

The background features abstract green geometric shapes. On the left, a tall, narrow green triangle points downwards. On the right, a larger, more complex shape composed of several overlapping green triangles of varying shades is positioned. The main title is centered between these two shapes.

Choosing Bible Versions

“A way to improve your Bible reading”

Living Room Bible Class

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INTRODUCTION to Slide 1 to 9

Slide 1

- 1) When you sit down and open your Bible, what is the goal you have in mind?
 - a) Just to read for pleasure
 - b) To study for a specific purpose
 - c) To prepare for an upcoming class or other study
 - d) To learn more about how God wants you to live
 - e) To answer a specific question
 - f) To learn about Jesus
- 2) All these reasons are good reasons.
- 3) Regardless of your reason, to reach your goal, you need to be able to understand the passages you are reading.
- 4) Obviously, the best way would be to grab the original letter that Paul wrote, sit down and read it knowing and understanding every word that he wrote.
 - a) Also knowing that every word that you see is exactly what he intended.
 - b) Of course, to do that you would find a couple of pretty sizeable problems.
 - i) First, we do not have that original letter.
 - ii) Even if we had the letter, you would need to learn Biblical or koine Greek in a manner that would assure you knew exactly what Paul meant by every word he wrote.
 - iii) Finally, you would have to learn how to read Greek written in a way that is much different than what you learned in first year Greek in college.
 - c) All of this of course is rather discouraging!
- 5) OR – perhaps you could do something that would be almost as good.
 - a) You could take advantage of the knowledge of many, many scholars who have dedicated their lives to doing this work for us.
- 6) What we are going to discuss today is one reasonably easy way to improve your understanding of what you are reading by **doing just that**.
 - a) We are going to cover a lot of stuff so in some cases it will be with a really broad brush.
 - b) Not to worry! All the slides, notes, and some extra material will be available on the Biblical Matters website so you can review it at your leisure.

Slide 2 – What we are going to cover ...

- 1) **Quick Definition of Terms**
- 2) **Path to Today's Modern Translations**
 - a) **Description of Extant Manuscripts**
 - b) **Manuscripts → Critical Edition → Translation**
 - c) **The Different Path for the KJV / NKJV**
- 3) **English Translations Overview**
- 4) **Types of translations**

Slide 3 – What we are going to cover (2) ...

- a) **How they are defined**
- b) **What their goals are**
- 5) **List 12 Most Popular Translations**
- 6) **Picking Your Versions**
 - a) **Why More than one Favorite.**
 - b) **Where to Look**
 - c) **What to Look at and Consider**
 - d) **You do NOT Have to Buy!**
 - e) **Software to accomplish this.**

Slide 4 – Some Quick Definitions of terms ...

1) ***MANUSCRIPTS***

- a) **Manuscripts**
 - i) **Copies of biblical texts** (papyrus/parchment)
 - (1) These include Greek New Testament manuscripts
 - (a) (e.g., Codex Sinaiticus, Codex Vaticanus)
 - (2) Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts
 - (a) (e.g., Leningrad Codex, Dead Sea Scrolls)
 - (3) Other ancient copies.
 - ii) A word about codices vs. Scrolls
 - (1) A codex is the earliest form of a book.
 - (2) Most New Testament extant manuscripts are in codex form – not scrolls.
 - (3) P46 – oldest
 - (a) early/mid 2nd century
 - (b) Paul's letters minus the pastorals 2 Thes and Philemon
- b) **Ancient Translations**
 - i) **“Other” language translations**
 - (1) These include Latin Vulgate, Syriac Peshitta, Coptic versions, Armenian, Ethiopic, and others
 - (2) They provide evidence for how the text was read in different regions and eras.
 - (3) Another value they have is that they are based on early manuscripts.
- c) **Internal Evidence**
 - i) **Content and context of the text itself**
- d) **External Evidence**
 - i) **Data outside the text itself** enhancing understanding

Slide 5 – Some Quick Definitions of terms (cont.) ...

ii) **Church Fathers' Writings**

(1) **Quotations, commentary, and paraphrases**

- (a) Used to confirm or illuminate textual readings known at the time.

iii) **Archaeological Discoveries**

(1) **Oxyrhynchus Egypt – ancient garbage dump**

- (a) Over 500,000 papyrus fragments are still to be transcribed, deciphered and catalogued
- (b) Over 5000 have been collated and transcribed.
- (c) Only 1 to 2% of the total have been published.

(2) **Oxyrhynchus New Testament papyri**

- (a) 52 manuscript fragments
- (b) Only 32 have been published.

- (3) From other sources there may be as many as 95 others unpublished.

iv) **Non-biblical inscriptions and artifacts**

(1) **Ancient synagogue inscriptions**

- (a) Give insight into how biblical texts or related phrases were used or referenced outside the canonical tradition.
- (b) Some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Ketef Hinnom silver scrolls

v) **Other Ancient Texts and Histories**

(1) **Refs to biblical events, people, or ideas**

- (a) Some examples are writings by Josephus, Tacitus, Thallus.
- (b) These can corroborate or supplement the biblical text from outside the religious tradition.

vi) *Other* – Inscriptions, Dead Sea Scrolls, etc.

vii) *Genizah Collections* – Repositories like the Cairo Genizah have yielded thousands of biblical and related manuscripts in Hebrew, Aramaic, Judeo-Arabic, and other languages, offering comparative external witness to the biblical text.

viii) These external sources, evaluated by age, geographic spread, manuscript families and reliability

ix) They contribute greatly to scholarly decisions in textual criticism alongside internal evidence from the text's content and style.

Slide 6 – Some Quick Definitions of terms (cont.) ...

