

## Reasons Not To Use The ESV

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by Wayne Goff

The **English Standard Version** has become one of the hottest selling versions of the Bible, but is still fifth on the list of best selling Bibles. Many brethren have purchased a copy, and I have had one in my library since it was first published in 2001, and an updated copy is in my Bible software. It is packaged beautifully, and is well-presented by Crossway Bibles of Wheaton, Illinois. While I do not discourage anyone from reading various popular versions, I would discourage you from making this version your standard copy of the Bible for the following reasons:

1. **It is a revision of the Revised Standard Version (1951).** Rather than being a new translation, it is simply an updated version of the RSV. We could actually call it the *Revised* Revised Standard Version! The RSV was issued by the **ultra-liberal** National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA in 1952. This version was infamously known for translating “*a virgin*” in Isaiah 7:14 as “*young woman*” in the prophecy concerning Mary, the mother of Jesus. This alone would steer the responsible Bible student away from this version.
2. **The RSV comes from the Nestle-Aland Greek manuscripts** rather than **the Textus Receptus** of the reliable KJV. It has been suggested by Westcott and Hort that the Textus Receptus was full of errors, but that has been seriously questioned in recent years. The preface to the RSV says the following: “The King James Version of the New Testament was based upon a Greek text that was marred by mistakes, containing the accumulated errors of fourteen centuries of manuscript copying...” Anyone who knows much about the copying of manuscripts should know that there are **no effective errors** of the Greek manuscripts of Textus Receptus. However, the RSV, and thence the ESV, needed an excuse to add their liberal theology to a new version.
3. **The ESV is published by Crossway Publishers**, the leading publisher of “reformed theology” (Calvinists). Therefore their version must be viewed as containing a Calvinistic slant.
4. **The ESV does not use italics for words supplied to assist in translating from Hebrew or Greek to English.** It is important to know this so that one can consider the biblical text both with and without the italicized words. John 8:28 is a good example. The KJV reads: “Then said Jesus unto them When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*,...” Jesus is affirming His deity and equality with the Father in the affirmation of “I AM” — a truth lost when “he” is added without italics.

Another example of **adding** words to the text without informing the reader is 1 Timothy 4:13. The ESV reads: “Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching.” The words “public” and “of Scripture” are added as a commentary to the original text! Perhaps the rendering is correct, but it is better to simply render the Greek text in a word-for-word fashion, as opposed to giving one’s own interpretation. I want a translation, not a commentary when I have my Bible in my hands!

5. **Consider Micah 5:2, ESV:** “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days.” It dilutes the Messianic prophecy of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem! Jesus’ coming forth was “*from everlasting*” not “from ancient days.” Jesus is God, not just an ancient person!
6. And if that were not bad enough, **consider ESV’s rendering of Ephesians 1:10:** “As a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” The Greek text has the word “Christ” rather than “him”! Why change that? Give me a Bible that **translates** the language into English, not one that *subtly* adds and subtracts to fit their theology!

Be aware of modern versions, dear reader. So many of them have subtle errors due to false religious beliefs. Select a Bible that has been translated by a committee with a checks-and-balance system.

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