

## About Bible Translations:

There are three basic approaches to translation including:

### **Word-for-Word:**

As much as possible, biblical scholars take each "word" from the original Greek or Hebrew text and an English word in its place.

### **Thought-for-Thought:**

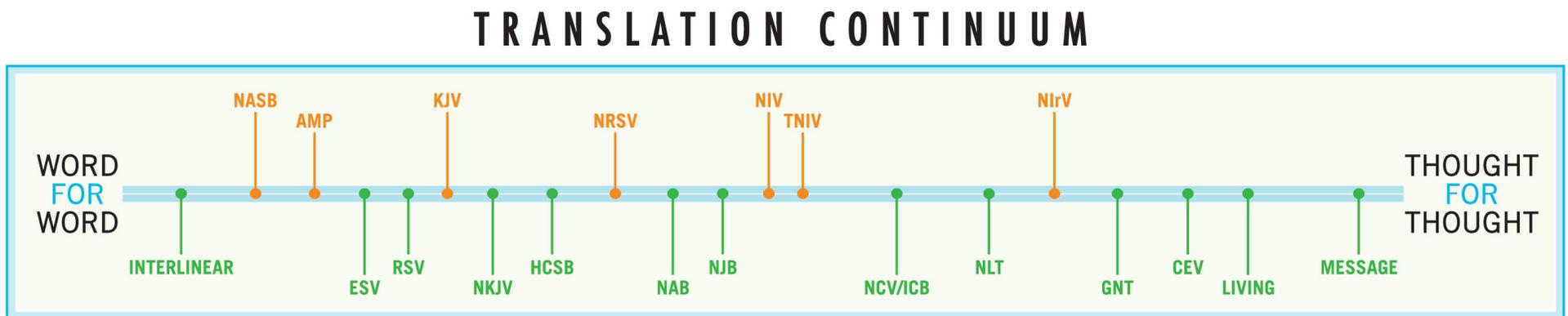
Translators take the "meaning" of the original language and rewrite it in modern language that's easy to read and understand.

### **Balanced Approach:**

Scholars translate word-for-word where it results in a translation that's both clear and accurate. But where a word-for-word approach might result in an unclear or inaccurate translation, these translations use the most natural English possible to clearly and accurately communicate the meaning.

Paraphrases help people who are new to the Bible understand it. And literal translations are helpful for people who want to study each word. The NIV and TNIV are literal where possible and "thought-for-thought" where necessary to help the reader understand. The NIV and TNIV are the best balance between accuracy and readability.

The graphic below can help you understand how each translation fits into the philosophies.



This continuum shows how different Bible translations fit into the word-for-word and thought-for-thought translation philosophies.

These are the Translations I believe we can agree on that should be used for teaching.

Listed in Alphabetical Order.

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## **English Standard Version**

Version » English Standard Version

Publisher Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers.

Testaments OT/NT

### **Version Information:**

The English Standard Version (ESV) stands in the classic mainstream of English Bible translations over the past half-millennium. The fountainhead of that stream was William Tyndale's New Testament of 1526; marking its course were the King James Version of 1611 (KJV), the English Revised Version of 1885 (RV), the American Standard Version of 1901 (ASV), and the Revised Standard Version of 1952 and 1971 (RSV). In that stream, faithfulness to the text and vigorous pursuit of accuracy were combined with simplicity, beauty, and dignity of expression. Our goal has been to carry forward this legacy for a new century. To this end each word and phrase in the ESV has been carefully weighed against the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, to ensure the fullest accuracy and clarity and to avoid under-translating or overlooking any nuance of the original text. The words and phrases themselves grow out of the Tyndale-King James legacy, and most recently out of the RSV, with the 1971 RSV text providing the starting point for our work. Archaic language has been brought to current usage and significant corrections have been made in the translation of key texts. But throughout, our goal has been to retain the depth of meaning and enduring language that have made their indelible mark on the English-speaking world and have defined the life and doctrine of the church over the last four centuries.

