

It is often difficult for those who have not themselves done translation work to realize that no version can be absolutely accurate and reliable. This is because it is impossible to make an absolutely accurate and reliable translation of anything from one language to another. It is comparatively seldom that a particular word in one language has exactly the same meaning in another language. The precise meanings of expressions and verb forms, and particularly of prepositions, vary greatly from language to language. Almost every sentence in any language has various possibilities of interpretation. The possibilities will be very different in any translation from what they are in the original. The translators of the King James Version did a very careful and scholarly job. One can safely say that there has never been a better translation from one language to another than this translation of the Bible into the English language as it was spoken at that time. The greatest difficulty with the King James Version comes from the fact that in the past 300 years the English language has so changed at many points that a word will have a different meaning. Thus "science" in the King James Version means what we would mean by "philosophy" today, and "philosophy" in the KJV indicates what we would call "science" today. The word "let" was often used to mean "hinder," as when Paul said that he wanted to go to Rome, "but was let hitherto." Many words have developed less significant changes of meaning which can sometimes be confusing. New manuscripts can give us additional light on minor points here and there, but all the additional manuscripts have simply increased our certainty that on most of the vital matters the manuscripts that were available in the time of King James were generally quite accurate.

The Book of Isaiah as contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls, and in the King James Version, are for all practical purposes identical. Unfortunately, this particular scroll was a rather poor copy, and contains many minor mistakes. On all major matters it agrees with the Book of Isaiah as it has been handed down to us. I have been informed that in the RSV there were a few instances where renderings were changed in view of the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah, but that in later sessions of the committee it was decided to abandon most of them, since this particular scroll is so very similar to the manuscripts of Isaiah that we already possess.

In my opinion one of the great needs of our day is a translation that accurately presents the Word of God in the English language