



The KJV and NKJV differences in translation. Here are some examples:

	King James Version	New King James Version
2 Corinthians 2:17	"For we are not as many which <b>corrupt</b> the word of God"	" <b>peddling</b> the word of God" (like the NIV, NASV and RSV)
Titus 3:10	"A man that is <b>an heretick</b> after the first and second admonition reject"	"Reject <b>a divisive man</b> " (like the NIV)
1 Thessalonians 5:22	"Abstain from <b>all appearance</b> of evil."	"Abstain from <b>every form</b> of evil." (like the NAS, RSV and ASV)
Isaiah 66:5	"Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the LORD be glorified: but <b>he shall appear to your joy</b> , and they shall be ashamed." [This means that the LORD shall appear, which shall occur at the Second Coming of Christ.]	"Hear the word of the LORD, you who tremble at His word: "Your brethren who hated you, who cast you out for My name's sake, said, 'Let the LORD be glorified, <b>that we may see your joy.</b> ' But they shall be ashamed." (Like the NIV, NASV, RSV and ASV, the Second Coming is wholly omitted from this scripture.)

Although accuracy is claimed for the NKJV, there are numerous Old Testament renderings which are simply erroneous or, at the very least, most misleading. We note the following:

- **Leviticus 19.16** – ‘blood’ (דָּם, *dam*) is changed to ‘life’, missing the whole point of the verse that ‘tale-bearing’ breeds strife and often leads to the shedding of ‘blood’ (see **Ezekiel 22.9**).
- **Deuteronomy 27.26** – omission of ‘to do them’ (although the words are in the Hebrew: לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם, *lasot otam*), which removes the proper sense of the verse.
- **1 Samuel 16.14** – change of רוּחַ רָעָה (*ruach-raah*, ‘an evil spirit’) to ‘a distressing spirit’ (also changed in verse 23 and 19.9).
- **1 Samuel 25.8** – יוֹם טוֹב (*yom tob*, ‘a good day’), is translated ‘a feast day’, which implies without any warrant that this was one of the regular feasts of Israel; it may mean no more than ‘a happy day’ or ‘a day of rejoicing’.
- **2 Samuel 22.3** – ‘the God of my rock’ (צוּר, *tsur*) is wrongly rendered ‘the God of my strength’.
- **Psalms 30.4** – instead of ‘the remembrance of his holiness’, the NKJV has ‘the remembrance of His holy name’, which is not a translation but an interpretation since the Hebrew has ‘holiness’ (קָדֹשׁ, *qadosh*; see also 97.12).
- **Psalms 33.15** – ‘He fashioneth their hearts alike’ is changed to ‘He fashions their hearts individually’, but the Hebrew (יַחַד, *yachad*) means that all alike are made by Him.
- **Psalms 43.1** – ‘Judge me, O God’, in the sense of ‘do justice for me’ (שָׁפְטֵנִי, *shaphteni*), is translated ‘Vindicate me’, a rendering which goes beyond the meaning of the original. The word means no more than ‘do justice in my case’ or ‘on my behalf’ without necessarily presupposing a favourable outcome.
- **Psalms 45.13** – ‘The king’s daughter is all glorious within’ (כָּל־כְּבוֹדָהּ בֵּית־מֶלֶךְ, *kal-kbudah bat-melek pnimah*) is changed to ‘the royal daughter is all glorious within the palace’; although added in italics, the words ‘the palace’ are a totally unwarranted and unnecessary addition.
- **Psalms 110.3** – ‘Thy people shall be willing’ is changed to ‘Your people shall be volunteers’, a most unhappy translation, particularly as the

Hebrew (נְדָבוֹת, *ndabot*) literally reads, 'Thy people shall be willingnesses'.

