





Wise And Foolish Versions (IV)

Goals Of Translators

Elegant,
KJV

Accurate,
ASV; NASB

Readable,
NIV

Mt.5:29

- College student in midwest came to Mt. 5:29, *“If your right eye offends you, pluck it out.”*
 - Misunderstanding Greek conditional sentences, translated it, *“Since...”*

A Go-between

- When we read an article by an English author, we read what he actually wrote.
- When we read a translation, a scholar has come between writer and reader. The reader is at the mercy of the translator or group of translators.
- *Some have no mercy.*


Cottonpatch

Mt.3:4-7 – “This guy John was dressed in blue jeans and a leather jacket, and he was living on corn bread and collard greens. Folks were coming to him from Atlanta and all over north Georgia and the backwater of the Chattahoochee. And as they owned up to their crooked ways, he dipped them in the Chattahoochee.” “When John noticed a lot of Protestants and Catholics showing up for his dipping....”



New International Version

- **Debuted in 1973, sponsored by International Bible Society**
- **115 scholars signed a statement of faith that the Bible is the Word of God**
- **Participants from many countries, various denominations**

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- **NIV outsold KJV in one-tenth the time; the best selling version of all time –**
 - **NIV: 42.62% share of Bible market**
 - **KJV: 19.31%**
 - **NKJV: 12.46%**
 - **NLT: 8.77%**
 - **NASB (updated): 4.75%**

NIV's Translation philosophy

- 1. “Functional” or “dynamic equivalent” approach to translating**
- 2. Emphasis on simplicity and readability**
- 3. Desire to translate the original text faithfully and accurately**
 - First two goals often collide w. third**
 - Four problems w. NIV**

1. Sentence structure

- NIV often divides long sentences into short ones for readability, often destroying logic of the sentence
- Shortening sentences forces translators to remove connector words:

for

because

and

but

Illustration: Ro.1:17-18

NIV ¹⁷ For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

¹⁸ ¶ The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men

ESV ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

¹⁸ **For** the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

2. Sentence ambiguity

**Some words / sentences are ambiguous
NIV translators use their judgment to
determine the meaning of the passage**

Three problems:

- 1. They may be wrong**
- 2. Prevents the reader from making
this judgment for himself**
- 3. Some ambiguity is a both-and
proposition, not either-or**

Illustration: Ro.1:17

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ESV: ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

3. Word consistency

- **NIV follows modern English practice of avoiding use of the same word again in the same sentence or paragraph**
- **If the same Greek word is used in a different sense, it should be translated by different English words**
- **If the sense is much the same, using different English words obscures the connection between words and ideas**

“Flesh” in Galatians

NIV: 3:3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?

4:23 His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

4:29 At that time the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now.

5:13 You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

ESV: 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

4:23 But the son of the slave was born according to the flesh, the son of the free woman was born through promise.

4:29 But just as at that time he who was born according to the flesh persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, so also it is now.

5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

4. From Metaphor to Commentary

- Instead of “walk in love,” **“live a life of love”**
- Instead of “flesh,” **“sinful nature”**


“Walk” in Ephesians

5:8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord.
Live as children of light,
NIV

5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, NIV

5:8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light, ESV


5:15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, ESV


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- **Gn.1:1-2 ftnt.:** “Or possibly *became*”
 - **Hints at Gap Theory:**
 - **Billions of years ago, God created perfect world; Satan fell; earth was destroyed, became waste and void; then God re-created it**
 - **Scotfield Bible**



■ Gn.1:1-2: Gap Theory does not harmonize with Scripture

- Gn.2:3, *all* created in six days, Gn.1
- Ex.20:11, *six days and a seventh*
- Mk.10:6, *male/female in beginning*
- Ro.1:20, *attributes seen from creation*
- Ro.5:12, *one man brought sin into world...*


