

Which Bible Translation(s) Should I Use?

September 3, 2023

The New English Translation (NET) was designed to be available for free on the internet (netbible.org). It was finished in 1998 (New Testament) and 2000 (Old Testament). It was revised in 2003 and again in 2005 when it was put in print for the first time. Then a second edition was printed in 2017. Almost all of the 23 Bible scholars who worked on this project were professors or graduates of Dallas Theological Seminary. The NET Bible has over 60,000 footnotes, which is far more than any other translation.

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “But surely I gave you no food to eat in all your cities; you lacked food everywhere you lived. Still you did not come back to me” (Amos 4:6 NET).

- NET Footnote: “*Heb* ‘But I gave to you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and lack of food in all your places.’ The phrase ‘cleanness of teeth’ is a vivid way of picturing the famine Israel experienced.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24 NET).

- NET Footnote: “The term *money* is used to translate *mammon*, the Aramaic term for wealth or possessions. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . The point is not that money is inherently evil, but that it is often misused so that it is a means of evil; see 1 Tim 6:6-10, 17-19. Here ‘money’ is personified as a potential master and thus competes with God for the loyalty of the disciple. The passage is ultimately not a condemnation of wealth (there is no call here for absolute poverty) but a call for unqualified discipleship. God must be first, not money or possessions.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “For indeed, the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21b NET).

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “This is a far better translation than ‘in you.’ Jesus would never tell the hostile Pharisees that the kingdom was inside them. The reference is to Jesus present in their midst. He brings the kingdom. Another possible translation would be ‘in your grasp.’ For further discussion and options, see D. L. Bock, *Luke* (BECNT), 2:1414-19.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “At that time Moses was born, and he was beautiful to God. For three months he was brought up in his father’s house” (Acts 7:20 NET).

- NET Footnote: “*Grk* ‘who was brought up for three months.’ The continuation of the sentence as a relative clause is awkward in English, so a new sentence was started in the translation by changing the relative pronoun to a regular pronoun (‘he’).”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “Now I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea” (Romans 16:1 NET).
- NET Footnote: “Or ‘deaconess.’ It is debated whether **δῆακονος** (*diakonos*) here refers to a specific office within the church. One contextual argument used to support this view is that Phoebe is associated with a particular church, Cenchrea, and as such would therefore be a deacon of that church. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . In the NT some who are called **δῆακονος** are related to a particular church, yet the scholarly consensus is that such individuals are not deacons, but ‘servants’ or ‘ministers’ (other viable translations for **δῆακονος**). For example, Epaphras is associated with the church in Colossians and is called a **δῆακονος** in Col 1:7, but no contemporary translation regards him as a deacon. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . In 1 Tim 4:6 Paul calls Timothy a **διάκονος**; Timothy was associated with the church in Ephesus, but he obviously was not a deacon. In addition, the lexical evidence leans away from this view: Within the NT, the **διακον**- word group rarely functions with a technical nuance. In any case, the evidence is not compelling either way. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . The view accepted in the translation above is that Phoebe was a servant of the church, not a deaconess, although this conclusion should be regarded as tentative.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “Greet Andronicus and Junia, my compatriots and my fellow prisoners. They are well known to the apostles, and they were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7 NET).
- “Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me” (Romans 16:7 NASB 1995).

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “The feminine name *Junia*, though common in Latin, is quite rare in Greek (apparently only three instances of it occur in Greek literature outside Rom 16:7, according to the data in the *TLG* [D. Moo, *Romans* [NICNT], 922]). The masculine *Junias* (as a contraction for *Junianas*), however, is rarer still: Only one instance of the masculine name is known in extant Greek literature (Epiphanius mentions Junias in his *Index discipulorum* 125). . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . Further, since there are apparently other husband-wife teams mentioned in this salutation (Prisca and Aquila [v. 3], Philologus and Julia [v. 15]), it might be natural to think of Junia as a feminine name. (This ought not be pressed too far, however, for in v. 12 *all* three individuals are women [though the first two are linked together], and in vv. 9-11 all the individuals are men.) . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . In Greek only a difference of accent distinguishes between Junias (male) and Junia (female). If it refers to a woman, it is possible (1) that she had the gift of apostleship (not the office), or (2) that she was not an apostle but along with Andronicus was esteemed by (or among) the apostles. As well, the term ‘prominent’ probably means ‘well known,’ suggesting that Andronicus and Junia(s) were well known to the apostles (see note on the phrase ‘well known’ which follows).”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “Or ‘prominent, outstanding, famous.’ The term ἐπίσημος (*episemos*) is used either in an implied comparative sense (‘prominent, outstanding’) or in an elative sense (‘famous, well known’). The key to determining the meaning of the term in any given passage is both the general context and the specific collocation of this word with its adjuncts. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . When a comparative notion is seen, that to which ἐπίσημος is compared is frequently, if not usually, put in the genitive case (cf., e.g., 3 Macc 6:1 [Ελεαζαρος δέ τις ἀνὴρ ἐπίσημος τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας ἱερέων ‘Eleazar, a man *prominent among the priests* of the country’]; cf. also *Pss. Sol.* 17:30). When, however, an elative notion is found, ἐν (*en*) plus a personal plural dative is not uncommon (cf. *Pss. Sol.* 2:6). . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . Although ἐν plus a personal dative does not indicate agency, in collocation with words of perception, (ἐν plus) dative personal nouns are often used to show the recipients. In this instance, the idea would then be ‘well known to the apostles.’ See M. H. Burer and D. B. Wallace, ‘Was Junia Really an Apostle? A Re-examination of Rom 16.7,’ *NTS* 47 (2001): 76-91, who argue for the relative notion here.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man. She must remain quiet” (1 Timothy 2:12 NET).

