

English Translation Comparisons of Key Passages

Below are 20 passages showing where translations may vary due to differing theological slants and/or ways of handling certain Greek grammatical nuances. The comments after each passage are both my interpretations as well as insights taken from Dan Wallace's Greek grammar book. Scoring is set in brackets beside each version and defined below. The highest possible score is 100.

5=right on; 4=grammar possible but missing a main point; 3=grammar or translation issues that water down exegesis; 2=needs improvement grammatically and exegetically; 1=bad translation leading to faulty theology

The final scores are presented at the end in the summary

[Matthew 6:13]

English Standard Version [3]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [3]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil .	13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil . [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'	13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil : For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.	13 And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one . For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.	13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one .'	13 καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν, ἀλλὰ ῥύσαι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ.

This ending of "The Lord's Prayer" shows how the simple presence or absence of the article can make a profound impact on how a passage is translated. The predominant role of the article is to identify something. The presence of it in *tou poneroi* indicates that it is identifying THE evil. The KJV started a tradition of leaving it as a vague "evil". By including the article, Jesus is saying we should pray for God to deliver us not from evil, which is unavoidable in the world because of our sin, but to be delivered from THE evil one...Satan (see also John 17:15: the true Lord's Prayer). The NKJV and NIV correctly relay the true meaning of the prayer.

*The doxology of the Lord's Prayer in the KJV, NKJV and bracketed in the NASB likely started as part of a liturgy in the early church no later than around the 4th or 5th centuries. It is not in the original gospel according to Matthew and should not be included in the English translation.

[Matthew 11:28]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [3]	King James Version [5]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [3]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
28 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden , and I will give you rest.	28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden , and I will give you rest.	28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden , and I will give you rest.	28 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden , and I will give you rest.	28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened , and I will give you rest.	28 Δεῦτε πρός με πάντες οἱ κοπιῶντες καὶ πεφορτισμένοι, καὶ ἐγὼ ἀναπαύσω ὑμᾶς.

There may be no more comforting verse in all the Bible. The Lord invites all who *kopiontes* and *pephortismenoi* and He will give them rest. The first word is an active participle meaning 'to labor'. The second word is a passive participle meaning 'to be laden'. First, all who actively labor and search for meaning and purpose in their lives via the religions and the philosophies of the world are burnt out. Likewise, others who have been beaten down by legalism and have had burdens of works and religious gimmicks place on them have become exceedingly weary. To these the Lord simply says, "Come to Me. I will free you of these endless struggles to find meaning and peace. I will give you rest." To get the full meaning of the Lord's invitation, the translation needs to correctly render both the active and passive participles (as ESV, KJV and NKJV).

[Luke 18:13]

English Standard Version [3]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [3]	The New International Version [3]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'	13 "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'	13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.	13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'	13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'	13 ὁ δὲ τελώνης μακρόθεν ἐστὼς οὐκ ἤθελεν οὐδὲ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐπάραι εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ἀλλ' ἔτυπτεν τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ λέγων· ὁ θεός, ἰλάσθητί μοι τῷ ἁμαρτωλῷ.

Here is another example of the importance of the article in *koine* Greek. If it is predominantly used to identify something, then its use in *to amartolo* is to identify THE sinner (NASB), not just any sinner. When looked at this way, the tax collector's prayer is even more intensified and personal. Also, the passive imperative verb *ilasthetimoi* is literally translated "be propitious" which refers to God's righteous anger towards our sin being soothed...somehow. As believers we know Christ was the propitiation for our sins (1John 4:10) when He died on the cross. This word carries more meaning theologically than does 'have mercy' (Gr. *eleeo*) in the tax collector's prayer. No translation above really captures the fullest intent of this sinner's gut-wrenching heart-changing prayer.

[John 4:14]

English Standard Version [4]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [4]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [4]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."	14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."	14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.	14 but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."	14 but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."	14 ὃς δ' ἂν πίη ἐκ τοῦ ὕδατος οὗ ἐγὼ δώσω αὐτῷ, οὐ μὴ διψήσει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕδωρ ὃ δώσω αὐτῷ γενήσεται ἐν αὐτῷ πηγὴ ὕδατος ἀλλομένου εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον.

