

1. Why So Many English Bible Versions and Which Version to Use?

2. Why So Many Versions?

☞ Several basic influences which have given birth to a multitude of translations.

1. Accessibility of the Bible in the Reader's language
2. Original text type
3. Translation philosophy
4. Translator's bias

3. From God to Us

☞ There are four links in the chain from God to us:

✧ Inspiration

- God gave the message to the prophets and apostles who received and recorded it.

✧ Canonization

- The recognition and collection of the prophetic writings.

✧ Transmission

- The passage from the time of writing to our present time.

✧ Translation

- Making the message known in the receiver's language.

4. Inspiration

☞ The biblical definition of inspiration is *theopneustos*, which is literally "God-breathed", or translated as "inspired by God".

✧ The term is found in 2 Timothy 3:16.

✧ The term does not imply a form of divine dictation. (Although parts of the Old Testament were dictated.)

✧ It does not imply the suspension of the normal cognitive faculties of the human authors.

✧ It does not imply poetic inspiration.

5. Canonization

☞ Canonization refers to men recognizing the writings that were inspired by God.

☞ A book is not inspired because men made it canonical; it is canonical because God inspired it.

☞ The books of Scripture were not made canonical by act of any council, but the council gave its sanction to the results of long and careful investigations as to which books were really of divine authority and expressed the universally-accepted decisions of the church.

6. Apocrypha

☞ Sometimes called the Old Testament Apocrypha or Deuterocanonical books.

☞ The collection of Jewish writings that were included in the Septuagint, transmitted by the early church, but ultimately excluded from the Protestant canon of Scripture.

☞ The Roman Catholic church canonized them at Trent (1546).

☞ Apocrypha is also found in the KJV, RSV and NRSV.

☞ In RSV and NRSV, there are additional apocrypha texts that are recognised by the Eastern Orthodox churches but not the Roman Catholic church.

7. Accessibility of the Bible

☞ The Bible is our ultimate authority, not tradition or personalities or experience.

☞ All believers are part of the priesthood, which means, among other things, that each Christian has the privilege and the responsibility to know God and his revealed will in the Scriptures.

☞ Therefore, it follows that every Christian needs to have access to the Scriptures in his or her own language.

9. Changing English Usage

☞ There are hundreds of archaisms or antiquated expressions in the KJV. In fact, many words were already archaic when the KJV came out.

☞ What do the following mean?

✧ Ambassage (Luke 14:32), Amerce (Deuteronomy 22:19), Mote (Matthew 7:3), Habergeons (2 Chronicles 26:7).

✧ "Shall they not rise up suddenly that shall bite thee, and awake that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booties unto them?" (Habakkuk 2:6-7).

- Booties = Baby shoes?

10. Changing English Usage

- ☞ However, over time, languages develop and change, including the English language.
- ☞ Bible translations must be revised from time to time to keep up with these changes.
- ☞ Also there is a need to cater for different reading levels.
- ☞ Some translations have opted to keep certain traditional Christian terminology (i.e. theological jargon), while others have chosen to reword them.
 - ☞ Example,
 - covenant: agreement, promise, arrangement, pledge, treaty
 - propitiation/expiation: payment for sins

11. Gender-neutral language

- ☞ In order to be more sensitive to modern readers, there has been a change in the English language that favours the use of gender-neutral or gender-inclusive language.
- ☞ Hence, there are now attempts to avoid the use of gender-related words in new English translations.
- ☞ The current debate is partly over the use of the generic "he" and the singular "they".
 - ☞ Example: "No one brought his book today" and "No one brought their book today."

12. Today's NIV (TNIV)

- ☞ Luke 17:3
- ☞ NIV: If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.
- ☞ TNIV: If any brother or sister sins against you, rebuke the offender; and if they repent, forgive them.
- ☞ Hebrews 2:6
- ☞ NIV: What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?
- ☞ TNIV: What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?
- ☞ Hebrews 12:7
- ☞ NIV: Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father?
- ☞ TNIV: Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their parents?

13. Where have all the verses gone?

- ☞ Compared to the KJV, modern translations seem to have cut out many of the most precious lines of Scripture.
 - ☞ They end Mark's gospel at Mark 16:8 instead of 16:20.
 - ☞ They omit the reference of the angel of the Lord stirring the waters at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:4).
 - ☞ They excise the story of the woman caught in adultery in John 7:53-8:11.
 - ☞ Reason: Because of differences in the underlying original language text.

