

Which Bible Translation(s) Should I Use?

July 30, 2023

The New King James Version was published in 1979 (New Testament) and 1982 (whole Bible). Then a minor revision was done in 1984. This translation was an updated edition of the King James Version. The translators basically took the KJV and put it into modern English. The NKJV is only slightly less literal than the KJV, but it's significantly more readable. Here's how they compare to each other:

- King James Version (KJV): 15 (12th grade)
- New King James Version (NKJV): 16 (10th grade)

Here are a few verses where the NKJV is significantly more readable than the KJV:

- “Thou, *even* thou, *art* to be feared: and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry?” (Psalm 76:7 KJV).

- “You, Yourself, *are* to be feared; And who may stand in Your presence When once You are angry?” (Psalm 76:7 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV is significantly more readable than the KJV:

- “Whoso is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing, and bewrayeth *it* not” (Proverbs 29:24 KJV).

- “Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life; He swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing” (Proverbs 29:24 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV is significantly more readable than the KJV:

- “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better. Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you” (Philippians 1:23–24 KJV).
- “For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you” (Philippians 1:23–24 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV updates some misleading language in the KJV:

- “Thou shalt not be affrighted at them: for the LORD thy God *is* among you, a mighty God and terrible” (Deuteronomy 7:21 KJV).
- “You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, *is* among you” (Deuteronomy 7:21 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV updates some misleading language in the KJV:

- “And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool” (James 2:3 KJV).
- “And you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, ‘You sit here in a good place,’ and say to the poor man, ‘You stand there,’ or, ‘Sit here at my footstool’” (James 2:3 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV updates some misleading language in the KJV:

- “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation” (1 Peter 1:15 KJV).
- “But as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct” (1 Peter 1:15 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV fixes some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it” (Matthew 26:27 KJV).
- “Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you’” (Matthew 26:27 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV fixes some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16 KJV).
- “The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV fixes some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:12 KJV).
- “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence” (1 Timothy 2:12 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV fixes some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13 KJV).
- “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13 NKJV).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV does not fix some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5–6 KJV).
- “In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths” (Proverbs 3:6 NKJV).
- “In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:6 NASB).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV does not fix some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *how* art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12 KJV).
- “How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! *How* you are cut down to the ground, You who weakened the nations!” (Isaiah 14:12 NKJV).
- “How you have fallen from heaven, You star of the morning, son of the dawn!” (Isaiah 14:12a NASB).

Here are a few verses where the NKJV does not fix some misinterpretations in the KJV:

- “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20b–21 KJV).
- “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:20b–21 NKJV).
- “For behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst” (Luke 17:21b NASB).

But the biggest problem with the NKJV is that it’s based on the same poor manuscript support as the KJV. The New Testament in the KJV is based on a small number of manuscripts that are dated between the 11th and 15th centuries. But many older copies of the New Testament have been discovered since the KJV was published. Yet the NKJV basically ignores this evidence.

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

- “And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do” (Acts 9:5–6 KJV).

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

- “And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ Then the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads.’ So he, trembling and astonished, said, ‘Lord, what do You want me to do?’ Then the Lord *said* to him, ‘Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do’” (Acts 9:5–6 NKJV).

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

- “And he said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And He *said*, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting, but get up and enter the city, and it will be told to you what you must do’” (Acts 9:5–6 NASB).

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

- “For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one” (1 John 5:7–8 KJV).

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

- “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one” (1 John 5:7–8 NKJV).

- “For there are three that testify: the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement” (1 John 5:7–8 NASB).

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

- “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:19 KJV).

- “And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:19 NKJV).

Here are some verses where the NKJV failed to update the KJV when it was based on poor manuscript support:

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

- “And if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book” (Revelation 22:19 NKJV).

So I cannot recommend the NKJV because it's based on poor manuscript support in the New Testament, just like the KJV.