

Why I Like The NASB By Pastor Craig Ponder

In the summer of 2007, I began using the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB) in much of my preaching and teaching. Let me first assure you that my love of the KJV has not wavered! It remains on my desk even now and I read from it every day. When I quote verses from memory, it is always from the KJV. Those comforting words and phrases will always be near and dear to my heart.

Secondly, let me first assure the reader that this change was not made just for the sake of change. I had simply found myself attempting to make the old-world Shakespearean English of the KJV more understandable to our modern ear. I was “*translating on the fly*” more and more. I came to a point in my ministry where the in-depth teaching the Lord was leading me to do simply called for a more accurate translation.

The first question that we must deal with is this: “*Does the translation process impact the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of the true Word of God?*” The answer to that question is a resounding **NO!** The Bible itself teaches that all scripture is inspired or “*God-breathed*”. (2 Timothy 3:16)

When we speak of “*inspiration*” we are referring only to the process by which the original scripture writings were composed. There must never be any doubt that the Bible is truly God’s Word to us. God inspired human authors to record for us His complete message, supernaturally guiding the writing process. Through His Divine guidance, God ensured that the 66 books they produced were free of error and were exactly what He wanted us to have. (2 Peter 1:21).

What we must remember is that any act of translation is, at best, an interpretative process. When translating from one language to another (i.e., from English to Spanish) choices must always be made. “*Should we use the more exact word, even if the meaning of that word is unclear to the reader?*” “*Or do we strive for the corresponding thought, even though the more literal meaning may be lost?*”

Literal translation of the word and not the thought is the most exacting and demanding method of translation. To be completely accurate, this method must follow the word and sentence patterns of the original

authors in order to enable the reader to study and understand the Word of God. The translators of the NASB meticulously followed all the tried-and-true safeguards of biblical translations, and took over 10 years to complete the task. The NASB was produced with the conviction that the words of Scripture, as originally penned in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, were literally inspired by God. These alone are the eternal, inerrant, infallible Words of God.

The NASB was developed to make use of many recently discovered documents dating back to the first century. By consistently following the oldest and best manuscripts, it is widely recognized as *the most literal translation of the Bible in the English language*. The translators and consultants who contributed to the NASB were all conservative Bible scholars with doctorates in biblical languages and theology. As with the KJV, the NASB takes the underlying Hebrew and Greek words and translates them into the closest corresponding English words possible at the time. (*Did you know that the 1611 Authorized King James Version of the Bible is itself a revision of the Bishops Bible, first published in 1568?*)

While I have confidence in the NASB, I recognize that no translation is inspired by God, and none are perfect. Does this mean we cannot trust a translation? The answer to that question is also **NO!** Through careful study of Scripture, with the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we can properly understand, interpret, and apply Scripture. We should thank God for the faithful efforts of dedicated Christian translators. But we must always trust in the oversight and guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring about understanding of God’s great gift to us. The Holy Scriptures continue to speak with fresh power to each generation; providing the wisdom that leads to salvation so that men and women may serve Christ for the glory of God.

Please understand that God’s calling on my life to be a pastor and teacher drives me in my efforts to provide my listener with the best possible understanding of God’s Word to us. As long as the Lord gives me the breath and strength, that will always be my life’s mission, and that is the reason why I enjoy preaching and teaching from the NASB.