14. Original language texts

- ☞ No originals of the books of the Bible are known to exist today.
- ☞ But "manuscripts" (mss), i.e. very old handwritten copies of the original books, are available in part or in whole.
- ☞ Moreover, both Old and New Testament books were translated into other languages of the ancient Near East and copies of these early translations, called "versions" (vss), are also available.

15. Byzantine and Alexandrian

- ☞ There are two main schools of Greek text types of the New Testament.
- ☞ The first text type is based on the Byzantine textual tradition.
 - ☞ Out of this came the Textus Receptus (which is the basic Greek text that is used by both KJV and NKJV) and the Majority Text.
- ☞ The other text type is the Alexandrian text-type, which the Critical Text (aka Westcott-Hort) is based.
 - ☞ For the most part, the Westcott-Hort text was a *shorter* New Testament. There are various theories as to why.
 - ☞ The Critical Text is currently the favoured translation text type of modern Bibles. (for better or worse)

16. Byzantine and Alexandrian

- ☞ Some think that none of these text-types are necessarily inferior to each other.
- ☞ The differences arise because of the way the underlying manuscripts are weighted in terms of age and authenticity.
- ☞ They may not affect the overall integrity of a given New Testament translation.
 - ✦ The differences should not affect any major doctrine. The two textual traditions are in substantial agreement (about 85% are the same).
- ☞ If you are interested to know the differences between the text-types, NKJV has conveniently footnoted these verse differences.

18. Translation Philosophy

- ☞ Formal equivalence
 - ✦ Word-for-word
 - ✦ Essentially Literal (literal being a strict use of this word*)
- ☞ Dynamic equivalence
 - ✦ Thought-for-thought
- ☞ Paraphrase
 - ✦ Thought-for-thought
 - ✦ Could be considered as an extreme form of dynamic equivalence

19. Formal Equivalence

- ☞ Formal equivalence seeks to preserve as much of the information in the text, and this includes grammatical forms, word orders and sentence structures.
- ☞ However no formal equivalence can be a perfect word-for-word translation (that would make it an interlinear and not a translation) as the translator has to ensure that the English text is readable and understood.
- ☞ A formal equivalence translation allows the reader interpret for himself. But too often, the average reader does not have the background or the tools to interpret accurately. The net result is that he can badly misunderstand the text.

20. Formal Equivalence - Gal 5:17

- ☞ King James Version
 - ✦ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.
- ☞ New King James Version
 - ✦ For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.
- ☞ New American Standard Bible (1995 Update)
 - ✦ For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.
- ☞ English Standard Version
 - ✦ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

21. Dynamic Equivalence

- ☞ Dynamic equivalence, where the translator attempts to express the idea or meaning of the text and author by translating on a "thought-for-thought" principle.
- ☞ It is not so concerned about the grammatical form of the original language as it is of the meaning of the original.
- ☞ Therefore it is more interpretative but easier to understand.
- ☞ Relies upon the translators' interpretation which may not always be right.

22. Dynamic Equivalence - Gal 5:17

- ☞ New International Version
 - ✦ For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.
- ☞ Good News Bible (aka Today's English Version)

☞For what our human nature wants is opposed to what the Spirit wants, and what the Spirit wants is opposed to what our human nature wants. These two are enemies, and this means that you cannot do what you want to do.

23. Paraphrase

- ☞The paraphrase is the most liberal translation philosophy.
- ☞Often translates from one English version to another, with little or no attention to the original Greek or Hebrew.
- ☞Tends to use contemporary English idioms to make the text more reader-friendly and specific to the readers' culture.
- ☞More like an interpretation or commentary of the Scripture rather than a translation.

24. Paraphrase - Gal 5:17

- ☞The Living Bible (Kenneth Taylor)
 - ☞For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things that the Holy Spirit tells us to do; and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has his way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us, and our wishes are never free from their pressures.
- ☞New Living Translation
 - ☞The old sinful nature loves to do evil, which is just opposite from what the Holy Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are opposite from what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, and your choices are never free from this conflict.
- ☞The Message (Eugene Peterson)
 - ☞For there is a root of sinful self-interest in us that is at odds with a free spirit, just as the free spirit is incompatible with selfishness. These two ways of life are antithetical, so that you cannot live at times one way and at times another way according to how you feel on any given day.