The Samaritan woman standing by the well could not have understood why Jesus was offering her a drink without having anything to pull up the water. Jesus clarifies and says he is offering her "living water" that will cause her to never thirst again. But, He is using a double negative (*ou me*) which is typically translated "never." Unlike English where double negatives cancel each other out, in the Greek, double negatives add emphasis. What Jesus is really saying here can be paraphrased, "Whoever drinks of the water I will give him will *never, ever, by any means* thirst again." A single "never" in the English translation does not adequately convey the intensity of the passage.

[Romans 8:28]

English Standard Version [3]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [3]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.	28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.	28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.	28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.	28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.	28 Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι τοῖς ἀγαπῶσιν τὸν θεὸν πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς ἀγαθόν, τοῖς κατὰ πρόθεσιν κλητοῖς οὖσιν.

Not many verses are taken out of context more than Romans 8:28. Many people take this verse to mean that all things will work out for good in the end. In context, we see that there are two qualifiers for this promise. It pertains to 1.) those loving God, and 2.) those who are called according to His purpose. One item that is even more overlooked is, “who is doing the working?” Is it “all things” or “God?” While the plural *panta* (all things) could technically be the subject of the verb *sunergei* (he works together), it probably makes more sense for God to be the subject since *sunergei* is singular and in the 3rd person. In this reading, God takes a much more active role in the working together of all things for our good. The NIV seems to have gotten this across better than the rest. The NASB has God as the causal agent, but still has “all things” as the subject of *sunergei*.

[Romans 10:9]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [3]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [3]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.	9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord , and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;	9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus , and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.	9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.	9 That if you confess with your mouth, “ Jesus is Lord ,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.	9 ὅτι ἐὰν ὁμολογήσης ἐν τῷ στόματί σου κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ πιστεύσῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου ὅτι ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ἤγειρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν, σωθήσῃ·

There is an interesting construction in the original Greek in this familiar verse on salvation. The words *kurion Iesou* are an object-complement pair where Jesus (*Iesou*) is the object and Lord (*kurion*) is the complement. Since the complement precedes the object, it is possible that it is definite albeit without the article. The resulting confession would be “Jesus is [the] Lord.” In verse 13, Paul quotes Joel 2:32 where it says that whoever calls on the name of the LORD (Heb. *Yahweh*) will be saved. Thus in context, he states that if one should confess Jesus is the LORD (*Yahweh*), the same God of the Old Testament, they will be saved. The ESV and NIV seem to portray this accurately. The KJV and NKJV definitize THE Lord but fail to equate the two.

[Ephesians 2:8]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [4]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [4]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,	8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God;	8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:	8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,	8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—	8 Τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσωσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν, θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον·

Paul says here that “something” is not of ourselves. Is it “grace”, “faith”, or the act of salvation? To what does the pronoun *touto* refer? Because it is neuter, *touto* most likely does not refer to the feminine nouns “grace” or “faith.” The conceptual act of salvation is clearly not of our own doing according to this passage. Paul makes it clear that we cannot earn salvation in any way: it

is the free gift of God. The ESV most clearly relays this message while the other translations are a little vague with regards to our complete and utter dependance on God for our salvation.

[Ephesians 4:9]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [4]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
9 (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth?)	9 (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth?)	9 (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)	9 (Now this, "He ascended"—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth?)	9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions?)	9 τὸ δὲ ἀνέβη τί ἐστίν, εἰ μὴ ὅτι καὶ κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς;

The Apostles Creed states that Jesus descended into Hell. This is one passage that is commonly taken to support that argument. However, there is perhaps more support for the genitive noun *tes ges* (the Earth) being a genitive of apposition (the lowest parts, NAMELY, the earth) rather than a partitive genitive (the lowest parts OF the earth). If this is the true intent of Paul in this passage, he is not saying that Jesus descended into Hell upon His death, but rather He descended to the earth from His heavenly home at His incarnation. The ESV and NIV take this view in translation.