- **Psalm 113.7** – 'the dunghill' (מַעֲשָׂפֹת, *meashpot*) from which men are raised, is improperly and weakly translated 'the ashheap', missing the point that men are sunk in moral degradation (see also **1 Samuel 2.8**).
- **Ecclesiastes 12.11** – 'the masters of assemblies' (literally, 'masters of gatherings' – אֲסֻפֹּת בַּעֲלֵי, *baale asupot*), is feebly translated 'the words of scholars' (although they admit in a footnote that this is 'Literally masters of the assemblies'), thus losing the idea of 'ministers' who are conveners and instructors of congregations.
- **Isaiah 1.27** – 'converts' is changed to 'penitents', but the Hebrew word (שׁוּב, *shub*) is commonly used to mean return, and in this passage it means 'her [Zion's] returners'.
- **Isaiah 7.16** – 'abhorrest' is changed to 'dread', where as properly the word (קָץ, *qats*) means 'loathe', originally associated with the feeling of nausea.
- **Isaiah 14.9** – 'Hell from beneath is moved for thee' is changed to 'Hell from beneath is excited about you', but the idea (רָגַז, *ragaz*) is that the spirits of the lost are 'roused' and not just a little 'surprised' to see the King of Babylon descending to that region.
- **Isaiah 61.3** – 'To appoint unto them that mourn' is changed to 'To console those who mourn', but the Hebrew word (שִׁים, *sim*) certainly requires 'set', 'appoint', 'supply' or 'give'.
- **Jeremiah 1.17** – 'Gird up thy loins' (וְאַתָּה תִּאָּזֵר מִתְּנִיָּךְ, *vatah tezor matneka*) is changed to 'prepare yourself', which is a departure from the original and an example of dynamic equivalence.
- **Lamentations 5.10** – The word 'black' (כָּמָר, *kamar*) in the sentence 'our skin was black like an oven', is rendered 'hot', an unhelpful substitution. The Hebrew word, although not the common word for black, conveys the idea of growing hot and being scorched. In the change, the NKJV loses the idea behind the word, of being scorched so that the skin shows the effect of the exposure to the heat.
- **Ezekiel 5.17** – 'evil [רָעָה, *raah*, 'bad'] beasts' becomes 'wild', a meaning which it never has in the Hebrew.
- **Ezekiel 9.10,11** – 'I will recompense their way' is changed to 'I will recompense their deeds', but the Hebrew word (דֶּרֶךְ, *derek*) means 'way' and is singular. Also, in verse 11 'reported the matter' (מְשִׁיב דָּבָר, *meshib dabar*)

*dabar*) is rendered ‘reported back’, with the word indicating ‘matter’ omitted.

- **Ezekiel 16.46** – שְׂמֹאל (śemol), ‘left hand’, and יָמִין (yamin), ‘right hand’ are rendered ‘north’ and ‘south’ respectively, which may well be what is to be understood, but it is not what has been written in the Hebrew.
- **Daniel 8.21** – מֶלֶךְ (melek), ‘king’ is arbitrarily and inconsistently (cf. 7.17) changed to ‘kingdom’, but ‘king’ here appears to be used in a dynastic sense even as later in the verse it is used in a personal sense.

These comprise only a sample of the erroneous and defective translations in the NKJV as far as the Old Testament is concerned, but they are surely enough to warn – and indeed to alarm – sincere believers who desire to read and study a true and accurate version of the Holy Scriptures.

*Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, is both preliminary and provisional. It represents a first step...Yet even as it is, this Majority Text contains nearly 1,900 changes to the Received Text, including the omission of such Scriptures as [Matthew 27.35](#); [Acts 8.37](#); 9.5,6; 10.6b; and [1 John 5.7](#). reveal that he was familiar with practically all the important variant readings known to modern scholars including [Mark 16.9–20](#), [Luke 22.43,44](#) and [John 7.53–8.11](#).

Some Textual Critics, after B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, refer to ‘families’ of New Testament manuscripts. This again is misleading, as it is impossible to ascertain with any certainty the ancestors of manuscripts or to prove the exact relationship which one manuscript has to another. But the particular device of referring to ‘families’ enabled Westcott and Hort to dismiss the Traditional or Received Text, supported by 90% of the Greek manuscripts, as a mere descendant of an exceedingly corrupt ancestor! It is therefore much better to refer to ‘text-types’. The major text-types are: the Traditional (Byzantine) text-type emanating from the Asia Minor/Greece area where Paul founded a number of churches (and called Byzantine because it was the recognized Greek text throughout the Byzantine period, AD 312–1453), and the Alexandrian text-type, associated with Alexandria and proceeding from Egypt. The Byzantine text-type has the overwhelming support of the Greek manuscripts (over