1) **Biblical Textual Criticism**

- a) **Scholarly study of differences in biblical manuscripts to reconstruct the nearest wording of the original texts.**
- b) The academic discipline that examines and compares biblical manuscripts to determine, as closely as possible, what the original text was.

2) **Not unique to Biblical world.**

- a) Textual Criticism is used across all literary works of ancient origins.

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3) NT Textual Criticism VAST number of Ms.

- a) New Testament Biblical Textual Criticism does have more manuscripts to work with than any other form of ancient literature.
- b) Therefore, it perhaps has more refined rules and abilities than perhaps other forms of literature.
 - i) We will look at the true picture of that in a moment.

4) NT / OT Textual Criticism differ.

- a) Old Testament Textual Criticism differs greatly from New Testament Biblical Criticism.
 - i) This is due in part to the methods of transmission
 - (1) How we got from the pens of the writers to what we have in our hands
 - ii) Also, the number of manuscripts that are available – more NT than OT

Slide 7 – Some Quick Definitions of terms (cont.) ...

1) Critical Edition

- a) **Original language version of a biblical text produced by Textual Criticism.**
- b) It is a carefully edited scholarly version of a biblical text in the source language.
- c) Critical Editions are what translators and translation committees use to produce our translations.
- d) **Apparatus – explanation of variants**
 - i) Critical Editions are always accompanied by notes showing important variants and editorial choices called an apparatus.
 - ii) Variants are defined as any differences between the content of manuscripts.
- e) **New Testament (Greek):**
 - i) **NA28 – Nestle Aland 28th Edition**
 - ii) **UBS5 – United Bible Society 5th Edition**
 - (1) Greek text is the same between the two (NA28 and UBS5).
 - (a) The difference is in the detail of the apparatus supplied
 - (b) UBS5 has a somewhat simpler apparatus and some punctuation differences.
- f) **Old Testament (Hebrew):**
 - i) **BHS – Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia**
 - ii) **BHQ – Biblia Hebraica Quinta**
 - iii) **HBCE – Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition**
 - iv) **HUBP – Hebrew University Bible Project**

This finishes the slides on terms, but we will be learning more as we go through the rest of the presentation.

Slide 8 – Biblical Manuscript Breakdown

- 1) Greek: Between 5,800 and 6,000.

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- 2) Latin: About 10,000.
- 3) Translations: 9,000 to 18,000
- 4) **Total: 23,000 to 25,000**

Slide 9 – Comparison, Early Literature to New Testament Manuscripts

- 1) This is a **Comparison, Early Literature to New Testament Manuscripts**.
- 2) The far righthand column is Number of Manuscripts we have for each writing
- 3) Pay particular attention to the ones that are marked history and the Annals of Rome.
- 4) Of course, the comparative totals are astounding!

INTRODUCTION to Slide 10 and 12

- a) O.k. we are going to take a quick look at the Path to Today's Translation.
 - i) From the manuscripts we have to the version you have in your hands.
- b) Again, up front, this is going to be a very broad-brush treatment.

Slide 10 – Path to Today's Modern Translations

- 1) Primary inputs to the process are our manuscripts.
 - a) **NT Ms. (~24000) 5800 in Greek**
 - i) 2nd to 15th centuries
 - ii) These include many early other language translations
 - (1) Valuable because they have as their source documents, early Greek and Hebrew texts.
 - b) **External Evidence**
 - i) Patristic Citations (Church Father's Writings)
 - ii) Non-Biblical Inscriptions and Artifacts
 - iii) Non-Biblical Ancient Texts and Historical References
 - iv) Church Fathers (see Appendix 6)
- 2) **Textual Critics OT / NT**
 - a) Old Testament and New Testament Textual Criticism are very much different.
 - b) Done by different groups of scholars with different skill sets.
- 3) **Principles of Textual Criticism**
 - i) Again, Textual Criticism is the academic discipline that examines and compares biblical manuscripts to determine, as closely as possible, what the original text was.
 - ii) Biblical Textual Criticism has been around since the 2nd century.
 - (1) Greek scholars like Zenodotus, Aristarchus, and Origen (3rd–2nd centuries BCE) compared Homeric manuscripts and marked textual differences — this is early classical textual criticism.
 - iii) Methods have been improved and are now making giant leaps ahead.

Choosing Bible Versions

- (1) Computer methods – CBGM (**Computer Based Generational Method**) / ECM (**Editio Critica Maior**) /
- (2) One completely computer-generated Critical text (not very well received at this point)
- iv) (**very simplistic**)
 - (1) Earlier is usually better.
 - (2) Broad distribution is stronger.
 - (3) Alexandrian text type often favored.
 - (a) Text types are not as important as they once were.
 - (4) Harder reading more likely original.
 - (5) Shorter reading often original.
 - (6) Fits original author's style and theology.
 - (7) Many more principles not outlined here....

Slide 11 – Path to Today's Modern Translations (2)

4) **Critical Editions** – Modern Critical Editions

a) **NEW TESTAMENT**

i) **Nestle Aland (NA28)**

ii) **United Bible Society (UBS 5)**

- (1) Both have same Greek Content

iii) Other Major and Current:

- (1) Editio Critica Maior (ECM)
- (2) Computer Based Genealogical Method

iv) Other (not often used)

- (1) Statistical Restoration Greek New Testament (SRGNT)
- (2) SBL Greek New Testament (SBLGNT)
- (3) Tyndale House Greek New Testament (THGNT)

b) **OLD TESTAMENT**

i) **BHS** – Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

ii) **BHQ** – Biblia Hebraica Quinta

iii) **HBCE** – Hebrew Bible: A Critical Edition

iv) **HUBP** – Hebrew University Bible Project

5) **Bible Translators**

- a) Predominately, these are committees of scholars working under a publisher to produce the desired translation.
- b) We will talk about translators and translation committees in a few minutes.