[Ephesians 5:18-21]

English Standard Version [3]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [3]	The New International Version [2]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit ,	18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit ,	18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit ;	18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit ,	18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit .	18 καὶ μὴ μεθύσκεσθε οἴνω, ἐν ᾧ ἐστὶν ἀσωτία, ἀλλὰ πληροῦσθε ἐν πνεύματι,
19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,	19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord;	19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;	19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,	19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord,	19 λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς [ἐν] ψαλμοῖς καὶ ὕμνοις καὶ ᾠδαῖς πνευματικαῖς, ᾄδοντες καὶ ψάλλοντες τῇ καρδίᾳ ὑμῶν τῷ κυρίῳ,
20 giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,	20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;	20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;	20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,	20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.	20 εὐχαριστοῦντες πάντοτε ὑπὲρ πάντων ἐν ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρί.
21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.	21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.	21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.	21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.	21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.	21 Ὑποτασσόμενοι ἀλλήλοις ἐν φόβῳ Χριστοῦ, *

Two issues to discuss in this passage. First, is the dative construct *en pneumatī* to be taken as "in", "with", or "by" the spirit and is the "spirit" ours or the Holy Spirit? There is much evidence that suggests this is a dative of means (by means of) and the spirit refers to the Holy Spirit. The word holy (*hagios*) is not present in the passage. Though its presences isn't necessary to refer to the Holy Spirit, in my opinion, it makes more sense in context to mean "be filled in

[our] spirit.” It is in direct contrast to a physical filling with wine that causes impairment to the senses that Paul urges us to be filled spiritually by giving us several practical examples.

This leads us to the second issue. The key word in the passage is “be filled.” There are five participles that follow (speaking, singing, making melody, giving thanks, and submitting). Each of these directly refer to the “be filled” in verse 18. For some reason, some modern translations use the passive participle *upotassomenoi* (lit. being submissive) to start the following passage on the conduct of husbands and wives. There is no reason for this as it properly fits as one of the five examples Paul uses to tell us how we can be filled in our spirits, in tune with God’s will, rather than filled in our bodies with wine that causes dissipation.

Grammatically a point is lost across the board for the translation “with” in vs. 18. Nothing is lost by referring to the Holy Spirit as this is grammatically possible. Another point is lost by translating the participle in vs. 21 in an active voice. The NIV is docked an additional point by ignoring the flow of Paul’s participles

[Philippians 4:20]

English Standard Version [4]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [4]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [4]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
20 To our God and Father be glory forever and ever . Amen.	20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever . Amen.	20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever . Amen.	20 Now to our God and Father be glory forever and ever . Amen.	20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever . Amen.	20 τῷ δὲ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ ἡμῶν ἡ δόξα εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων, ἀμήν.

Another wonderful Greek phrase is found here. Used several times in the New Testament, it is here worded *eis tous aionas ton aionon*. It is unfortunately commonly translated as “forever and ever.” In 21st Century English we have lost the true meaning of this phrase (i.e. “I will love you forever and ever” or “This meeting is lasting forever.”) While we say “forver” there is often an implied temporary-ness that can last either a few moments or until death. In either case, its not forever. In the Greek, it means forever. The word *aionos* literally means eternity or age (eon). By using it in the plural and repeating it twice, the true meaning is this...”To our God and Father be the glory into the eternities of eternities (or the eons of eons).” Our God’s glory is not bound by our definition of forever. It extends beyond time and our comprehension, and a proper translation should pick this up.

[Colossians 1:15]

English Standard Version [1]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [1]	King James Version [1]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation .	15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation .	15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature :	15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation .	15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation .	15 ὃς ἐστὶν εἰκὼν τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,

What’s at stake here is the supremacy and eternity of Christ. Is He the firstborn OF, or OVER, all creation? Grammatically the genitive is most often translated with an “of”, but the context of this passage requires the translation “over.” If Christ is the image of God through whom all things were created (v. 16), and if He existed before all things and holds all things (v.17), He cannot be part of Creation! It is surprising to see some respected translations take this view in their rendition. There is no doubt that Paul clearly gets across Christ’s deity and supremacy over all things created in this passage. Also, creation is clearly in view and the KJV “creature” is unjustified here.

[2 Thessalonians 2:1]

English Standard Version [4]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [5]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [4]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,	1 Now we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him,	1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,	1 Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you,	1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers,	1 Ἐρωτῶμεν δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἡμῶν ἐπισυναγωγῆς ἐπ' αὐτόν

What's so important here about the word "and?" Some have taken this as referring to the same event. In other words, at the Second Coming of Christ, we are all gathered together with Him rather than being gathered to Him beforehand (i.e. the rapture). This is the post-tribulational view. However, this is a unique construction that requires an interpretation consisting of two distinct events. No indication is given of the time between events, if any at all, but they are different nonetheless. The KJV does the best job of conveying this by adding the second "by" after the "and."