95% of the more than five thousand Greek manuscripts in existence); and naturally these have most impressive agreement among themselves. It is in this text-type that the Traditional Text has survived, which was published in the 16th and 17th centuries by Erasmus, Stephanus, Beza and the Elzevirs (Bonaventure and Abraham). In the 'Preface' to the Elzevirs' second edition (1633) reference is made to the 'text...now received by all' (*textum...nunc ab omnibus receptum*), from whence arose the designation 'Textus Receptus' or 'Received Text'. It is a text of this type which underlies the Authorised Version. All of the existing New Testament Greek manuscripts are copies (apographs). None of the original writings of the Apostles (autographs) have survived. The Byzantine group of manuscripts are mostly, but by no means entirely, later copies. But some 4th-century manuscripts of the Alexandrian group have come to public notice since the publication of the Received Text in the 16th and 17th centuries. These are Codex Vaticanus (from the Vatican library) and Codex Sinaiticus (discovered in St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai in 1859). These manuscripts differ radically from the Traditional or Received Text. It is estimated that there are about six thousand differences. These include numerous omissions, sometimes of entire verses (e.g., [Matthew 12.47, 18.11](#); [Luke 17.36](#); [Acts 28.29](#); [Romans 15.24](#)), and often even more than this (e.g., [Matthew 16.2,3](#); [Mark 9.44,46](#); [John 5.3,4](#); [Acts 24.6–8](#)). Notorious among these, of course, are the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark and [John 8.1–11](#). Even between themselves, these Alexandrian manuscripts show no agreement or consistency. H. C. Hoskier, after meticulously careful research, noted that in the four Gospels alone there were no less than three thousand differences between Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus.

But since 1881 when, under the baleful influence of Westcott and Hort, the Revised Version of the Bible was published, the Alexandrian have been preferred to the Byzantine manuscripts chiefly because of their date, the view being that the oldest manuscripts are likely to be the most accurate. But this is a complete misconception, since accurate and approved copies would have been much in use and therefore would soon have become worn out – a damp climate not helping to preserve them as the arid climate of Egypt did with respect to the Alexandrian manuscripts. The good copies needed themselves to be copied and the evidence is that a great many copies were made in later centuries, a

large number of which still exist today. It follows that, contrary to the footnotes in most modern versions, the 'oldest' are not at all likely to be the 'best' but could well be the 'worst'. Why? Because, recognized as defective, they were rejected and therefore little used.

Versions of the Bible since 1881 have been mainly based on these few early manuscripts. At first sight the NKJV appears to be an exception; yet while using the Received Text, it contains in its marginal references variant readings from these defective Alexandrian manuscripts. When examined, these marginal readings are seen to cast doubt on such fundamental doctrines as the Eternal Generation of the Son, the Union of Christ's Deity and Humanity, the Incarnation, the Blood Atonement, and the Eternal Conscious Punishment of the Wicked in Hell (e.g., [John 1.18](#) – 'the only begotten Son' becomes 'the only begotten God'; [1 Corinthians 15.47](#) – omission of 'the Lord'; [1 Timothy 3.16](#) – 'God' changed to 'Who'; [Colossians 1.14](#) – 'through his blood' is left out; [Mark 9.46](#) – omission of 'Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched'). Here is a clear case of what the Scripture refers to in Ecclesiastes: 'Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour'(10.1).

Even more serious is the fact that in the actual text of the NKJV New Testament there are a great many departures from the Received Text, where Critical Text readings have apparently been preferred and followed or other unwarranted changes have been made. This is a matter of gravest concern. Here are some examples:

- [John 10.6](#) – omission of the first instance of αὐτοῖς (*autois*), 'unto them' (AV: 'This parable spake Jesus unto them'; NKJV: 'Jesus used this illustration'). *Autoisis* in all the Greek texts, both TR and Critical, and there is not even a textual variant indicated in the Critical editions; why the NKJV omits it is unclear.
- [Acts 15.23](#) – The NKJV omits τάδε (*tade*), 'after this manner', as does the Critical Text.
- [Acts 19.39](#) – The NKJV changes from the TR's περὶ ἑτέρων (*peri heteron*), 'concerning other matters' to 'any other inquiry'. The Critical Text has περαιτέρω (*peraitero*, 'further'). The NKJV reading is not just a



change from plural to singular but appears to be based upon the use of the entirely different expression seen in the Critical Text.

- **Acts 27.14** – The NKJV omits κατ' αὐτῆς (*kat' autes*), 'against it'; *kat autes* is in both the TR and the Critical Text. Again one is left to wonder why the NKJV omits it.
- **2 Corinthians 4.14** – The NKJV changes διὰ Ἰησοῦ (*dia Iesou*), 'by Jesus', to συν Ἰησοῦ (*sun Iesou*), 'with Jesus', in keeping with the Critical Text reading – a very misleading change.
- **2 John 7** – The NKJV changes from εἰσῆλθον (*eiselthon*), 'entered into', to ἐξελθον (*exelthon*), 'gone out into', the Critical Text reading.
- **Revelation 6.11** – The NKJV changes from the plural στολαὶ λευκαί (*stolai leukai*, 'white robes'), to the singular στολη λευκη (*stole leuke*) 'a whiterobe', which is the Critical Text reading.