Slide 12 – Path to Today's Modern Translations (3)

- 6) O.k. what do we have for translations ...

Choosing Bible Versions

1) Translations

- a) **From the beginning** of English Translations
 - i) **Approximately 450 to 900 Including:**
 - (1) Full Translations
 - (2) Paraphrases
 - (3) Partial Translations
 - (4) Significant Revisions
- b) **Between 1900 and 2025**
 - i) **40 to 50 Complete English Bible Editions** produced.

2) Types

- a) **Formal Equivalence**
- b) **Medium Equivalence**
- c) **Functional Equivalence**

We will discuss these in detail in just a moment but first.

INTRODUCTION to Slide 13 and 14

- 3) We need to discuss the paths to the KJV and the NKJV versions.
 - a) We need to see concretely the difference between these translations and our modern translations.
 - b) Up Front! – The KJV and NKJV are fantastic IF you know what you are dealing with and are willing to accept it.

Slide 13 – Path to KJV Translation

1) Manuscripts

- a) **Old Testament**
 - i) **Hebrew scribes**
 - (1) Same basic Hebrew scripture as used in our modern version.
- b) **New Testament**
 - i) **6 to 8 manuscripts**
 - (1) originally compiled by **Erasmus**.
 - (2) Part of the book of Revelation was converted from Latin Vulgate to Greek since parts of the manuscript he had were missing.
 - ii) **Others ~15 Manuscripts**
 - (1) Stephanus and Beza examined and collated additional Greek manuscripts beyond those Erasmus used.
 - (a) **Stephanus** consulted at least 15 manuscripts (possibly more) for his editions, particularly for his 1550 edition. He included variant readings in the margins of his 1550 edition from these additional sources
 - (b) **Beza** had access to two very important manuscripts: Codex Bezae (5th/6th century) and Codex Claromontanus (6th century), which he collated though he used them sparingly

2) Critical Editions

Choosing Bible Versions

a) **Old Testament – Masoretic Text**

i) **Septuagint**

ii) **Latin Vulgate**

iii) **Targums**

(1) Aramaic translations and paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible used in Jewish synagogues. (not much used)

(a) Examples include:

(i) Targum Onkelos (on the Torah)

(ii) Targum Jonathan (Yonatan) (on the Prophets)

(iii) Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Targum Neofiti, and various Jerusalem Targums

(iv) They are part of the Old Testament textual tradition

b) **New Testament – Textus Receptus**

i) Textus Receptus refers to the family of Greek New Testament editions published in the 16th-17th centuries.

(1) Started by Erasmus

ii) **Stephanus**

iii) **Beza & beyond**

(1) Stephanus and Beza examined and collated additional Greek manuscripts beyond those Erasmus used.

(a) The name Textus Receptus itself comes from the Elzevir brothers' 1633 edition.

(b) Latin for “Received Text”

c) **Bible Translators**

d) **47 to 54 Scholars**

i) In 1604 to 1611 this group of translators produced the original version in.

(1) Anglican Church Scholars

(2) Divided into 6 committees

(a) Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster

(b) Crosschecked each others work

e) **KJV Versions**

(1) Only three

ii) **1611 Original**

(1) 47 – 54 Scholars produced the first actual translation

iii) **1762 Cambridge**

(1) Revision – by Francis Sawyer Paris

iv) **1769 Oxford**

(1) Revision – by Benjamin Blayney

v) These two releases both provided corrections / spellings / typeset errors.

vi) The 1769 release also corrected some variants.

vii) In both cases, there was one editor, not a translation team

Notice the bracket at the bottom – Basis – KJV / NKJV.

Slide 14 – Path to NKJV Translation

1) Critical Editions

- a) **OT – Masoretic Text**
- b) **NT – Textus Receptus**
 - i) No new manuscripts were added

2) Modern Critical Editions

- a) **NA26, UBS3, MT** (majority text)
 - i) The Majority Text refers to a form of the Greek New Testament that is reconstructed by comparing all surviving manuscripts and selecting the reading that appears in the majority of them. It is closely associated with the Byzantine textual tradition, which represents over 80–90% of all extant Greek New Testament manuscripts.
 - (1) Nestle–Aland (NA, then 26th edition)
 - (2) United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament (UBS, then 3rd edition)
 - (3) Majority Text (Hodges & Farstad edition, 1982)
 - ii) Modern critical editions used for footnotes to identify variances.

3) Revision Team

- a) **130 interdenominational Scholars**
 - i) I called it a “Revision Team” because the NKJV translators themselves explicitly call it a revision, not an entirely new translation.
 - (1) The translators retained the KJV’s structure, rhythm, and style.
 - (2) They updated Archaic English and the grammar and punctuation.
 - (3) They made certain textual decisions based on modern scholarship.
 - (4) They did not start over with new translation philosophy or new base texts.

4) NKJV 1982

The takeaway here is that the KJV and NKJV are NOT based on the current and best Critical Editions.

They are instead based on a limited (all be it reasonable) manuscript base of Textus Receptus and the Masoretic text.

LET THE READER BEWARE!!!

INTRODUCTION to Slide 15 and 17.....

- 1) We could literally spend weeks on what we just covered.
- 2) However, we must move on to the real meat of today’s adventure – picking translations.
- 3) To begin, I thought we would look at what are currently the Top Selling Versions.
 - a) Next three slides are from 3 AI engines – Perplexity, Claude, and ChatGPT
 - i) Note the 4 top sellers in each are the same – just a different order.