The ESV is an "essentially literal" translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. It seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original.

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### ***More about the ESV translation philosophy...***

#### **Translation Philosophy:**

The ESV is an “essentially literal” translation that seeks as far as possible to capture the precise wording of the original text and the personal style of each Bible writer. As such, its emphasis is on “word-for-word” correspondence, at the same time taking into account differences of grammar, syntax, and idiom between current literary English and the original languages. Thus it seeks to be transparent to the original text, letting the reader see as directly as possible the structure and meaning of the original.

In contrast to the ESV, some Bible versions have followed a “thought-for-thought” rather than “word-for-word” translation philosophy, emphasizing “dynamic equivalence” rather than the “essentially literal” meaning of the original. A “thought-for-thought” translation is of necessity more inclined to reflect the interpretive opinions of the translator and the influences of contemporary culture.

Every translation is at many points a trade-off between literal precision and read-ability, between “formal equivalence” in expression and “functional equivalence” in communication, and the ESV is no exception. Within this framework we have sought to be “as literal as possible” while maintaining clarity of expression and literary excellence.

Therefore, to the extent that plain English permits and the meaning in each case allows, we have sought to use the same English word for important recurring words in the original; and, as far as grammar and syntax allow, we have rendered Old Testament passages cited in the New in ways that show their correspondence. Thus in each of these areas, as well as throughout the Bible as a whole, we have sought to capture the echoes and overtones of meaning that are so abundantly present in the original texts. As an essentially literal translation, then, the ESV seeks to carry over every possible nuance of meaning in the original words of Scripture into our own language. As such, it is ideally suited for in-depth study of the Bible. Indeed, with its emphasis on literary excellence, the ESV is equally suited for public reading and preaching, for private reading and reflection, for both academic and devotional study, and for Scripture memorization.

## **Translation Style:**

The ESV also carries forward classic translation principles in its literary style. Accordingly it retains theological terminology—words such as grace, faith, justification, sanctification, redemption, regeneration, reconciliation, propitiation—because of their central importance for Christian doctrine and also because the underlying Greek words were already becoming key words and technical terms in New Testament times.

The ESV lets the stylistic variety of the biblical writers fully express itself—from the exalted prose that opens Genesis, to the flowing narratives of the historical books, to the rich metaphors and dramatic imagery of the poetic books, to the ringing rhetorical indictments in the prophetic books, to the smooth elegance of Luke, to the profound simplicities of John, and the closely-reasoned logic of Paul.

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.

The biblical languages regularly connect sentences by frequent repetition of words such as “and,” “but,” and “for,” in a way that goes beyond the conventions of literary English. Effective translation, however, requires that these links in the original be reproduced so that the flow of the argument will be transparent to the reader. We have therefore normally translated these connectives, though occasionally we have varied the rendering by using alternatives (such as “also,” “however,” “now,” “so,” “then,” or “thus”) when they better capture the sense in specific instances.

In the area of gender language, the goal of the ESV is to render literally what is in the original. For example, “anyone” replaces “any man” where there is no word corresponding to “man” in the original languages, and “people” rather than “men” is regularly used where the original languages refer to both men and women. But the words “man” and “men” are retained where a male meaning component is part of the original Greek or Hebrew. Similarly, the English word “brothers” (translating the Greek word *adelphoi*) is retained as an important familial form of address between fellow-Jews and fellow-Christians in the first century. A recurring note is included to indicate that the term “brothers” (*adelphoi*) was often used in Greek to refer to both men and women, and to indicate the specific instances in the text where this is the case. In addition, the English word “sons” (translating the Greek word *huiioi*) is retained in specific instances because of its meaning as a legal term in the adoption and inheritance laws of first-century Rome. As used by the apostle Paul, this term refers to the status of all Christians, both men and women, who, having been adopted into God’s family, now enjoy all the privileges, obligations, and inheritance rights of God’s children.

