

Blue Ridge Brandmarks

“...I bear on my body the brandmarks of Jesus” - Gal. 6:17

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Number 2

Choosing a Translation

Have you noticed how many different versions of the Bible there are these days? Ever consider how they differ? When I was growing up the only Bible I was familiar with was the **King James Version**, published in 1611. It was Dad's version, the one from which I learned early memory work and it was by far the most commonly used Bible in the English language. Today, according to recent sales data, the KJV holds just under 20% of market share for all Bibles sold in the U.S. Now you have several options, some good and some not so good. You will also find the **New King James** (NKJ, 1982), the **Updated New American Standard Bible** (NASB, 1995), the **New Revised Standard Version** (NRSV, 1990), the **English Standard Version** (ESV, 2001), the **New International Version** (NIV, 1978), Today's **New International Version** (TNIV, 2001), the **New Living Translation** (NLT, 1996), the **New International Readers Version** (NIRV,

1994), the **Amplified Bible** (1964), the **New American Bible** (NAB, 1970), the **Good News Translation** (GNT, 1976), **The Message** (1993), the **Contemporary English Version** (CEV, 1995), the **Holman Christian Standard Bible** (HCSB, 2000), the **New Jerusalem Bible** (NJB, 1966), and probably a handful of others. As the handy little store brochure said, "translations for every age and stage."

While I had previously understood that some 'paraphrased' versions were doctrinally slanted, I discovered an additional bit of information. Until the middle of the 20th Century, English Bible translation was based on the assumption that the goal of Bible translation was to translate the words of the original Hebrew and Greek texts into their most accurate English counterparts; that is, word-for-word translation. I learned that in his desire for exactness, William Tyndale, the early English translator, coined such terms as 'intercession' and 'atonement' to

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Signs of the End

It's fascinating to reflect on the rise and fall of the world's great civilizations and compare their historical "life cycle" to that of our own country. Historians note that the great civilizations of the world pass through a series of ten stages from birth to death as follows: (from bondage to) spiritual faith, great courage, liberty, abundance, selfishness, complacency, apathy, moral decay, dependence, and back to bondage again. The similarities are indeed striking, and yet, deeply concerning. In fact, knowing that most great nations have an average 200-year life span, coupled with the characteristics that existed before their demise (arrogance, increasing social evils, etc.) can make us wonder about the future stability of this country that presently gives us our tremendous freedom.

The Israel of the Old Testament passed through these same stages, as did the great civilizations of Greece and Rome. Even an optimist would have to admit that it seems somewhat inevitable that our country will run the same course unless some type of revival and reformation alters our current path. Dwight D. Eisenhower said, "A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both."

Curiously, just as the fall of nations is

generally predictable, so is the fall of a Christian, yet in a different way. First of all, it's worth stating that while we recognize that no nation is likely to hold power for an unlimited period of time, by God's grace and one's own faithful obedience, a Christian can remain in a safe state for eternity. However, it's those individuals who do not remain faithful that offer a learning opportunity for all of us in our spiritual journey.

So if we could predict the fall of a follower of God, what would the weeks, months, or years preceding the fall look like? It is likely that we, whether from observation or personal experience, might all have our own opinions about this. Certainly, any list would have to include pride (Prov. 16:18), poor attendance for worship services (Heb. 10:25), lack of interest in other Christians (I Pet. 1:22), a weak prayer life (I Thess. 5:17), and no time for daily Bible reading or study (I Pet. 2:2), among others.

Now take a look back at the list found in paragraph one above. Can you also see how we might follow the same path in our personal lives? Selfishness leading to complacency, leading to apathy, leading to moral decay, leading to dependence on someone or something other than Jesus Christ, and as a result, leading us into bondage to sin once again. Fortunately, the Bible offers its own building blocks for counteracting such a decline in the life

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more accurately reflect the original Greek text. However, by the middle of the 20th Century a new theory of translation developed known as dynamic (or functional) equivalence, which sought to reproduce the ideas or thoughts as understood by the translators, rather than the actual words. Thought-for-thought translations were based on the understandings and opinions of the translators where obsolete or unclear expressions were used in the original texts. I find that interesting. And alarming!

In a study of the history of the early church we reviewed the development of creed books and articles of faith among denominations and discussed the dangers inherent with such attempts to substitute man's synopsis for 'key' elements of the Text. I see a similar serious concern with the new theory of translation. Throughout the Bible, Scripture is referred to as the 'word of God'. Jesus himself said, "*the words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life*" (Jn. 6:63). He told Satan in

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of a servant of God and assures us "...if you do these things you will never stumble." **READ II Peter 1:5-11.**

If our President had the power to stop the fall of our own nation, don't you think he would? The power to prevent our own spiritual decline resides in each one of us.

Matt. 4:4, "*man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*" Numerous other passages reiterate the importance of the actual words of the Bible (cf. Ex. 19:6, Deut. 32:46-47, Prov. 30:5, Jn. 17:8, Rev. 21:5 & 22:18-19, etc.).

For 50 years, the alternate approach, dynamic equivalence has been the predominate philosophy of new Bible translations. In fact, the current top selling version, the widely acclaimed NIV with just under 50% market share, is a blend of word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation. (Translator liberties can be seen in such passages as Ps.24:10 where references to "the Lord of hosts" and "God of hosts" have been replaced with "Lord Almighty" and "God Almighty"—good descriptions but ones that do not signify a God of heavenly armies.) With each new version it seems like the departures from the original Greek and Hebrew texts grow bolder. It might be helpful to know the translator's approach. A few of the most literal translations are highlighted above for your consideration the next time you are looking for a new Bible.

◄Charlie King►

Will you recognize the warning signs and take action before it's too late? In the final analysis, isn't the decline of God's people the only indicator we need to gauge the health of a nation? "*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*" (I Cor. 10:12).

◄Gerald Holt►

FEBRUARY 2011 DUTY ROSTER

Weekday	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED	SUN	WED
Date	2/2	2/6	2/9	2/13	2/16	2/20	2/23	2/27	3/2
Opening Prayer		Kevin H.		Brent P.		Ed M.		Randy F.	
Morning Message		Don H.		Randy F.		Larry P.		John M.	
Announcements	Leo R.	Jimmy F.	John M.	David T.	Jimmy F.	Matt M.	Jonathan L.	Larry P.	David T.
Leading Songs	Randy F.	Charlie K.	Matt M.	John M.	David T.	Randy F.	Charlie K.	Brad F.	Leo R.
First Prayer	Alan M.	Eric B.	David T.	Bill A.	Larry P.	Alan M.	Kevin H.	Jerry D.	Eric B.
Lead at Lord's Table & Contribution		Alan M.		Larry P.		Jonathan L.		Bill A.	
Assist		James M.		Jeremy P.		Don H.		Eric B.	
Assist		Brad F.		Kevin H.		David T.		Ed M.	
Assist		Cody M.		Jerry D.		Bill A.		Jeremy P.	
Read Scripture		Jeremy P.		Brad F.		James M.		Leo R.	
Preaching		Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.		Brent P.	
Wed. Exhortation	Eric B.		Jimmy F.		Matt M.		Leo R.		Charlie K.
Closing Prayer	Brent P.	Jerry D.	James M.	Matt M.	Alan M.	Eric B.	Jimmy F.	Kevin H.	James M.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Sunday

9:15 - Morning Message

10:00 - Bible classes for all ages

11:00 - Worship

Wednesday

7:30 - Bible Classes for all ages

Elders:

Jim Fields, Alan Moeller & Leo Rodrigue

Deacons:

Eric Bridge & John Malloy

Evangelist:

Brent Paschall

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