Choosing Bible Versions

- ii) You may also notice that there are a total of 12 different translations across the 3 engines.
- 4) They are in Appendix 1 as well.
 - i) *So, let's take a quick look.*

Slide 15 – Top Selling Versions 2024-2025

Perplexity

1. New International Version (NIV)
2. English Standard Version (ESV)
3. King James Version (KJV)
4. New Living Translation (NLT)
5. New King James Version (NKJV)
6. Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
7. New International Reader's Version (NIRV)
8. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
9. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
10. The Message MSG

Slide 16 – Top Selling Versions 2024-2025

Claude

1. King James Version (KJV)
2. New International Version (NIV)
3. English Standard Version (ESV)
4. New Living Translation (NLT)
5. Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
6. The Message (MSG)
7. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
8. Common English Bible (CEB)
9. Amplified Bible (AMP)
10. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Slide 17 – Top Selling Versions 2024-2025

ChatGPT *

1. New International Version (NIV)
2. King James Version (KJV)
3. English Standard Version (ESV)
4. New Living Translation (NLT)
5. Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
6. New King James Version (NKJV)
7. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
8. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
9. New International Reader's Version (NIRV)
10. The Message MSG

INTRODUCTION to Slide 18 – 20

- 1) Ok let's talk for a couple of minutes about the Types of translations.
- 2) This is the real heart of where we are going.

Choosing Bible Versions

- a) Three basic types; Formal, Functional, and Medium

Slide 18 – Types of Translations ...

1) Formal Equivalence

- a) **AKA – literal or “word-for-word” ***
 - i) Also called Direct equivalence or Direct translation
- b) **Closest in meaning to the Source Language**
 - i) Seeks to capture the “form” of the Greek or Hebrew while producing an understandable version in the Target Language.
- c) **Closest in grammar and syntax to the Source Language**
 - i) Holds as closely as possible to the syntax taking into consideration the latest in advances linguist scholarship
- d) **Sometimes “wooden” in style.**
 - i) Because Formal Equivalence translations tend to stay with the proper renderings, they can make the wording awkward.

Simply put, these are the translations that will get you the closest to what was originally written in the Greek and Hebrew.

Examples: ESV / NASB 2020

- a) * Word-for-word translations are NOT POSSIBLE in any language.

Slide 19 – Types of Translations (cont.) ...

1) Functional Equivalence

- a) AKA **Dynamic equivalence**
 - i) Thought-for-thought translation
 - ii) Idiomatic translation
 - iii) Meaning-based translation
- b) **Most readable**

Seeks to capture the “function” or meaning of the Greek or Hebrew and by doing so then reproduce its “meaning” in good idiomatic (natural) sense of the Target Language.

- c) **May be defined in some cases as a Paraphrase.**
 - i) e.g. The Message by Peterson
- d) **Translations vary widely in the liberties taken.**
- e) **May have more theological biases.**

2) Examples: NLT / AMP / MSG

Slide 20 – Types of Translations (cont.) ...

3) **Medium Equivalence**

- a) **Middle ground**

Choosing Bible Versions

- i) Sets between **Formal** and **Functional** equivalence.
- b) **More readable than formal**
- c) **May miss some nuances of the SL text**
- d) **Still very accurate**
 - i) Not as accurate at transferring the true source text meaning as the Formal Equivalence Versions
- 4) Examples: NIV / CSB

Slide 21 – 12 Top Selling Versions 2024-2025 by Type

- 1) Quick look at the top 12 ranked by Type
 - a) All these lists are in the Appendices of the Notes PDF.

INTRODUCTION to Slides 22 – 27

- 1) Having said all that let's jump into the how to go about choosing your version.

Slide 22 – How to Choose your versions (1) ...

- 1) **Why should we have multiple versions?**
 - a) **Promotes better understanding.**
 - b) **Formal by itself may be hard to read.**
 - c) **Medium / Functional by themselves**
 - i) **Easier to read.**
 - ii) **May miss important details and nuances.**
- 2) **In difficult passages – helpful to use side-by-side with Formal Equivalence version.**
- 3) **Helps spot theological biases.**

Slide 23 – How to Choose your versions (2) ...

- 1) **Deciding on the types**
 - a) **What do you currently use?**
 - b) **Where does it fit? – formal / med / functional.**
 - c) **Don't give up - Update it instead!**
 - d) **Why update?**
 - i) **New understandings of language and syntax**
 - ii) **New techniques of Textual Criticism (CBGM/ECM)**
 - iii) **New manuscript discoveries –Search is Still ON!!**
 - iv) **New Features**

Now, a word of caution ABOUT UPDATES – Don't assume its o.k. and just buy cold.

USE THE TECHNIQUES FOR CHOOSING A NEW VERSION we are getting ready to discuss when updating your old version.

Chances are the equivalence has not changed but there could be changes in publishing control or other factors or choices that have been made that may make the new release less than acceptable to you.

Slide 24 – How to Choose your versions (3) ...

1) **Suggestions:**

- a) **Add to what you currently have.**
- b) **Minimum – 1 Formal and 1 Medium**
- c) **A Functional - nice as a third version**
- d) **The more the merrier! (to a point)**
 - i) **Consider a study bible.**
 - ii) Same kinds of rules apply with choosing.
 - (1) Writer – team or individual?
 - (2) Know the philosophy / theology of the individual(s) doing the notes sections.
 - iii) **OBVIOUS** – Remember study bible commentary is not equal to scripture.

Slide 25 – Evaluating Versions – READ Before You Buy! ...

- 1) You always need to read parts of the Bible itself
 - a) Equally important are facts about the version.
- 2) **What to READ**
 - a) **Preface and Forward**
 - i) **Looking for biases**
 - (1) Anything that causes you heartburn.
 - ii) **Check out the publishers.**
 - (1) Family owned / Corporation / What's the makeup?
 - iii) **Check out the translators / writers.**
- 3) **Where to READ**
 - a) **On Amazon, Kindle versions “look inside.”**
 - i) Normally have the Preface and samples.
 - b) **Publisher's websites**
 - i) Have a wealth of information.
 - ii) If you can't find the information you are looking for, they will normally respond well to “Contact Us” emails.
 - c) **Free online editions.**
 - i) Google the version you are looking for to find an online edition.
 - (1) They may not always have the Preface materials.