[1 Timothy 6:10]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [4]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils . It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.	10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil , and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.	10 For the love of money is the root of all evil : which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.	10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil , for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.	10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil . Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.	10 ρίζα γὰρ πάντων τῶν κακῶν ἐστὶν ἡ φιλαργυρία, ἧς τινες ὀρεγόμενοι ἀπεπλανήθησαν ἀπὸ τῆς πίστεως καὶ ἑαυτοὺς περιέπειραν ὀδύνας πολλὰς.

This is another often misunderstood verse. The traditional KJV rendering "THE root of all evil" is not entirely accurate. Is the love of money A, or THE, root all (KINDS) of evil(S)??? First, there is no article with *riza* (root), so it is probably not *THE* root. Second, because of the construction, it is also probably not *A* root either. The idea here may likely be that the love of money has the capacity to produce every kind of evils. This is by no means the only interpretation here, but it is probably not THE root of all evils. And evil is plural here and should be translated "evils."

[2 Timothy 3:16]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [5]	King James Version [5]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,	16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;	16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God , and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:	16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God , and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,	16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,	16 πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν, πρὸς ἐλεγμόν, πρὸς ἐπανάρθωσιν, πρὸς παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ,

Is "all Scripture inspired and profitable", or is "all inspired Scripture profitable?" There is an enormous difference, and both are being used today. Which is right? Context. Right after giving Timothy this reminder about Scripture's

importance, Paul solemnly urges him to “preach the word” (4:1-2). By leaving this “word” unqualified, Paul insists that all of the word (i.e. Scripture) must be preached, not just the inspired parts. Therefore, the only way to interpret this passage is to agree that ALL Scripture is inspired (lit. God-breathed.)

[Hebrews 1:2]

English Standard Version [3]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [5]	King James Version [3]	The New King James Version [3]	The New International Version [3]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son , whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.	2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son , whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.	2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son , whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;	2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son , whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;	2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son , whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.	2 ἐπ’ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν τούτων ἐλάλησεν ἡμῖν ἐν υἱῷ , ὃν ἔθηκεν κληρονόμον πάντων, δι’ οὗ καὶ ἐποίησεν τοὺς αἰῶνας·

Literally, this passage would read “spoken to us in son.” This is in contrast to the former times when God spoke to His people through prophets (v. 1). In these last days, He has spoken to us in son. “His” Son is implied here, but not mentioned. The point would be that He is equal to the Son and has chosen to communicate to the people in “Son” form. What a personal God we serve that He would step into His creation and live among us as He did in Jesus Christ.

[Hebrews 1:8]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [5]	King James Version [5]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
8 But of the Son he says, “Your throne, O God , is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom.	8 But of the Son He says, “Your throne, O God , is forever and ever, And the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.	8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God , is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.	8 But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God , is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.	8 But about the Son he says, “Your throne, O God , will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom.	8 πρὸς δὲ τὸν υἱόν· ὁ θρόνος σου ὁ θεός εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος, καὶ ἡ ῥάβδος τῆς εὐθύτητος ῥάβδος τῆς βασιλείας σου

There are two nominative nouns here, *thronos* (throne) and *theos* (God). The deity of the Son, Jesus Christ, is at stake as to how you position the word God. It is either a subject (God is Your throne), predicate nominative (Your throne is God), or a nominative in place of a direct address (O God). Because of the conjunctions used in vs. 7-8 (and...but...), the most likely use is the direct address, because of the distinction the author wants to make between the Son and the angels. In fact the nominative case is used every time but once when directly addressing God in the New Testament. The writer clearly equates the Son with the everlasting God.

[Hebrews 12:2]

English Standard Version [4]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [4]	King James Version [4]	The New King James Version [4]	The New International Version [4]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.	2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.	2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.	2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.	2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.	2 ἀφορῶντες εἰς τὸν τῆς πίστεως ἀρχηγὸν καὶ τελειωτὴν Ἰησοῦν, ὃς ἀντὶ τῆς προκειμένης αὐτῷ χαρᾶς ὑπέμεινεν σταυρὸν αἰσχύνης καταφρονήσας ἐν δεξιᾷ τε τοῦ θρόνου τοῦ θεοῦ κεκάθικεν.