25. Paraphrase - 1 Cor 16:20

- ☞[New International Version]
 - ☞[All the brothers here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.]
- ☞The Living Bible (Kenneth Taylor)
 - ☞All the friends here have asked me to say hello to you for them. And give each other a loving handshake when you meet.
- ☞The Message (Eugene Peterson)
 - ☞All the friends here say hello. Pass the greetings around with holy embraces!
- ☞New Living Translation
 - ☞All the brothers and sisters here have asked me to greet you for them. Greet each other in Christian love.

26. Comparing Bible Translations

27. Translators' Bias

- ☞Bible translations are affected by the theological background of the translators whether they are evangelicals, liberals, Roman Catholics or even Messianic Jews.
- ☞Ideological and theological biases show up more often in translations and paraphrases done by individuals.
- ☞Furthermore, some versions do not translate or interpret faithfully but have distorted and perverted the Word of God.

28. New World Translation

- ☞New World Translation is published by Jehovah's Witnesses
- ☞Genesis 1:2
 - ☞Now the earth proved to be formless and waste and there was darkness upon the surface of the watery deep; and God' active force was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters.
- ☞John 1:1
 - ☞In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.
- ☞Galatians 6:14
 - ☞Never may it occur that I should boast, except in the torture stake of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom the world has been impaled to me and I to the world.

29. The ONE Translation

☞Matthew 4:1-11

✪Jesus felt he needed to spend some time in the desert to be clear in his mind which direction his life should take. He went without food for about six weeks. By then he was near to starvation. The thought came to him, "If I am God's Chosen One, all I need to do is to order these stones to become bread." Then he remembered some words from the old books, "People cannot live just on bread. They need God's words as well."

☞1 Corinthians 7:1-2

✪Some of you think the best way to cope with sex is for men and women to keep right away from each other. That is more likely to lead to sexual offences. My advice is for everyone to have a regular partner.

31. Which Version To Use?

☞Get good **translations** of the Bible.

✪Modern English.

✪Either formal or dynamic equivalence.

✪Avoid paraphrases as your primary bible.

✪Avoid sectarian translations or those done by an individual as your primary bible.

☞Every Christian who is serious about studying the Bible own at least two translations in modern English.

✪At least, one formal equivalence translation.

32. Different Features in Bibles

☞Red Letter—Words of Christ are printed in red.

☞Wide Margin—To facilitate note-taking.

☞Large Print.

☞Cross References—Links of various specific Bible words and passages.

☞Study Notes—Comments on verses/passages in order to interpret or apply its meaning.

☞Concordance—Locates where specific words, phrases, or ideas occur in the Bible.

☞Maps—Visual aids that show geographical areas of events in the Bible.

33. Tools for Bible Study

☞Atlas/Mapbook—Shows geographical areas of events in the Bible.

☞Dictionary/Encyclopaedia—Defines and explains the Bible's terms, teachings, people, and places.

☞Concordance/Topical Index—Locates where specific words, phrases, or ideas occur in the Bible.

☞Manners & Customs—Describes life in Biblical times.

☞Lexicon—Gives you the definitions of Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek words.

☞Grammar—To help you understand the Hebrew/Aramaic/Greek Language.

34. Tools for Bible Study

☞Handbook/Survey—All-in-one resource that introduces and overviews Bible books.

☞Commentary—Comments on verses/passages in order to interpret or apply its meaning.

☞Word Studies—Explains what the Hebrew/Greek means within the context of the verse(s).

☞Study Guide—Guides personal or group study.

☞Interlinear—Original Hebrew or Greek texts with English word-by-word translations.

36. Bible Software

☞A **bible software programme** is useful to compare various translations and the original language texts.

☞A comprehensive software usually includes multiple resources for bible study.

☞Several websites on the Internet also make different translations available.

✪BibleGateway.com

✪StudyLight.org

✪eSword!

37. Read your Bible

☞2 Timothy 3:16-17

✪All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.