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4) Other – consider AI searches with questions.

- a) Use AI engines with specific questions you might have about the teams, philosophy, etc.
 - i) Look up Individuals.
 - ii) Look up Publishers.
- b) DON'T TRUST JUST ONE!! Use 2 or 3 different engines and cross check.
 - i) Many give references automatically.
 - ii) Others you may need to type “references” in the question box after they supply the original answer.

Slide 26 – Evaluating Versions – READ Before You Buy! (cont.)...

c) Passages

- i) NOTE - Type figures in here ...
- ii) **Favorite passages**
 - (1) How do they sound?
 - (2) Are they clear to you?
- iii) **Difficult passages**
 - (1) Are they clearer and more understandable?
 - (2) Could you read them aloud with confidence?

Slide 27 – Conclusions and Takeaways ...

- 1) Use the Appendices at the end of the Notes.
- 2) Use the Appendices at the end of the Notes.
- 3) Appendix 1**
 - a) **Lists of top sellers**
 - i) 3 AI generated lists.
 - ii) List of 12 by type list that we just looked at.
- 4) Appendix 2**
 - a) **Equivalence Spectrum – 30 Versions**
 - i) Left to Right list of versions showing approximately where they fall in the line between Formal Equivalence and Functional Equivalence.
- 5) Appendix 3**
 - a) **37 Example Versions**
 - i) Useful for abbreviations is nothing else.
- 6) Appendix 4**
 - a) **Detailed Statistics - 12 Most Popular versions**
 - i) Publisher and Link to website
 - ii) Year(s) Published
 - iii) Notes sections on:
 - (1) Style
 - (2) Strengths

Choosing Bible Versions

- (3) Limitations
- (4) Translating Team

Slide 28 – Conclusions and Takeaways ...

- 1) **Bible Software: THIS IS A GREAT WAY TO CHECK OUT VERSIONS !!!**
 - a) **Allow good searches.**
 - b) **Usually provide side by side Bible reading.**
 - c) **Many features.**
 - d) **Many commentaries built in.**
 - e) **Several good packages (top 5).**
 - i) **Logos**
 - ii) **Accordance Bible Software**
 - iii) **Olive**
 - iv) **e-Sword (free)**
 - v) **Blue Letter Bible (free)**

Slide 29 – Conclusions and Takeaways (cont.) ...

- 1) **Logos**
 - a) **Free Edition**
 - i) **5 Bibles – ESV, KJV, CSB, Lexham English Bible**
 - ii) **Added Bibles = \$10 ea.**
 - b) **Subscriptions: (Billed Annually)**
 - i) **Premium = \$70 / yr (\$ 5.83 / mn)**
 - ii) **Pro = \$130 / yr (\$10.83 / mn)**
 - iii) **MAX (all features) = \$170 / yr (\$14.17 / mn)**

https://www.logos.com/figure/subscriptions?campaignid=18467614025&adgroupid=144568226385&keyword=logos+free+book&device=c&utm_source=google&utm_medium=advertising_cpc&utm_campaign=google_search-keyword_brand_logos_us&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=18467614025&gbraid=0AAADlggz2-LZ2zjoNJtNrUoeaVo81VF&gclid=CjwKCAjwjffHBhBuEiwAKMb8pNLRddSC2aM-BvGXNRlmY9_IDWiLS1c55-LavDJ3TbKDGf6Xj6jM-BoCSi4QAvD_BwE&trackId=191

Slide 30 – Conclusions and Takeaways (cont.) ...

- 1) **Suggested readings:**
- 2) **How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth**
Gordon D. Fee
- 3) **New Testament Textual Criticism**
David Alan Black
- 4) **Textual Criticism of the Bible**
Paul D. Wegner

Appendix 1 – Top 12 Versions Listed by Type

• King James Version	(KJV)	Formal
• English Standard Version	(ESV)	Formal
• New King James Version	(NKJV)	Formal
• New American Standard	(NASB)	Formal
• New International Version	(NIV)	Medium
• Christian Standard Bible	(CSB)	Medium
• New Revised Standard Version	(NRSV)	Medium
• Common English Bible	(CEB)	Medium
• New Living Translation	(NLT)	Functional
• New International Reader's Version	(NIrV)	Functional
• The Message	(MSG)	Functional
• Amplified Bible	(AMP)	Functional

Top 10 Versions Listed by 3 Different AI Engines

Perplexity

11. New International Version (NIV)
12. English Standard Version (ESV)
13. King James Version (KJV)
14. New Living Translation (NLT)
15. New King James Version (NKJV)
16. Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
17. New International Reader's Version (NIrV)
18. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
19. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
20. The Message MSG

Claude

11. King James Version (KJV)
12. New International Version (NIV)
13. English Standard Version (ESV)
14. New Living Translation (NLT)
15. Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
16. The Message (MSG)
17. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
18. Common English Bible (CEB)
19. Amplified Bible (AMP)
20. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

ChatGPT *

11. New International Version (NIV)
12. King James Version (KJV)
13. English Standard Version (ESV)
14. New Living Translation (NLT)
15. Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
16. New King James Version (NKJV)
17. New American Standard Bible (NASB)
18. New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)
19. New International Reader's Version (NIrV)
20. The Message MSG

Appendix 2 – Equivalence Spectrum for the 30 most Popular Versions

Formal Equivalence				Medium Equivalence				Functional Equivalence			
NASB	KJV	RSV	ASV	CSB	NIV	NABRE	NJB	CEB	GNT	LB	VOICE
ESV	NKJV	NRSV	MEV	NET	TNIV	NJB	NCB	NLT	ERV	GW	LIVING
				Tanakh JPS and HCSB				GW	NCV	CEV	MSG

