

# The Truth About The ENGLISH SUBSTANDARD VERSION

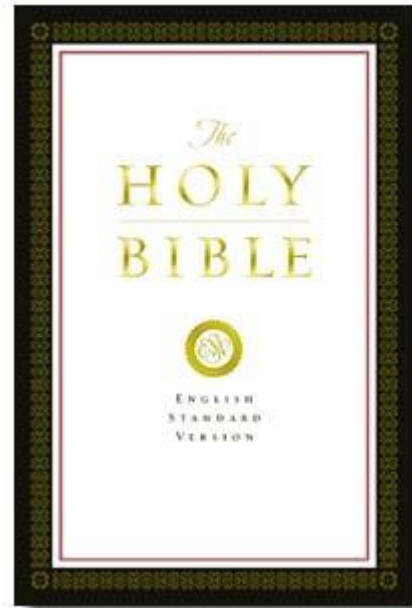
[Dr. Terry Watkins](#)

Dial-the-Truth Ministries

Every few years (for the last 40+), a new Bible suddenly appears that claims to “finally” translate the words of God clear and “finally” (after 200+ English versions) translate the words of God into our “everyday language” so we can “finally” understand the Word of God.

## ***And finally it's here!***

In 2001, Crossway Books gave birth to the English Revised Standard (ESV) into the crowded family of Bible versions. Much like the heralded arrival of the RSV, ASV, NIV, NASV, NRSV, CEV, NCV, and every other version for the last 100 years – Crossway proudly trumpets, we’ve “finally” done it! We’ve “finally” produced an accurate and easy to understand English Word of God! Hallelujah! “Finally” after all these years, and money, and Bibles, (and money), and translators, (and money), and accolades, (and money) – we “finally” have an accurate, easy to read, reliable, beautiful, faithful, \_\_\_\_\_ (just fill in the blank) Bible! Thank you Crossway publishers! You “finally” accomplished what the Holy Spirit could not do in 2,000 years!



As ridiculous as that sounds -- that is the belief of many of today's “Christian” leaders. Think I’m exaggerating? Then read the following glowing ESV endorsements from the ESV web site (<http://www.esv.org/about/endorsements>, bold emphasized added):

“The translation is outstanding. **The ESV achieves a new standard** in accurate Bible translations for our day.”

Dr. R. C. Sproul

“**The wait is over!... I am thrilled to finally possess a translation that excels** for serious study, devotional reading, Scripture memorization, and the preaching/teaching event. **The ESV truly is a Bible for all of life.**”

Yancey Arrington

*Teaching Pastor, Clear Creek Community Church*

“**The ESV is the text I have been waiting for my entire life. . .**”

Rev. Ranald Macaulay

*L'Abri Fellowship*

“**The ESV is what I've wanted for myself and my church for twenty-five years**—one Bible we can all read, study, memorize, and give to our children.”

Dr. Joseph F. (Skip) Ryan

*Pastor, Park Cities Presbyterian Church, Dallas, Texas*

“I am so impressed with the clarity, beauty, and power of the ESV that **I feel that I am reading the Bible again for the first time.** From now on the ESV will be my Bible of choice. I simply don't have the words to say how thankful I am for the ESV, its faithfulness to the original, and its beauty.”

Steve Brown

*Professor of Preaching, Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, Florida*

“The ESV is, I believe, **the most accurate English translation of the Bible ever completed**. I rely on it myself for classroom study, for my own devotional reading, and for leading family worship. **Those who choose the ESV can be sure they are reading the very Word of God.**”

Daniel R. Heimbach

*Professor of Christian Ethics, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“After twenty years of teaching God’s Word and changing translations **I have found at last, by God’s grace, a translation that is easy to read and immensely accurate.** . . .”

James MacDonald, *Senior Pastor, Harvest Bible Chapel, Rolling Meadows, Illinois*

“**At last a translation** that majors on accuracy, combined with a modern, fluent style. I am confident that in time the ESV will become the standard translation for the English-speaking world.”

