

New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue)

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Carried out by the National Council of Churches (holder of the copyright to the RSV, NRSV and now the NRSVue, a venerable organization with broad ecumenical participation) and the Society of Biblical Literature (the largest, most respected, international body of biblical scholars)

Builds upon the New Revised Standard Version of 1989, which built upon its predecessors reaching all the way back to the King James Version of 1611. (Take a quick look of the family tree on the "Chart of the English Bible" below, from the American Bible Society)

Continues to enjoy approval from most major branches of Christendom: Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox. Respect for Jewish tradition and involvement of Jewish scholars has also been practiced going back to the 1940s.

Why An Update?

- "Text-critical Revisions": new understandings of the meaning of the ancient texts from which we translate are always emerging. Sometimes previously unknown manuscript copies come to light. (For example, the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in the 1940s). **Bottom line: our understanding of the meaning of our ancient texts is constantly evolving. It is ever-changing.**
- "Philological Revisions": once we have done our best to determine how the ancients likely understood their texts, what would be the best way to express that meaning in appropriate contemporary English? For example, if an ancient text *said* "men," but surely intended to *mean* "men and women," the NRSVue opts for the latter. **Bottom line: our understanding of how best to express the meaning of our ancient texts in our own language, here and now, is constantly evolving. It is ever-changing.**

Recommended Reading on the NRSVue

Friendship Press, "NRSVue Bible Sampler," 2021 For a free download of the 36 page PDF, see: <https://www.friendshippress.org/products/nrsvue-arc> [or contact Fowler for a copy of the PDF]

Annelisa Burns (interviewer), "An even better Bible: The leaders of the NRSVue project talk about translation, reception, and what Bibles are for," <https://www.christiancentury.org/article/interview/even-better-bible>, December 19, 2022

<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-Updated-Edition-NRSVue-Bible>

- Version Information from the National Council of the Churches of Christ
- Preface to the *NRSV Updated Edition*, From the Society of Biblical Literature

Biblical Archaeology Society, "What is the Best Bible Translation?," <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/bible-versions-and-translations/best-bible-translation/>

SMU Perkins School of Theology, "NRSV Updated Edition,"
<https://blog.smu.edu/perkins/nrsv-updated-edition/>, January 2022

Hal Taussig, "A new edition of the Bible, with 20,000 revisions, should spark 20,000 thoughtful conversations," *LA Times*, December 24, 2021 [PDF copy available from Fowler]

History of the English Bible

American Bible Society, Chart of the English Bible, date? [two page PDF, available from Fowler]

American Bible Society, *A Concise History of the English Bible*, 1998 [60 pp.; out of print, but Fowler obtained a free PDF download from ABS, which he will share]

Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Translators to the Reader: Preface to the King James Version 1611* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935) [A scan of Goodspeed's 14 page discussion is available as a PDF from Fowler]

Erroll F. Rhoades and Liana Lupas, eds., *The Translators to the Reader: The Original Preface of the KING JAMES VERSION of 1611 Revisited* (New York: American Bible Society, 1997) [85 pp.; preface in three versions: facsimile of original, transcription in modern type, and a modern paraphrase]

"The Translators to the Reader" [of the King James Bible], <https://www.bible-researcher.com/kjvpref.html>

Random Notes

- "The book *The Murderous History of Bible Translations* by Harry Freedman chronicles the long history of burning translators at the stake or beheading them." (Annelisa Burns) [Fowler: I have not seen this, but it sounds bloody interesting!]
- Joseph Crockett: "The RSV will remain in print, but the NRSV will go out of print." [!!] (Annelisa Burns)
- Martin Luther Hux: 1952 ripped out and burned the RSV page from Isaiah containing Isaiah 7:14 concerning "virgin" versus "young woman" [many websites refer to the event]
 - King James: "a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son"
 - RSV: "a young woman shall conceive and bear a son"
 - NRSV: "the young woman is with child and shall bear a son"
 - NRSVue: "the young woman is with child and shall bear a son"
- Friendship Press, 'Bible Sampler'
 "The NRSVue presents approximately 12,000 substantive edits and 20,000 total changes, which include alterations in grammar and punctuation."

•"The Translators to the Reader

The Best Things Have Been Calumniated

Zeal to promote the common good, whether it be by devising anything ourselves, or revising that which hath been laboured by others, deserveth certainly much respect and esteem, but yet findeth but cold entertainment in the world. It is welcomed with suspicion instead of love, and with emulation instead of thanks: and if there be any hole left for cavil to enter, (and cavil, if it do not find a hole, will make one) it is sure to be misconstrued, and in danger to be condemned." <https://www.bible-researcher.com/kjvpref.html>

"Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one, ... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones, one principal good one, not justly to be excepted against; that hath been our endeavor, that our mark." <https://www.bible-researcher.com/kjvpref.html>

NRSVue Changes of Interest from the NRSV

Changes within the Gospel of Mark

- Mark 1:1: "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." → "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ. [Footnote: "Other ancient authorities add *Son of God*"]"
- Mark 1:16: "fishermen" → "fishers"
- Mark 1:40, 42: "leper" → "a man with a skin disease"
 - "leprosy" → "skin disease"
- Mark 2:14: "tax booth" → "tax-collection station"
- Mark 3:19: "Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him" → "Judas Iscariot, who handed him over"
- Fixing a nonsensical verse division in Mark 3:20: "Then he went home; 20 and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat." → "20 Then he went home, and the crowd came together again, so that they could not even eat."
- Mark 9:22: "have pity on us and help us" → "help us! Have compassion on us!"
- Mark 12:14: "pay taxes to the emperor" → "pay taxes to Caesar"
- Mark 14:69: "servant-girl" → "female servant"
- Mark 14:70: "Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean." → "Certainly you are one of them, for you are a Galilean, and you talk like one."
- Mark 15:22: "Golgotha (which means the place of a skull)" → "Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull)"
- Mark 15:41: women who "provided for him" → women who "ministered to him" [[Fowler footnote: the verb in Greek is *diakoneo*, from which we get "deacon"]]

Other Changes of Interest

- Leviticus 4:8 (and 125 other verses!): "sin offering" → "purification offering"
- Oh, those rascally "temple prostitutes" in the Old Testament!
 - The term, "temple prostitute," associated with both men and women (!), occurs 8 times in the Old Testament of the NRSV. Most frequently the new term in the NRSVue has to do with "serving in an illicit shrine" (That is, not paying proper homage to the God of Israel).
- Matthew 2:1: "wise men" → "magi" [Footnote: Or *astrologers*]
- Matthew 4:24: "they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them"
 - "they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, people possessed by demons or having epilepsy or afflicted with paralysis, and he cured them"
- numerous places in Acts: "brothers" → "brothers and sisters"
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-10:
 - "fornicators" → "sexually immoral"
 - "male prostitutes" → "male prostitutes" [Footnote: "Meaning of Gk uncertain"]
 - "sodomites" → "men who engage in illicit sex" [Footnote: "Meaning of Gk uncertain"]
 - "robbers" → "swindlers"
- Galatians 4:22: "slave woman" → "an enslaved woman"
- "...the NRSV regrettably had used lowercase letters to describe some Jewish calendrical observances. Lest doing so be interpreted as disrespectful, such observances as the Sabbath and Passover are now rendered in capital letters." SMU website

CHART OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