Appendix 3 – 37 Example Versions

37 Example Versions Including some of the Most Popular

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. AMP - Amplified Bible | 20. NASB (also NAU) - New American Standard Bible |
| 2. ASV - American Standard Version | 21. NCV - New Century Version |
| 3. CEB - Common English Bible | 22. NEB - New English Bible |
| 4. CEV - Contemporary English Version | 23. NET - New English Translation (NET Bible) |
| 5. CSB - Christian Standard Bible | 24. NJB - New Jerusalem Bible |
| 6. EHV - Evangelical Heritage Version | 25. NIV - New International Version |
| 7. ERV - Easy-to-Read Version | 26. NIVI - New International Version Inclusive Language Edition |
| 8. ESV - English Standard Version | 27. NIrV - New International Reader's Version |
| 9. GNT - Good News Translation (also GNB) | 28. NIVUK - New International Version UK Edition |
| 10. GW - God's Word | 29. NKJV - New King James Version |
| 11. ICB - International Children's Bible | 30. NLT / NLT2 - New Living Translation (also second edition) |
| 12. ISV - International Standard Version | 31. NRSV - New Revised Standard Version |
| 13. JB - Jerusalem Bible | 32. RSV - Revised Standard Version |
| 14. JPS - Jewish Publication Society Version | 33. Tanakh HCSB - Holman Christian Standard Bible |
| 15. KJV - King James Version | 34. TNK - Tanakh (Jewish Publication Society) |
| 16. LB - Living Bible | 35. VOICE - The Voice |
| 17. MEV - Modern English Version | 36. WEB - Webster Bible |
| 18. MSG - The Message | 37. YLT - Young's Literal Translation |
| 19. NAB / NABRE - New American Bible
(Revised Edition) | |

Appendix 4 – Top 12 Version Statistics

Formal Equivalence

KJV – King James Version

- **Publisher:**
 - Originally in the Church of England
 - Currently in the public domain (various publishers print it)
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First released in 1611
 - Latest Edition – Standard Editions revised in **1769**.
- **Style:**
 - Formal Equivalence
- **Strengths:**
 - Majestic English style
 - Historical influence, literary richness
- **Limitations:**
 - Archaic language
 - Dated scholarship and manuscripts
 - Hard to understand
 - Few notes and other helps beyond the text
- **Translating Team:**
 - 47 Church of England Anglican Scholars
 - Divided into 6 committees at Oxford, Cambridge, and Westminster

ESV – English Standard Version

- **Publisher:**
 - Crossway (Good News Publishers)
 - https://www.esv.org/about/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23123763093&gclid=0AAAAADQBsDqkm6WJd0ExnfXbEenkwJ5II&gclid=CjwKCAjw6vHHBhBwEiwAq4zvAzo9--32NmpO2snvrODSSkoQgL0YW6iuQQ4sVbGrqZs9QI9kwzVJqxoCgJ8QAvD_BwE
 - Not-for-profit evangelical Christian publishing ministry
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First released in 2001
 - Updates – 2007, 2011, 2016
 - Latest Edition - February **2025**
- **Type:**
 - Formal Equivalence
- **Strengths:**
 - Modern Language and very easy to read.
 - Accuracy with literary elegance.
 - Limitations:
 - Some theological conservatism in translation choices (gender?)

Choosing Bible Versions

- **Translating Team:**

- Translation Oversight Committee: Fourteen-member committee responsible for translation process and oversight.
- Translation Review Scholars: More than fifty biblical experts who provided input and review.
- Advisory Council: Over fifty members who offered commentary and input.
- Publishing Team: The overall effort involved more than one hundred people.

NKJV – New King James Version

- **Publisher:**

- Thomas Nelson Publishers
- <https://www.thomasnelsonbibles.com/nkjv-bible/>

- **Year(s) Published:**

- First – NT 1979, Psalms 1980, Complete 1982
- Latest Editions – **1982, 1983**

- **Style:**

- Formal Equivalence

- **Strengths:**

- Maintains literary beauty of KJV but in modern English
- Retains connection to traditional church usage
- Includes textual notes comparing manuscripts

- **Limitations:**

- Still based on Textus Receptus manuscripts (like KJV), not always earliest/most reliable
- Slightly dated phrasing in places compared to newer translations

- **Translating Team:**

- 130 scholars, linguists, and pastors across various denominations
- Lead by Dr. Arthur Farstad

NASB – New American Standard Bible

- **Publisher:**

- The Lockman Foundation
- https://shop.lockman.org/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=13149374850&gbraid=0AAAAAD0fhpuUW7HwnkdtRBv75qT9Elnd&gclid=CjwKCAjw6vHHBhBwEiwAq4zvA36NR-Tdj1psH78_OEgB_Qlue-bLy5mxhHtb7i7F1xj5s4NBf896tBoCGBcQAvD_BwE

- **Year(s) Published:**

- First released in 1971
- Latest Edition – 1995 and **2020**

- **Style:**

- Formal equivalence (most literal major English translation)
- Very balanced between readability and accuracy

- **Strengths:**

- Very precise, excellent for in-depth study
- Closely reflects original language structure

Choosing Bible Versions

- Widely respected for precision
- **Limitations:**
 - Sometimes rigid and less natural in English (“wooden”)
 - Sometimes sacrifices readability for literalness
- **Translating Team:**
 - Evangelical scholars and translators (50) under Lockman Foundation oversight (non-denominational, conservative)

