

The Comprehensive New Testament: New Testament with complete textual variant mapping and references for the Dead Sea scrolls, Philo, Josephus, Nag Hammadi Library, Pseudepigrapha

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This new translation of the New Testament books of the Bible is in the words of the editors “the most accurate translation of the Nestle-Aland edition Greek New Testament.” It is designed to present a single-source reference to clergy and laymen who wish to study the original source text—the Greek manuscripts.

Each verse throughout the text has been translated directly from these Greek sources and any variation from that translation is noted at the bottom of the page. Most of the pages encompass about one-half translation and one-half notes. For example the translation of Matthew 5:5 is “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth.” The notes include references to the DRA (Douay-Rheims American Edition 1899 translation of the Vulgate) which places verse 5 before verse 4. The famed Love Chapter I Corinthians 13 states in verse 8 that “love never fails” with the notes referring to the Byzantine Translation used by the familiar King James Version which states “love never falls away.” An average of five to ten notes appear on each page.

The King James Version of the Bible first published in 1611 has served for more than three centuries as the nearly universal English translation of the Bible. It is called a formal-equivalent translation because it follows the original languages closely. However many theological scholars today deem it an inferior translation because of its original sources and because it was published prior to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. It is also difficult to read because of the archaic language of that time. Revisions of this translation in 1885 and again in 1982 (NKJV) has helped somewhat in this matter. Both the 1611 translation and the 1982 revision are included in the notes of *The Comprehensive New Testament*.

Seven sources are given for this translation including the Alexandrian Text which is the standard text for the Western Church and the Byzantine Text considered to be the standard text for the Eastern (Orthodox) Church. Linguistic notes are given for word or phrase sources from Aramaic Hebrew and Latin. Twenty-one other translations or revisions are noted in the footnotes to show in the editor’s words “the differences a Greek reader would see in Greek editions of the New Testament.”

Pages 439 — 742 include cross references specific to each book where one verse refers back to an earlier verse or event as in traditional Bibles. The editors claim that this Bible is written at a sixth grade reading level. While that may be a general guideline this is definitely not a text for the weak. This text will still require a considerable amount of effort on the part of the reader. It will however provide a one-source basic understanding of the Greek text and how other translations have dealt with the differences.

In the words of the editors from their preface in presenting another translation to an already voluminous field their effort has been to “translate the right words—and not words created by scribal mistakes or editorial changes.” This is

a worthwhile effort and should prove to be a meaningful reference.

JOYCE RICE (January 9, 2009)

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