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- **Ex.10:19 ftnt.: “Hebrew Yam Suph; that is, **Sea of Reeds**”**
 - **Ibn Ezra, 12th Century Spanish Jewish commentator, suggested “**Sea of Reeds**” derives from plants that grow around it**
 - **Luther et al. copied him**

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- 1 K.9:26 et al. cannot refer to anything except Red Sea
 - There are no reeds in Red Sea; papyrus does not grow in salt water
 - “The supposed connection between yam suph and its Egyptian derivation will not stand up under scrutiny. The words actually refer to **sea at the end of the world**”
 - Hb.11:29, “Red Sea” —B.A.R. Vol. X, No.4

- **Ps.51:5, “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” THD**
- **Even if the translation accurately represented the original, this is *poetry***
 - **V.4, not literally true (poetic license)**
 - **V.7, not literally possible (1 K.4:33; Hb.9:19)**

Ps.51:5, **poetry**...

- **V.8, not literally possible. Cf. 6:2-3**
- **V.9, 16, obviously figurative**
- **V.17, figurative (v.19; 20:3)**
- **Ps.18:1-2, not literally true**
- **Ps.22:6, obviously figurative**
- **Ps.91:4, obviously figurative (cf.11-13)**
- **And yet Ps.51:5 is literal??**

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- **Even if it said, “I was born in sin,” it would not prove THD**
 - **Ac.2:8**
 - **Speaking Chinese runs in families...but it is not inherited**
 - **Job 31:18**
 - **Ps.58:3, a life-long practice**

Ps.51:5

- Ga.4:4, was Jesus a sinner from birth?
- 1 Jn.3:4, we do not **inherit** sin
- Ezk.18, sin is non-transferable. The last thing David wanted to do was blame his sin on his mother
- Ps.119:67, 176, David and others **went** astray; they were not **born** astray

- **Mt.24:34, text: generation; ftnt., “race” (premillennial bias)**
 - **GENEA = the sum total of those born at the same time, expanded to include all those living at a given time, generation, contemporaries**
- Cf. Mt.23:36; 12:41-42**

- Ep.1:9-10, premillennial bias adds “to be”:
 - “...to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment...”
 - “To be” is not in Greek; no italics
 - All of history has been working toward God’s plan in Christ – this present dispensation

Ac.2:27, a comparison

NIV: “Because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay”

ESV: “For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, or let your Holy One see corruption”





Ro.4:3, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him **as** righteousness”

[Actually, his faith was counted to him for (*unto; in order to*) righteousness]

- Ro.5:14, “did not sin *by breaking a command...*” THD
 - No patriarch disobeyed a command of God?
 - 12, *all sinned.* Cf. 3:23
- Ro.7:18 et al., *flesh*: “sinful nature.” (2 Pt.2:18, “sinful human nature”)

- Ro.7:18, *sinful nature...* Sarx occurs 151 times in NT
 - **KJV:** *flesh*, 147; *carnal*, 2; *carnally*, 1; *fleshly*, 1
 - **RSV:** *flesh* 106 times
 - **NIV:** *flesh* only 37 times; **they use 22 different English words for other occurrences;** *sinful nature* 27 times
 - Ro.1:3, Jesus – born in flesh

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- 1 Co.2:14, “*natural man*” becomes “the man *without the Spirit*”
 - Direct operation of Holy Spirit
 - Non-Christians cannot understand the gospel! [Contrast Ro.1:16]

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- 1 Co.13:10, “*when perfection comes...*”
 - V.9, **imperfection** [in part method of revelation]
 - V.10, **perfection** [when NT books were **complete**], prophets ceased. Why need them? Cf. Ja.1:25
 - If “**in part**” method still exists, then every gift remains

- 1 Tim.3:11 ftnt., *deaconesses*.
Also Ro.16:1. (TNIV, *deaconesses* in main text)
 - 1 Tim.3:11, Gk.: *wives* or *women*
 - DIAKONOS is general. Ro.15:8; 13:4
 - What qualifications / work of deaconess?
 - Are all servants deacons?
1 Tim.4:6

