



## Classic Orthodox Bible

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The English of the praying Orthodox Church, the English of the prayers and Liturgies, the English of the common Orthodox Christians and the hymn of Scripture itself, is the English of Thee's and Thou's, not the street, the TV news, or the blog. And even if they can't put a finger on it, there is something more that is beautiful about the older classic language. As one literature professor said, "The problem with the King James Version is the translators' shaky grasp of Hebrew. The problem with all modern versions is the translators' increasingly shaky grasp of English." And there's more to it than that.

The Classic Orthodox Bible has, as its foundation, Sir Lancelot Brenton's translation of the Greek Old Testament, the Septuagint. All other known translations that revised Sir Lancelot have revised his language to be newer and more modern; though this is not an important distinction, this text revised Sir Lancelot to be very slightly more archaic and read more authentically like the King James Version. There have been multiple changes made, though not all that many for a new Bible version. In any case the attempt was made to cut with the grain rather than against it, and to preserve and enhance a rendering that is the English of the praying Orthodox Church.

Changes that have been made have usually been meant to be with a light touch. One of few serious complaints about the King James Version is that it translates two words, "Gehenna" and "Hades", with one English word, "Hell", even though their meanings are different. "Hades" is the place of the dead and everyone goes there, including Christ. Lazarus in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Good Thief, are in Paradise when they are in Hades, and this is no contradiction. But the English Bible does not dare what the text does: one word, "Christos", applies both to the Son of God and all the faithful. In the English, this is muddle-headedly rendered "Christ" for the Son of God and an unrelated-looking "anointed one(s)" where no distinction exists in Greek. "Pharmakeia" is in the English Bible only rendered with reference to the occult; in this day and age when homeopathy is only the beginning of occult medicine engaged by Orthodox Christians, "pharmakeia" should usually be rendered as a reference to occult medicine. The Song of Songs is treated with some semblance of the respect due to one of the greatest poems in history: it also clarifies somewhat what exactly it is that is metaphorically identified with two hundred feet of delicately fragrant wood. And, among other changes, punctuation has been made with some intent of better assisting the ordinary reader much better than the partly unfamiliar punctuation of the King James Version. Headings also make the text easier to navigate.

A number of metaphors present themselves to the simple Christian trying to choose rightly from all the Bible versions available: there are murky waters, or a dizzying array, or a labyrinth. Whatever name is given to this confusing task, the Classic Orthodox Bible comes with a roadmap that comments not just itself, the Classic Orthodox Bible (COB), but also the Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible (EOB), English Standard Version (ESV), King James Version (KJV, also called the Authorized Version or AV), the Message, New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS), New International Version (NIV), New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), New King James Version (NKJV), New Living Translation (NLT), Orthodox Study Bible (OSB), and Revised Standard Version (RSV).

But the advice is simple.

If you only read version, read the Orthodox Study Bible.

But if you read more, as there is good reason, read the Classic Orthodox Bible.

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