The two issues here are word choice for *archegon kai teleiotes* (lit. founder and finisher), and the use of the preposition *anti*. First, these translation do an adequate job of conveying that Jesus is the beginner and finisher of their faith. More importantly, the preposition *anti* is used in places to suggest that Christ's death was "in the place of" ours. This is substitutionary atonement. It can also mean "because of" in certain places. So, Christ either died because of the joy He had while bringing sinners to Himself, or instead of the joy He had before He emptied Himself at the incarnation. Sadly, across the board, translators have used "for" which leaves the interpretation open.

[James 2:14]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [5]	King James Version [1]	The New King James Version [1]	The New International Version [5]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?	14 What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him?	14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?	14 What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?	14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him?	14 τί τὸ ὄφελος, ἀδελφοί μου, ἐὰν πίστιν λέγη τις ἔχειν ἔργα δὲ μὴ ἔχει; μὴ δύναται ἡ πίστις σῶσαι αὐτόν;

Remember that the predominant use of the article is to identify. The noun "faith" (*e pistis*) has the article. To identify which faith James is referring to, one only needs to go back a few words...the faith without works. So the KJV rendering "can faith save him?" is not only a faulty translation, it borders heresy. Modern translations have correctly rendered the passage by stressing it is a faith without works that is dead.

[1 Peter 5:6-7]

English Standard Version [5]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [5]	King James Version [5]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [2]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,	6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,	6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:	6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,	6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.	6 Ταπεινώθητε οὖν ὑπὸ τὴν κραταιὰν χεῖρα τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα ὑμᾶς ὑψώσῃ ἐν καιρῷ,
7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.	7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.	7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.	7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.	7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.	7 πᾶσαν τὴν μέριμναν ὑμῶν ἐπιρίψαντες ἐπ' αὐτόν, ὅτι αὐτῷ μέλει περὶ ὑμῶν.

As in Ephesians 5:18-21, participles usually don't stand alone. They refer back to something. Here, the participle *epiripsantes* refers back to Peter's instruction to "humble yourselves" in the preceding verse. Thus, casting all your cares on God is a way of humbling yourself. This is not a separate command and should not be taken out of context. While it is important to go to God with our anxieties and give them to Him, the main point is humility before God. The NIV, in its ways of breaking participles apart from their antecedents, does not convey the message accurately.

[Revelation 22:20]

English Standard Version [3]	New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update [5]	King James Version [5]	The New King James Version [5]	The New International Version [3]	Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 27th Edition
20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon ." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!	20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly ." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.	20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly . Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.	20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly ." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!	20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon ." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.	20 Λέγει ὁ μαρτυρῶν ταῦτα ναί, ἔρχομαι ταχύ . Ἄμην, ἔρχου κύριε Ἰησοῦ.

The adverb *tachu* can mean soon, but is best rendered quickly. In this context, then, the focus is on the immanency of Christ's return, and that it will happen "quickly" when it happens...as a thief in the night (1 Thess. 5:2), as lightening flashes across the sky (Matt. 24:27). Jesus, therefore was not giving any mention to the time, but the manner of His coming. The time is not for us to know (Matt. 24:36), but we should be prepared any moment for His return.

Summary:

Overall, the ESV and NASB were very good, although they both failed to deliver the intensity of the Greek in several passages. Usually one or both had adequate readings of the test passages. The NIV was surprisingly good overall, but where it was bad, it was really bad. The NKJV also is very good, but did not break away from old KJV traditions which are antiquated and in some cases corrupt.

I gave extra credit to the translations that use the Greek text that is best attested as giving the original reading (The United Bible Society's 4th edition). The ESV and NASB both use this text and get +5 points. The NIV uses an eclectic text and gets +2 points. The KJV and NKJV both use the Textus Receptus which has numerous later additions and therefore get no extra credit. The ESV, KJV and NIV get docked one point for not capitalizing personal pronouns relating to God.

Final scores:

NASB 85
ESV 84
NIV 81
NKJV 79
KJV 72