In addition, there are some serious faults in the translation:

- **Matthew 15.32** – νήστεις (*nesteis*), 'fasting', is rendered 'hungry', losing the point that, in attending upon our Lord's ministry, the people had chosen to go without food (also changed in **Mark 8.3**).
- **Matthew 22.10** – ὁ γάμος (*hogamos*), 'the wedding', is changed to 'the wedding hall'. Although hall appears in italics in the NKJV, it is an unnecessary addition unsupported by the Textus Receptus.
- **Luke 11.34** – ἀπλοῦς (*haplous*), 'single', in the clause 'thine eye is single', wrongly becomes 'good', the true reference being to an eye that does not see double (also changed in **Matthew 6.22**);
- **Luke 11.54** – the words ἐκ τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ (*ek tou stomatos autou*), 'out of his mouth' are changed to 'He might say', which does not translate the Greek.
- **Luke 22.53** – οὐκ ἐξετεínaτε τὰς χεῖρας ἐπ' ἐμέ (*ouk exeteinate tas cheiras ep' eme*), 'ye stretched forth no hands against me', becomes 'you did not try to seize me' which is far from a literal translation.
- **Acts 18.6** – ἀντιπασσομένων δὲ αὐτῶν (*antitassomenon de auton*), 'opposed themselves', that is, set themselves in the way to prevent the apostle preaching, is translated 'opposed him'.
- **2 Corinthians 7.2** – Χωρήσατε ἡμᾶς (*choresate hemas*), 'receive us', is rendered 'open your hearts to us', as in the Revised Version; this is an example of dynamic equivalence.
- **2 Corinthians 11.29** – οὐκ ἐγὼ πυροῦμαι (*ouk ego puroumai*), 'I burn not', is translated 'I do not burn with indignation', which is yet another case of

interpretation rather than translation (the verb can be otherwise understood to mean ‘burn with desire’ or, perhaps, and preferably, ‘burn with pain’).

- [Galatians 5.4](#) – the AV has ‘Christ is become of no effect unto you’. In the NKJV, this is rendered ‘You have become estranged from Christ’. The verb καταργεω (*katargeo*) literally means to render or make useless, or unprofitable, the idea being that those who sought justification by the law were severed from Christ and the benefits of His death. The NKJV unjustifiably imports the concept of a breakdown in the personal relationship with Christ, in place of the forfeiture of saving benefit.
- [Philippians 3.8](#) – the things formerly relied upon which are now reckoned but σκύβαλα (*skubala*), ‘dung’ or ‘muck’, become merely ‘rubbish’ in the NKJV. However, the Greek word appears to be derived from one properly meaning human excrement, and thus conveys more literally something of the apostle’s present estimate of, and aversion to, his Jewish legal privileges when considered a ground of justification (as is made clear in the AV).
- [1 Timothy 6.5](#) – νομιζόντων πορισμὸν εἶναι τὴν εὐσέβειαν (*nomizonton porismon einai ten eusebeian*), literally ‘supposing that gain is godliness’, is rendered by the NKJV: ‘who suppose that godliness is *a means* of gain’. Admittedly, in Greek it is possible to reverse the order of words when they are connected by a form of the verb ‘to be’, thus ‘godliness is gain’ just might be acceptable. However, regarding the words ‘a means of’, as indicated by the NKJV’s use of italics and its omission of these words in the following verse, the inclusion of them here is invalid.
- [Hebrews 3.16](#) – in the NKJV is the mistranslation of ἅλλ’ οὐ πάντες (*all’ ou pantes*), ‘howbeit not all’, to ‘indeed, was it not all’, thereby suggesting the rebellion of all the Israelites, whereas the truth was that Joshua and Caleb did not rebel.
- [Revelation 2.22](#) – ‘sick’ is added to κλίνην (*klinen*), ‘bed’, making it ‘sickbed’.
- [Revelation 16.16](#) – καὶ συνήγαγεν αὐτοὺς (*kai sunegagen autous*), ‘And he gathered them together’, is changed to ‘And they gathered them together’, effectively removing (without any manuscript support) God’s sovereign action, and apparently attributing the action to unspecified malign forces.

It is therefore simply not true to say that the NKJV is faithful to the Received Text where it differs in so many areas Of the King James Bible of a word for word translation of what is written.