The Rt. Rev. Wallace Benn, *Bishop of Lewes, England*

“**The ESV represents a new level of excellence** in Bible translations—combining unquestionable accuracy in translation with a beautiful style of expression. It is faithful to the text, easy to understand, and a pleasure to read. **This is a translation you can trust.**”

Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., *President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“I am delighted to express my great appreciation for the English Standard Version. As soon as I started using the ESV **I realized what a treasure it is.** . . .”

Dr. Kendell H. Easley, *Chairman, Department of New Testament and Greek, Mid-American Baptist Theological Seminary*

“An excellent translation **that can be trusted.**”

Dr. John F. Walvoord, *Chancellor, Dallas Theological Seminary*

“In translation philosophy and original-language fidelity, **for many settings the ESV surpasses all other English language translations.**”

Dr. Robert W. Yarbrough, *New Testament Chair, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School*

“For our churches and pulpits, as well as for our students, it is critically important to have a Bible translation that does not compromise orthodox theology or gender issues, and that is both faithful to the languages of the text and eminently readable. **The ESV uniquely fulfills that prescription.**”

Dr. Paige Patterson, *President, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“**I believe the ESV is the Bible of the future.** It is readable, accurate, and reverent.”

Dr. Thomas R. Schreiner, *Professor of New Testament, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary*

“I recommend the ESV as **the best literal translation for Bible study** in my hermeneutics class and in Bible study seminars. Congratulations on a job well done.”

Dr. Grant R. Osborne, *Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, Illinois)*

I have been using the ESV for my readings, study, and teaching since its original introduction in 2001. I find it to be a great balance between literalness and readability. Also, as one who has been reading the Bible and memorizing portions of it, for sixty years, **I appreciate the essential continuity with the older English translations such as the King James Version.**

Jerry Bridges, *Author, The Pursuit of Holiness*

These are just a few of the scores of lustrous endorsements found on the ESV web site. As we continue our examination of the ESV, the words of the Lord Jesus in Matthew 15:14 certainly rings loud and clear on the ESV cheerleaders, “Let them alone: **they be blind leaders of the blind.** And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” (Matthew 15:14)

During our investigation of the ESV several things will be revealed: a web of deceit sustains the modern day Bible publishing market; they all attack the King James Bible; they do not believe in any infallible English Word of God and truth is not their mission. And while this article deals with the ESV, the same indictment applies to virtually every new Bible. Over 300+ versions of the English Bible have been published since the King James Bible of 1611. And every new Bible’s mantra is the same: it’s more accurate; it’s easier to understand and it updates the King James Bible. And every new Bible finds

a few thousand (or million) gullible Christians blindly seeking for some miraculous illumination of the scriptures. As Brother Lester Roloff preached many times, "We don't need to rewrite the Bible, we need to re-read it."

## THE READIBILITY LIE. . .

Before we even begin our examination of the ESV let us remove the chief justification of every new Bible version published.

Every new Bible that hits the market attacks the King James Bible with the flat-out lie that the KJB is too hard to understand. They all claim that the King James Bible is too archaic. You can't understand the Elizabethan language. It's just too difficult to understand. This is the number one reason people lay down their King James Bible. They've been lead to believe they can not understand the King James Bible. The Preface of the ESV naturally repeats the "easier to read, clearer" promise:

**"Archaic language has been brought to current usage and significant corrections** have been made in the translation of key texts. . . .

In punctuating, paragraphing, dividing long sentences, and rendering connectives, the ESV follows the path that seems to make the ongoing flow of **thought clearest in English.**"

(Preface, English Standard Version)

## The Facts. . .

We "scientifically and grammatically" compared the ESV to the archaic, hard-to-understand King James Bible.

