

### New International Version

The New International Version (NIV) was a major effort to bring the Bible into contemporary English. It became the main Bible used within our church body in the late 1970's and early 1980's.

The first NIV New Testament translation was published in 1973.

The first NIV translation of the entire Bible was published in 1978.

Revisions from the first translations resulted in a version printed in 1984.

Here's a summary of the origins of the NIV from the preface to the 1984 version:

- ◆ The NIV had its beginnings in 1965 when a group of scholars met in Illinois.
- ◆ Responsibility for the new version was delegated to a self-governing body of 15 called the Committee on Bible Translation.
- ◆ The project was funded by the New York Bible Society (now the International Bible Society).
- ◆ Over 100 scholars worked to translate directly from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.
- ◆ The translation was intended to be international, so participants came from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. The participants also came from many denominations.
- ◆ The translation process included a number of editorial committees which checked and revised the translation of each Bible book before publication.

The Committee on Bible Translation had certain goals for the NIV (again, taken from the 1984 preface):

- ◆ The first goal was to have an accurate translation from the original languages. The preface states that *the translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They believe that it contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, that it shed light on our path in a dark world, and that it sets forth the way to our eternal well-being.*
- ◆ A second goal was to have clarity and literary quality. The committee wanted the translation to be suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use. Stylistic consultants and test readers were used to check the style and readability of the translation by various kinds of people (not just scholars). A conscious decision was made not to use archaic personal pronouns like "thou," "thee," and "thine" when referring to God.
- ◆ The committee also wanted to keep some continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English.
- ◆ Stating that *there is a sense in which the works of translation is never wholly finished*, the intention was that the translation would be open for revision in the future.

Let's compare some verses of the NIV (1984) with the King James Version (KJV).

◆ Genesis 3:1-3

*KJV: Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

*NIV: Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?" The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*

What observations do you make when you compare the two translations?

◆ Psalm 8:1-4

*KJV: O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider thy heavens, the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained: What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?*

*NIV: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise [footnote: strength] because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?*

What observations do you make when you compare the two?

◆ Romans 7:14-20

*KJV: For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do*

*not: but the evil which I would not do, that I do. Now if I do what I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*

*NIV: We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.*

What observations do you make between the two?

After the 1984 version, a thorough revision was completed in 2005. This was called Today's New International Version (TNIV).

Another updated NIV was published in 2011. Since the 2011 edition was published, the publisher, Zondervan, no longer publishes any previous editions of the NIV, nor does Zondervan grant any permissions to quote earlier editions in Bible quotations.

One of the major changes in the 2005 and 2011 translations was a shift in the way gender was presented. Let's look at some examples of this, comparing NIV 84 with NIV 11.

◆ Genesis 1:27,28

*1984: So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number..."*

*2011: So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number..."*

◆ 1 Timothy 2:3,4

*1984: This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ, Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men...*

*2011: This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.*

What comments do you have after you compare those sections?

◆ 1 Corinthians 15:1,2

1984: *Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you.*

2011: *Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you [and the rest is identical to 1984].*

What do you think of the change?

◆ 1 Corinthians 14:34,39

1984: *Women should remain silent in the churches...Therefore, my brothers, be eager to prophesy...*

2011: *Women should remain silent in the churches...Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy...*

What do you think of the change?

◆ Matthew 16:24

1984: *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."*

2011: *"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it."*

What do you think of the change?

Agree or disagree? A modern Bible translation should use gender-inclusive language.