The prayer ends in the name of Jesus. The closing paragraphs after Amen invite questions, encourage verification and return to the church's Aloha to Aloha structure.

Concise Final Judgment

The NKJV is not merely the KJV with archaic pronouns removed. It is a conservative revision that sometimes retranslates the originals.

The NKJV is not properly classified as a secret critical-text translation. Its New Testament normally prints the Textus Receptus and openly footnotes critical and Majority Text alternatives.

Both translations have strengths and limitations. Reason Together Church can retain the KJV as its ordinary pulpit Bible while using the NKJV fairly and profitably as a close comparative translation.