

DANGERS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS #4 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

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In my study of the ESV, I have learned it is a “light revision” of the notorious Revised Standard Version. By putting them side by side, one can see the great similarity between the two. In fact, in most places there is no difference at all. I believe this point is generally unknown among many in the Lord’s church who have “latched on” to this modern translation. We note here, to their credit, they did change “young woman” to “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14.

As we have emphasized in previous articles, there are two dangerous issues in connection with modern translations generally: (1) Modern translations, as a rule, do not use the text-base used by the KJV. (The KJV uses the Received Text for the New Testament and the Masoretic Hebrew text for the Old Testament.) (2) Modern translations that have attained any notoriety use for their translation technique a “dynamic equivalency” technique instead of a “verbal and formal” technique. See my previous articles for a full discussion of this: seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/HowWeGotTheBible.pdf

Although in the preface of the ESV the claim is made that the ESV is in harmony with the “Tyndale-King James legacy,” upon close examination this is a claim that cannot be substantiated.

(1) The Textus Receptus (Received Text) was used as the textual basis for translation in the New Testament by the KJV. The text base of the ESV in the New Testament was the modern UBS 4th edition/Nestle-Aland 27th edition Greek Text (this is a faulty text base).

(2) The Hebrew Masoretic Text was used by the KJV for Old Testament translation. The ESV used the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch...and other sources for Old Testament translation purposes. (See the preface of the ESV). They used these spurious sources to modify the Hebrew text which underlies the KJV.

(3) The KJV used italics to indi-

cate when a word was not represented in the original text but was demanded by syntax, grammatical structure, etc. The ESV has no use of italics like this whatsoever.

(4) Here are a few of some other serious issues with the ESV:

a) In John 7:53-8:11 and Mark 16:9-20, brackets are used and footnotes that cast serious doubt on the integrity of these whole sections of the Word of God.

b) “Only begotten” is deleted from these precious passages: John 1:14,18; 3:16-18; 4:9. The original word for only begotten is *monogenes*. The unparalleled linguists of the KJV rendered this word as “only begotten.” The ASV (American Standard Version), the NASV (New American Standard Version), and the NKJV (New King James Version) all retain the words “only begotten” as the correct translation of this word. The ESV along with the RSV (Revised Standard Version), TEV (Today’s English Version), and the NIV (New International Version) have abandoned “only begotten” as the correct translation. To remove “only begotten” from these passages is an attack on the virgin birth and deity of Christ. One of the best brief summaries of the cumulative evidence through the centuries concerning the truth of this matter that I’ve run across is found in a lecture by brother Robert Taylor entitled “Jesus, The Only Begotten Son” (Sixth Annual Firm Foundation Lectureship on John, 1989, pp 81-91).

c) Clearly, changing “regeneration” to “in the new world” has a pre-millennial slant in Matthew 19:28. The word “regeneration” is also found in Titus 3:5 where it refers to the period of the new birth which is the New Testament or Gospel period under which we now live.

d) Matthew 19:9. Changing the specific word “fornication” to “sexual immorality” which is generic and too inclusive and also leaving out the last phrase of Matthew 19:9 has far-reaching implications. The last phrase says, “and whoso marrieth her which is put

away doth commit adultery.” Lasciviousness is a type of sexual immorality but it is not fornication. In other words, all fornication is sexual immorality, but not all sexual immorality is fornication.

e) By cross examining Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:15, the ESV has Jesus and Paul contradicting each other with reference to the “abolishing” of the Old Testament Mosaic Law. The ESV says: “Do not think that I have come to *abolish* the Law or the Prophets; *I have not come to abolish* them but to fulfill them.” The KJV says: “Think not that I am come to *destroy* the law, or the prophets: *I am not come to destroy*, but to fulfil.” Now, consider also Ephesians 2:15: ESV: “by *abolishing* the law of commandments expressed in ordinances...” KJV: “Having *abolished* in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments...” The ESV has Jesus contradicting Paul in these passages (Matt. 5:17; Eph. 2:15) on the termination of the Mosaic system at the cross. One of the reasons Jesus came into the world was to “abolish” the Law of Moses. He did not come to “destroy” it, we still have it. We learn from it (Rom. 15:4). But Jesus did “abolish” it. He took it out of the way “*nauling it to his cross*” (Col. 2:14).

Other errors could be noted but these are enough to demonstrate that the ESV is not trustworthy.

We conclude by saying the ESV has the wrong text base in both testaments and translation issues with doctrinal consequences. We continue to urge all to stay with the accurate and reliable KJV.

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A review of the ESV by Robert R. Taylor, Jr. is available at: seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/ESV-Taylor.pdf

How We Got the Bible (Jan-June 2018) by Randy Kea is available at: seektheoldpaths.com/pdf/HowWeGotTheBible.pdf

November’s review of modern versions will be: “New King James Version.”