The inclusive use of the generic “he” has also regularly been retained, because this is consistent with similar usage in the original languages and because an essentially literal translation would be impossible without it. Similarly, where God and man are compared or contrasted in the original, the ESV retains the generic use of “man” as the clearest way to express the contrast within the framework of essentially literal translation.

In each case the objective has been transparency to the original text, allowing the reader to understand the original on its own terms rather than on the terms of our present-day culture.

**Textual Basis:**

The ESV is based on the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible as found in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (2nd ed., 1983), and on the Greek text in the 1993 editions of the Greek

New Testament (4th corrected ed.), published by the United Bible Societies (UBS), and Novum Testamentum Graece (27th ed.), edited by Nestle and Aland. The currently renewed respect among Old Testament scholars for the Masoretic text is reflected in the ESV’s attempt, wherever possible, to translate difficult Hebrew passages as they stand in the Masoretic text rather than resorting to emendations or to finding an alternative reading in the ancient versions.

In exceptional, difficult cases, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint, the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate, and other sources were consulted to shed possible light on the text, or, if necessary, to support a divergence from the Masoretic text. Similarly, in a few difficult cases in the New Testament, the ESV has followed a Greek text different from the text given preference in the UBS/Nestle-Aland 27th edition. In this regard the footnotes that accompany the ESV text are an integral part of the ESV translation, informing the reader of textual variations and difficulties and showing how these have been resolved by the ESV translation team. In addition to this, the footnotes indicate significant alternative readings and occasionally provide an explanation for technical terms or for a difficult reading in the text. Throughout, the translation team has benefited greatly from the massive textual resources that have become readily available recently, from new insights into biblical laws and culture, and from current advances in Hebrew and Greek lexicography and grammatical understanding.

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**King James Version**

Version » King James Version

Publisher Public Domain

Testaments OT/NT

**Version Information:**

In 1604, King James I of England authorized that a new translation of the Bible into English be started. It was finished in 1611, just 85 years after the first translation of the New Testament into English appeared (Tyndale, 1526). The Authorized Version, or King James Version, quickly became the standard for English-speaking Protestants. Its flowing language and prose rhythm has had a profound influence on the literature of the past 300 years. The KJV is public domain in the United States.

**Copyright Information:**

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## **New American Standard Bible**

Version » New American Standard Bible

Publisher The Lockman Foundation

Testaments OT/NT

### **Version Information:**

While preserving the literal accuracy of the 1901 ASV, the NASB has sought to render grammar and terminology in contemporary English. Special attention has been given to the rendering of verb tenses to give the English reader a rendering as close as possible to the sense of the original Greek and Hebrew texts. In 1995, the text of the NASB was updated for greater understanding and smoother reading.

The New American Standard Bible Update – 1995

Easier to read:

Passages with Old English "thee's" and "thou's" etc. have been updated to modern English.

Words and Phrases that could be misunderstood due to changes in their meaning during the past 20 years have been updated to current English.

Verses with difficult word order or vocabulary have been retranslated into smoother English.

Sentences beginning with "And" have often been retranslated for better English, in recognition of differences in style between the ancient languages and modern English. The original Greek and Hebrew did not have punctuation as is found in English, and in many cases modern English punctuation serves as a substitute for "And" in the original. In some other cases, "and" is translated by a different word such as "then" or "but" as called for by the context, when the word in the original language allows such translation.

More accurate than ever:

Recent research on the oldest and best Greek manuscripts of the New Testament has been reviewed, and some passages have been updated for even greater fidelity to the original manuscripts. Parallel passages have been compared and reviewed. Verbs that have a wide range of meaning have been retranslated in some passages to better account for their use in the context.

And still the NASB:

The NASB update is not a change-for-the-sake-of-change translation. The original NASB stands the test of time, and change has been kept to a minimum in recognition of the standard that has been set by the New American Standard Bible.