Medium Equivalence

NIV – New International Version

- **Publisher:**
 - HarperCollins Christian Publishing
 - <https://www.zondervan.com/bibles/niv-bibles/>
 - Zondervan is the North American commercial rights holder.
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First in 1978
 - Latest Editions - 1984 and **2011**
- **Type:**
 - Medium Equivalence – leaning toward natural English phrasing
 - Very balanced between readability and accuracy
- **Strengths:**
 - Clear contemporary language
 - Extensive scholarly updates
 - Broad acceptance
- **Limitations:**
 - Sacrifices Formal Equivalence for readability
- **Translating Team:**
 - Members vary but they maintain 15 scholars
 - Over 100 Translators

CSB – Christian Standard Bible

- **Publisher:**
 - Holman Bible Publishers/LifeWay
 - <https://www.bhpublishinggroup.com/imprints/holman-bible-publishers/>
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First released in 2004
 - Latest Edition – **2017 as the CSB**
- **Style:**
 - Medium Equivalence – They call it “optimal equivalence”
 - Balance of Formal and Functional
- **Strengths:**
 - Blends word-for-word accuracy with readability
 - Broad appeal

Choosing Bible Versions

- Scholarly oversight
- **Limitations:**
 - May be seen as compromise rather than clear formal or dynamic approach
- **Translating Team:**
 - 10 Scholars from various seminaries as Oversight Committee
 - Over 100 scholars from 17 denominations participated

NRSV – New Revised Standard Version

- **Publisher:**
 - National Council of Churches (Division of Christian Education)
 - <https://www.zondervan.com/p/nrsvuebible/>
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First released in 1989
 - Latest Edition – **2021 as NRSVue**
- **Style:**
 - Medium Equivalence – blend of formal and functional
 - Focus on inclusive language and scholarly accuracy
- **Strengths:**
 - Current scholarship
 - Gender-inclusive
 - Broad denominational use
 - Academic reliability
- **Limitations:**
 - Inclusive decisions can be contentious
 - Less “devotionally warm” style than others
- **Translating Team:**
 - About 30 initial translators
 - Later 56 book editors and 7 general editors for update
 - Wide Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Jewish participation

CEB – Common English Bible

- **Publisher:**
 - Common English Bible Committee
 - <https://www.commonenglishbible.com/>
 - Distributed by Abingdon Press (official publisher for the CEB project)
 - Christian Resources Development Corporation (CRDC) alliance
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - New Testament (2010)
 - Complete Bible **(2011)**
- **Style:**
 - Functional equivalence
 - Aims for clear, natural English that communicates the meaning of the original text rather than strict word-for-word rendering
- **Strengths:**

Choosing Bible Versions

- Very readable and accessible English for modern audiences.
- Inclusive and gender-accurate language where context supports it.
- Avoids traditional theological jargon
- Ecumenical collaboration across denominations
- **Limitations:**
 - Less literal—some details and nuances of original wording are paraphrased.
 - Conservative readers may find it too interpretive or inclusive at points.
 - Not ideal for verse-by-verse doctrinal study.
 - Less familiar phrasing may be jarring for those used to traditional translations
 - Some conservatives critique certain translation choices as too interpretive.
 - Some adventurous renderings may unsettle traditional readers (e.g., “Human One” for “Son of Man”); less literal than some conservative translations
- **Translating Team:**
 - Over 120 biblical scholars from 24 denominations.
 - Reviewed by 77 reading groups to ensure readability for 7th-grade level.
 - Included mainline Protestant, Evangelical, and even Catholic scholars.
 - Diverse team including both men and women
 - Ecumenical/interdenominational approach

Functional Equivalence

NLT – New Living Translation

- **Publisher:**
 - Tyndale House Publishers
 - <https://www.tyndale.com/sites/nlt/?srsltid=AfmBOoqcGKIm9xy7IUzvo-OjHjYyRaJtP41XZb02hW3jUgGqN5qtb7Re>
 - Zondervan is the North American commercial rights holder
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First released in 1996
 - Latest Edition – 2004, 2007, **2015**
- **Style:**
 - Functional Equivalence – thought for thought
- **Strengths:**
 - Highly readable
 - Excellent for new believers and children
 - Captures the meaning well
- **Limitations:**
 - Sometimes adds interpretive elements
 - Less suitable for detailed word studies
 - May oversimplify complex passages
- **Translating Team:**
 - 90 scholars from various denominations
 - Revisions based on feedback and updated scholarship

NIRV – New International Reader’s Version

- **Publisher:**
 - Zondervan (HarperCollins Christian Publishing)

Choosing Bible Versions

- <https://www.zondervan.com/bibles/nirv-bibles/>
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - First Edition (1996)
 - Revised Editions (1998, **2014**)
- **Style:**
 - Functional equivalence, simplified from the NIV.
 - Designed for children, English learners, or those reading at a 3rd–4th-grade level.
- **Strengths:**
 - Highly readable and simple; ideal for children, ESL readers, or beginning Bible students.
 - Faithful to the theological stance of the NIV.
 - Smooth, clear sentence structure.
- **Limitations:**
 - Very simplified, so some depth and nuance are lost.
 - Not suitable for advanced study or preaching.
 - Targeted primarily at readability over precision.
- **Translating Team:**
 - Based on the New International Version (NIV), produced by the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT) – a group of Evangelical scholars.
 - Nlrv was a simplified adaptation rather than a full retranslation.

