

The New American Standard Bible

*The New American Standard Bible (NASB) was completed in 1971.
The following comments relate to certain unsatisfactory features of this
modern English version of the Bible.*

The Greek Text underlying the KJV

The Greek text of the New Testament underlying the King James Version of 1611 was the product of the labours of several eminent scholars: the five editions of Erasmus, from 1516 to 1535; the Complutensian Polyglot, printed in Spain in 1514 and published in 1522; Robert Stephanus' four editions of 1546–1551; Theodore Beza's four editions of 1565–1598; and the editions published by the Elzevirs in 1624 and 1633.

This text represents with a high degree of fidelity the “traditional text” in general use in the Byzantine period A.D. 312–1453. Because the Byzantine Text is that preserved in the majority of the Greek manuscripts, it is appropriately described as the “Majority Text”. Because the Elzevirs described the text of their edition as being “received by all” (*textus receptus*), their text and the text of the preceding 16th century editions came to be known as the “Received Text”. Down to the present day, the best translations of the New Testament into other languages have been based on this reliable form of Greek text.

The Greek Text underlying the NASB

The most significant changes in the modern versions are not merely changes in English translation, vocabulary and style, but reflect changes made in the underlying Greek text in accordance with the misguided opinions of textual critics since the 18th century, and more particularly since the time of Professors Westcott and Hort, the chief architects of the Greek text followed by the scholars who produced the English Revised Version of 1881–1885.

This “critical text” was constructed on the basis of Westcott and Hort's theory that the purest and most ancient text was preserved in the manuscripts known as Codex Vaticanus (B) and Codex Sinaiticus (Aleph), and the comparatively small number of other ancient manuscripts, versions and “Fathers” which correspond with these documents. The effect of this theory is seen in the numerous omissions and radical alterations which characterise modern versions based upon the Greek text so revised. Although it is often stated that modern textual criticism of this kind does not affect any major doctrine, this is not in accordance with the facts, for the revised Greek text and modern versions based on it are seen to weaken or eliminate many important passages which bear upon the eternal Divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ, His essential Deity and equality with the Father, and the perfection of His work. Many changes of this kind are to be found in the recently published New American Standard Bible, a revision of the American Standard Version of 1901, which was produced by a revision committee working parallel with and in substantial agreement with the English Revisers responsible for the Revised Version of 1881–1885.

The preface to the NASB states that those who produced it wished to give all due honour to the Lord Jesus Christ, but the effect of following such a form of the text is that the testimony of Holy Scripture to the Divine glory of the Redeemer is inevitably reduced.

Some examples are given below:

Matthew 1.25

NASB “a Son” for “her firstborn son” – this weakens the assertion of our Saviour’s virgin birth.

Matthew 19.16

“Teacher” for “Good Master” – the rendering of this passage obscures the testimony of Holy Scripture to His essential Divine Goodness.

Mark 1.1

NASB footnote “Many mss. do not contain *the Son of God*”. This is quite misleading, as more than a thousand Greek manuscripts (including Codex Vaticanus) contain the words, while only about three Greek manuscripts omit them. Even the Greek text of the New English Bible retains these words on the ground that it is the best attested reading.

Mark 15.28

“And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors.” NASB questions the genuineness of this sentence by placing it in square brackets and adding a footnote saying that many manuscripts do not contain this verse.

Mark 16.9–20

The whole of this portion is placed in brackets and is followed by the so-called “short ending”. A footnote leaves this whole passage under a thick cloud of uncertainty, while the testimony of the mss. to the authenticity of these verses is plentiful and ancient.

Luke 2.14

In the KJV “...on earth peace, good will toward men”. NASB, with other modern versions, has a rendering in the text and note similar to the Latin Vulgate “men of good will”. The NASB and other modern versions here follow a form of Greek wording that has insufficient manuscript authority.

Luke 24.40

“When He had thus spoken, He shewed them His hands and His feet.” NASB questions this important testimony to the physical and literal reality of the resurrection of Christ. A footnote misleadingly asserts that “many mss.” do not contain this verse. In fact there is only one Greek manuscript which is known to omit this verse (Codex D of the 5th century), and *all* other Greek manuscripts contain it.

Luke 24.51

NASB here deletes the account of Christ’s Ascension into Heaven. A footnote states that “some mss. add *and was carried up into heaven*”. This is a serious misrepresentation of the evidence, considering that all Greek manuscripts except two contain these words.

Luke 24.52

NASB omits Luke’s statement that the disciples “worshipped” Christ, and relegates the missing phrase to a footnote, which says that “some mss. insert” the words. However, only one Greek manuscript (out of more than a thousand) is known to omit the words in question.

John 3.13

NASB omits “Who is in heaven” (“The Son of man which is in heaven” KJV).

John 6.47

NASB changes “He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life” to “He who believes has everlasting life”. This passage no longer requires belief in Christ, but merely belief in God.

John 6.69

NASB changes “Christ the Son of the Living God” to “The Holy One of God”, with the result that this Scripture no longer testifies that He is the Son of the living God.

John 9.35

NASB changes “Son of God” to “Son of Man”.

John 14.14

NASB changes “If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it” to “If you ask Me anything in My name...” This no longer invites prayer to the Father in the Name of the Son.

Romans 14.10

In NASB “judgment seat of Christ” is changed to “judgment seat of God”.

1 Corinthians 15.47

KJV “The second man is the Lord from heaven” is changed by NASB to “The second man is from heaven”, and another testimony to His deity is lost.

1 Timothy 3.16

The great declaration that the Lord Jesus Christ was “God manifest in the flesh” is radically changed and weakened in NASB, where we read merely “He who...”. Any man is manifest in the flesh, but only Christ was “God manifest in the flesh”. The note does not do justice to the weight of mss. evidence for “God manifest in the flesh”.

2 Timothy 3.16

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.” The NASB note admits the possibility of the weaker rendering – “Every Scripture inspired by God”, so the reader is left with the choice between a wholly inspired Bible and a Bible only partly inspired.

While it is acknowledged that this version is less radical than the Revised Standard Version and more accurate than the Good News Bible and the Living Bible, we certainly could not recommend that it should be adopted as a substitute for the KJV, which more accurately, more faithfully and more completely preserves the revelation given by inspiration of God.

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Trinitarian Bible Society
Tyndale House
Dorset Road
London, SW19 3NN
UK