**Note: To prove and validate our results. Anyone with a PC, a Bible Program, and WordPerfect can easily (in less than 30 minutes) duplicate the following tests.**

Utilizing Quickverse Bible software, we copied the complete New Testament text of the King James Bible and the ESV into text files. With no modifications, no editing, but exactly as they came from Quickverse, we opened the KJB and the ESV New Testament text files in Corel Wordperfect. We then simply performed the Grammar checking function within WordPerfect.

**Note:** The WordPerfect Grammar checking function uses the authoritative and industry-standard Flesch-Kincaid readability scale formulas. Rudolf Flesch is the pioneer of Readability studies and author of several readability books, including the best-selling "Why Johnny Can't Read". Without question, Dr. Flesch is the recognized authority in this discipline.

And what was the result? The King James Bible literally "blew the doors off" the ESV! **The following verifiable scientific results do not lie.**

DESCRIPTION	KJB	ESV
Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level (Lower Easier to Read)	4.32	8.22
Sentence Complexity (Lower Easier to Read)	29	61
Vocabulary Complexity (Lower Easier to Read)	2	10
Short Sentences (Higher Easier to Read)	10342	3441
Simple Sentences (Higher Easier to Read)	5728	2301
Big Words (Lower Easier to Read)	7020	13478
Average Words per Sentence (Lower Easier to Read)	8.78	18.82

**As you can see from our easy to verify results, the readability statistics of the much aligned "hard-to-understand" King James Bible clearly knocks the ESV out of the park!**

*The Bible for Today* published an interesting and revealing book titled, *The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version*, by D.A. Waite, Jr. Using computer readability software (Grammatik 4.0, Grammatik 5.0, Word for Windows) Mr. Waite, spent hundreds of hours, lasting over three years, analyzing every word in the King James Bible, the American Standard Version (ASV), the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the New American Standard Version (NASV), the New International Version (NIV), the New King James Version (NKJV) and the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version is an exhaustive and serious study. It contains very detailed tables, charts, documentation, analysis of every conceivable readability tests known. The King James Bible outscored the new versions in virtually every test.

Some of Mr. Waite's analysis:

"According to the F-K [Flesch-Kincaid] formula 74.3% of the books [in the KJV] are on or below the sixth grade level, and 94% are on or below the seventh grade level! . . . **And the FRE [Flesch Reading Ease] rated 97% of the KJV books as Fairly Easy or Easy! These were all first place statistics!**"

(D.A. Waite Jr, *The Comparative Readability of the Authorized Version*, p. 80)

Mr. Waite summarizes his extensive analysis:

**"If any of these seven versions is authorized to boast about its success in these rigorous readability contests, it is the Authorized Version. [KJV]. If any has the right to flaunt the crown of victory, it is the KING James Bible."**

(Ibid, p. 80)

Dr. Rudolf Flesch's book, *The Art of Plain Talk*, he makes the following noteworthy statement about the King James Bible:

"The best example of very easy prose (about 20 affixes per 100 words) is the King James Version of the Bible: . . ."

(Rudolf Flesch, *The Art of Plain Talk*, p. 43)

Several times in his book, Dr. Flesch praises the King James Bible for its ease of reading. And may I remind you, this is from the leading authority on the subject.

Now that we have disposed of the "easier to read" propaganda, let us continue. . .

Due to the length and the depth of the examination of the ESV, we have separated our analysis into two sections. I would encourage my readers to review both sections.

The first section, "**The Foundation of the ESV**", reveals the distorted and deceitful manuscript foundation of the ESV. This section may appear too technical for many readers, but even a limited comprehension will reveal the corrupt foundation of the new versions. This section answers "why" the new versions attack the Lord Jesus Christ, hell, salvation and scores of other key Bible doctrines.

The second section, "**The Fruit of the ESV**", examines the distorted text and verses within the ESV. We compare hundreds of troubling verses in the ESV with the King James Bible. You'll witness blatant attacks on the Lord Jesus Christ, salvation, hell, the word of God and deliberate new-age-neutral-gender distortions.

## [The Foundation of the ESV](#)

## [The Fruit of the ESV](#)