MSG – The Message

- **Publisher:**
 - NavPress (a division of Tyndale House Publishers)
 - <https://www.zondervan.com/author-product/the-message/>
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - New Testament (1993)
 - Complete Bible (**2002**)
- **Style:**
 - Paraphrase (extremely functional—beyond dynamic equivalence)
 - A restatement of Scripture in contemporary, idiomatic English rather than a direct translation.
- **Strengths:**
 - Highly engaging and fresh; captures emotional tone and impact of the text.
 - Excellent for devotional reading or newcomers to the Bible.
 - Excellent for seeing familiar passages with fresh eyes
 - Captures emotional tone and cultural context effectively
 - Feels like natural spoken English.
- **Limitations:**
 - Not a translation, so not suitable for word studies or doctrinal analysis.
 - Some paraphrases reflect interpretation rather than translation.
 - Single translator limits perspective
 - Takes significant interpretive liberties
 - Sacrifices precision for readability and impact.
- **Translating Team:**

Choosing Bible Versions

- Single translator: Eugene H. Peterson, a pastor and scholar.
- Peterson had Hebrew and Greek expertise
- No formal committee review (unlike other major translations)
- Personal project over 10 years

AMP – Amplified Bible

- **Publisher:**
 - Zondervan (HarperCollins Christian Publishing)
 - <https://www.zondervan.com/p/amplified-bibles/>
- **Year(s) Published:**
 - Original Edition (1965)
 - Updated Editions: 1987, **2015** (Amplified Holy Bible)
- **Style:**
 - Formal equivalence with expanded renderings (a hybrid style)
 - “Expanded Literal”
 - Tries to capture the range of meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew words by adding synonyms or clarifying phrases in parentheses or brackets.
- **Strengths:**
 - Excellent for word studies and nuance.
 - Makes explicit many possible shades of meaning from the original text.
 - Helpful for readers without knowledge of Greek or Hebrew.
- **Limitations:**
 - Cluttered and verbose due to expanded phrases.
 - Can interrupt readability and flow.
 - Occasionally over-interprets or suggests too many possible meanings.
- **Translating Team:**
 - Original (1965-1987): The Lockman Foundation team (same organization behind NASB), with Frances Siewert doing much of the work
 - 2015 Revision: Committee of Greek and Hebrew scholars assembled by Lockman Foundation
 - Conservative evangelical scholars focusing on precise word meanings.
 - Specific names not always publicly listed, following Lockman's traditional approach

Functionals Quick Comparison:

- ***Most literal:*** AMP (with amplifications)
- ***Most readable:*** MSG, NIV
- ***Best for study:*** AMP (depending on approach)
- ***Most interpretive:*** MSG

Appendix 5 – Sites for Reading for Free

1. BibleGateway

Website: <https://www.biblegateway.com>

Free Versions Available:

KJV • NIV • NLT • ESV • CSB • NKJV • NASB • NRSV • NRSVue • CEB • MSG • NIrV

Covers nearly all major English versions.

Features: Parallel reading, keyword search, audio Bibles, reading plans.

2. YouVersion (Bible.com / Bible App)

Website: <https://www.bible.com>

Free Versions Available:

KJV • NIV • NLT • ESV • CSB • NKJV • NASB • NRSV • CEB • MSG • NIrV (and hundreds more)

Features: Reading plans, offline access (via app), highlight & note system, many languages.

3. ESV.org

Website: <https://www.esv.org>

Free Versions Available:

ESV (English Standard Version)

Features: Clean reading layout, cross-references, study tools for ESV users.

4. NLT (Tyndale)

Website: <https://www.tyndale.com/nlt>

Free Versions Available:

New Living Translation (NLT)

Features: Overview articles, reading plans, background info on translation.

5. CSB (Christian Standard Bible)

Website: <https://www.csbible.com/read/>

Free Versions Available:

Christian Standard Bible (CSB)

Features: Full online text, keyword search, mobile-friendly.

6. Thomas Nelson Bibles (NKJV)

Website: <https://www.thomasnelsonbibles.com/nkjv-bible/>

Free Versions Available:

New King James Version (NKJV)

Features: Sample passages, devotionals, and study editions.

7. NASB (Lockman Foundation)

Website: <https://www.lockman.org/nasb-read/>

Free Versions Available:

New American Standard Bible (NASB 1995 & 2020)

Features: Official NASB text with notes and updates.

8. NRSV / NRSVue (Friendship Press)

Website: <https://www.nrsv.net/>

Free Versions Available:

NRSV (1989) and NRSVue (2021)

Choosing Bible Versions

Features: Direct reading access, background info, translation notes.

9. Common English Bible (CEB)

Website: <https://www.commonenglishbible.com/>

Free Versions Available:

Common English Bible (CEB)

Features: Read online and view translation philosophy.

10. The Message (MSG)

Website: <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/The-Message-Bible-MSG/>

Free Versions Available:

The Message (MSG)

Features: Full text, plus audio through Bible Gateway.

11. NIrV (New International Reader's Version)

Website: <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-International-Readers-Version-NIrV-Bible/>

Free Versions Available:

NIrV

Features: Simplified English edition of NIV for children or ESL readers.

12. KJV (King James Version)

Website: <https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/>

Free Versions Available:

King James Version (1611 / 1769)

Features: Concordance, search tools, commentary, reading plans.

Would you like me to list **which sites offer offline downloads (PDF, ePub, or app versions)** of these Bibles next?

Appendix 6 – Early Church Fathers

- Clement of Rome (c. 35–99)
- Ignatius of Antioch (c. 35–110)
- Polycarp of Smyrna (c. 69–155)
- Papias of Hierapolis (c. 60–130)
- Barnabas (date uncertain)
- Justin Martyr (c. 100–165)
- Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 130–202)
- Tertullian of Carthage (c. 155–222)
- Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215)
- Origen of Alexandria (c. 185–254)
- Later "Post-Nicene" Fathers
- Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–373)
- Basil the Great (c. 329–379)
- Gregory of Nazianzus (c. 329–389)
- Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330–395)
- John Chrysostom (c. 347–407)
- Jerome (c. 342–420)
- Augustine of Hippo (c. 354–430)
- Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386)
- Ambrose of Milan (c. 339–397)
- Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444)
- Pope Gregory the Great (c. 540–604)