

Translations of the Bible

by Bill Crews

All translations of the Bible are not created equal. Just as many people believe that one church is just as good as another, so many believe that one translation of the Bible is just as good as another. This is far from the truth.

The various translations are usually called “versions.” Some have even been made by those who do not even believe the Bible to be divine in origin. What is most desirable is that a translation is made by (1.) true scholars of the original languages (Hebrew, Koine Greek and a little Aramaic), (2.) who believe the Bible in its original languages to be inspired of God (the writers writing as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance), (3.) who are using the most accurate texts possible, and (4.) whose goal is to produce as the finished “version” the most accurate (true to the original wordings) translation possible.

Most people who purchase a Bible are unaware of (1.) the fact that many translations of the Bible were produced under the philosophy of what has been called “**Dynamic Equivalence**,” that is, seeking to convey to the reader what the translators consider to be the “sense” or the “meaning” of the original texts (this would allow them to rephrase words or even add new words), (2.) the fact that other translations of the Bible were produced under the philosophy of what has been called “**Formal Equivalence**,” that is, seeking to give to the reader what the translators consider to be the most literal or most accurate rendering of the original texts (this allows the reader the freedom to determine the “sense” or the “meaning” of any given passage.), and (3.) the fact that a few so-called Bibles are not translations in any sense, but only [paraphrases](#) colored by the understandings of the one or ones who produced them (such as *The Living Bible* and *The Message*).

To illustrate in a small way how the above may affect any given translation of the Bible: The Greek word rendered “*Christian*” is used but three times in the New Testament, Acts 11:26; Acts 26:28 and 1 Peter 4:16. True to this fact the word “*Christian*” is found but three times in the New Testament of the *King James Version*, the *English Revised Version*, the *American Standard Version*, the *New King James Version*, the *New American Standard Bible* and others. **BUT**, the word “*Christian*” in the *Today’s English Version (Good News for Modern Man)* has been added 47 times to other passages. In the *Amplified Bible* (both a translation and an amplification) it is added 26 times. In the *Living Bible* (again, a paraphrase) it is added 85 times. In the *New Living Translation* it is added 61 times. If you are using any of these and want the passages where the word “*Christian*” has been **added**, I have a list of those.

“*Faith only*,” “*faith alone*,” or “*only by faith*” can be found but one time in the Greek New Testament; the passage is James 2:24 where justification is said to be “*not by faith only*.” But the *New Living Translation* adds it in Romans 3:20. The *Living Bible* adds it 4 times — Romans 4:9; 4:12; Galatians 2:16 and James 2:18.

“*Sinful nature*,” which Calvinism uses to support its teaching that every person is born with the guilt of Adam’s sin upon him and is totally depraved, is not found in the Bible. But that did not prevent some translators from adding the words (usually in place of the Greek word for “*flesh*”). The *New International Version* (which is very supportive of Calvinism) uses “*sinful nature*” some 23 times. In *The New Living Translation* it appears some 19 times.

So, dear reader, be careful and particular about the Bible translation you choose.