



QA: What Difference Is a Translation? by [John T Polk II](#)

All Scriptures and comments are based on the **New King James Version**, unless otherwise noted.

QUESTION: What is the difference between a translation, interpretation, or paraphrase of the Bible?

ANSWER: God inspired the very wording of the Scriptures:

For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were moved* by the Holy Spirit. (**2 Peter 1:16-21**)

1. Scripture did not originate amidst "**cunningly devised fables**," or myths, fables, traditional lore, or made-up stories. There is no fiction in the Scripture narrative! "Once upon a time" is never in actual Scripture!
2. "**Eyewitnesses of His majesty**" means there is no hand-me-down, or go-between person who would have made mistakes in reporting what the Apostles saw happen with Jesus Christ. That means **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John** were written by those who saw the events take place. The Holy Spirit surely revealed the facts as they actually happened.
3. The incident referred to was personally seen by Peter, James and John on the mount when Jesus was transfigured: **Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 9:28-36**. They saw, and heard, Jesus be distinguished from Moses and Elijah, and described as God had predicted through Moses in **Deuteronomy 18:15-19**, transitioning from the Old to the New Law.
4. "**And so we have the prophetic word confirmed**" means that what they saw established for good that what God had prophesied had come to pass.
5. They have accurately written what was seen and done in the life of Jesus Christ on earth, because they were "**moved by the Holy Spirit**." The Old Testament prophecy and the New Testament event were written in words guided by the Holy Spirit, Himself.

For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. (**1 Corinthians 2:11-13**)

True events have been truthfully recorded in human words which the Holy Spirit selected from the writers' individual vocabularies.

6. A "**translation**" will, as accurately as possible, bring the Scripture words into a different language, word-for-word, because God wrote the Scripture word-for-word. Because the original Scriptures were written in Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, the form and thought may need to have words supplied by the translator in the new language. A true "translation" will indicate these supplied words by italics, setting them apart from the actual wording of the manuscripts.
- (a) An "**interpretation**" interjects the thoughts of the so-called "translator" so that what is printed in the new language is nothing more than a "commentary," or "private interpretation." When that is sold as "Bible" it is not exactly what God has said, and therefore should not be relied upon for "the faith." READ THE PREFACE TO KNOW WHAT THE WRITER INTENDED TO DO!
- (b) A "**paraphrase**" is even worse, for the writer is regurgitating digested Scripture from his/ her/ their "private interpretation." ***It is sold as "Bible" under a false title.***

— jtp11, April 25, 2021