- NET Footnote: “*Grk* ‘but to be in quietness.’ The phrase ἐν ἡσυχίᾳ (*en hesuchia*) is used in Greek literature either of absolute silence or of a quiet demeanor.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “Likewise also their wives must be dignified, not slanderous, temperate, faithful in every respect” (1 Timothy 3:11 NET).
- NET Footnote: “Or ‘also deaconesses.’ The Greek word here is γυναῖκας (*gunaikas*) which literally means ‘women’ or ‘wives.’ It is possible that this refers to women who serve as deacons, ‘deaconesses.’ . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . The evidence is as follows: (1) The immediate context refers to deacons; (2) the author mentions nothing about wives in his section on elder qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-7); (3) it would seem strange to have requirements placed on deacons’ wives without corresponding requirements placed on elders’ wives; and (4) elsewhere in the NT, there seems to be room for seeing women in this role (cf. Rom 16:1 and the comments there). . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: "... The translation 'wives'—referring to the wives of the deacons—is probably to be preferred, though, for the following reasons: (1) It would be strange for the author to discuss women deacons right in the middle of the qualifications for male deacons; more naturally they would be addressed by themselves. (2) The author seems to indicate clearly in the next verse that women are not deacons: 'Deacons must be husbands of one wife.' ..."

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: "... (3) Most of the qualifications given for deacons elsewhere do not appear here. Either the author has truncated the requirements for women deacons, or he is not actually referring to women deacons; the latter seems to be the more natural understanding. (4) The principle given in 1 Tim 2:12 appears to be an overarching principle for church life which seems implicitly to limit the role of deacon to men. Nevertheless, a decision in this matter is difficult, and our conclusions must be regarded as tentative."

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “As we wait for the happy fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13 NET).

- NET Footnote: “The terms ‘God and Savior’ both refer to the same person, Jesus Christ. This is one of the clearest statements in the NT concerning the deity of Christ. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . The construction in Greek is known as the Granville Sharp rule, named after the English philanthropist-linguist who first clearly articulated the rule in 1798. Sharp pointed out that in the construction article-noun-καί-noun (where καί [*kai*] = ‘and’), when two nouns are singular, personal, and common (i.e., not proper names), they *always* had the same referent. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . Illustrations such as ‘the friend and brother,’ ‘the God and Father,’ etc. abound in the NT to prove Sharp’s point. The only issue is whether terms such as ‘God’ and ‘Savior’ could be considered common nouns as opposed to proper names. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . Sharp and others who followed (such as T. F. Middleton in his masterful *The Doctrine of the Greek Article*) demonstrated that a proper name in Greek was one that could not be pluralized. Since both ‘God’ (θεός, *theos*) and ‘savior’ (σωτήρ, *soter*) were occasionally found in the plural, they did not constitute proper names, and hence, do fit Sharp’s rule. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . Although there have been 200 years of attempts to dislodge Sharp’s rule, all attempts have been futile. Sharp’s rule stands vindicated after all the dust has settled. For more information on Sharp’s rule see *ExSyn* 270-78, esp. 276. See also 2 Pet 1:1 and Jude 4.”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- “And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city that are described in this book” (Revelation 22:19 NET).

- NET Footnote: “The *Textus Receptus*, on which the KJV rests, reads ‘the book’ of life (ἀπὸ βίβλου, *apo biblou*) instead of ‘the tree’ of life. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . When the Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus translated the NT he had access to no Greek mss for the last six verses of Revelation. So he translated the Latin Vulgate back into Greek at this point. As a result he created seventeen textual variants which were not in any Greek mss. The most notorious of these is this reading. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . It is thus decidedly inauthentic, while ‘the tree’ of life, found in the best and virtually all Greek mss, is clearly authentic. The confusion was most likely due to an intra-Latin switch: The form of the word for ‘tree’ in Latin in this passage is *ligno*; the word for ‘book’ is *libro*. . . .”

Here are some verses where the NET Bible has a good translation and at least one helpful footnote:

- NET Footnote: “. . . The two-letter difference accounts for an accidental alteration in some Latin mss; that ‘book of life’ as well as ‘tree of life’ is a common expression in the Apocalypse probably accounts for why this was not noticed by Erasmus or the KJV translators.”