The NASB update continues the NASB's tradition of literal translation of the original Greek and Hebrew without compromise. Changes in the text have been kept within the strict parameters set forth by the Lockman Foundation's Fourfold Aim. The translators and consultants who have contributed to the NASB update are conservative Bible scholars who have doctorates in Biblical languages, theology, or other advanced degrees. They represent a variety of denominational backgrounds.

Continuing a tradition:

The original NASB has earned the reputation of being the most accurate English Bible translation. The NASB update carries on the NASB tradition of being a true Bible translation, revealing what the original manuscripts actually say--not merely what the translator believes they mean.

**The Lockman Foundation:**

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## **New International Version**

Version » New International Version  
Publisher International Bible Society  
Testaments OT/NT

### **Version Information:**

The New International Version (NIV) is a translation made by more than one hundred scholars working from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. It was conceived in 1965 when, after several years of study by committees from the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals, a trans-denominational and international group of scholars met at Palos Heights, Illinois, and agreed on the need for a new translation in contemporary English. Their conclusion was endorsed by a large number of church leaders who met in Chicago in 1966. Responsibility for the version was delegated to a self-governing body of fifteen Biblical scholars, the Committee on Bible Translation, and in 1967, the New York Bible Society (now International Bible Society) generously undertook the financial sponsorship of the project.

The translation of each book was assigned to a team of scholars, and the work was thoroughly reviewed and revised at various stages by three separate committees. The Committee submitted the developing version to stylistic consultants who made invaluable suggestions. Samples of the translation were tested for clarity and ease of reading by various groups of people. In short, perhaps no other translation has been made by a more thorough process of review and revision.

The Committee held to certain goals for the NIV: that it be an Accurate, Beautiful, Clear, and Dignified translation suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing, and liturgical use. The translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They agreed that faithful communication of the meaning of the original writers demands frequent modifications in sentence structure (resulting in a "thought-for-thought" translation) and constant regard for the contextual meanings of words.

In 1973 the New Testament was published. The Committee carefully reviewed suggestions for revisions and adopted a number of them, which they incorporated into the first printing of the entire Bible in 1978. Additional changes were made in 1983.

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**New King James Version**

Version » New King James Version

Publisher Thomas Nelson, Inc.

Testaments OT/NT

**Version Information:**

Commissioned in 1975 by Thomas Nelson Publishers, 130 respected Bible scholars, church leaders, and lay Christians worked for seven years to create a completely new, modern translation of Scripture, yet one that would retain the purity and stylistic beauty of the original King James. With unyielding faithfulness to the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic texts, the translators applies the most recent research in archaelology, linguistics, and textual studies.

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**Today's New International Version**

Version » Today's New International Version

Publisher International Bible Society

Testaments OT/NT

**Version Information:**

The Today's New International Version (TNIV) is a thoroughly accurate, fully trustworthy Bible text built on the rich heritage of the New International Version (NIV). In fact, this contemporary language version incorporates the continuing work of the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), the translators of the NIV, since the NIV's last update in 1984.

In translating the NIV, the CBT held to certain goals: that it be an Accurate, Beautiful, Clear, and Dignified translation suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing, and liturgical use. The translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They agreed that faithful communication of the meaning of the original writers demands frequent modifications in sentence structure (resulting in a "thought-for-thought" translation) and constant regard for the contextual meanings of words.

The uniqueness of the TNIV rests in its ability to speak God's Word clearly and accurately in English that has evolved and changed. The result is a Bible text that reflects the NIV, but also clarifies and updates passages and words to provide a more timely, contemporary English rendition for a new generation of Bible readers.

Increased Clarity:

Word updates: Some of the improvements in the TNIV text are simple word changes that reflect contemporary English terms. For example, the "sixth hour" is accurately translated as "noon" in the modern understanding of time (Mark 15:33). Gender: Without exception, the TNIV retains gender-accurate, masculine terminology for references to God. This is a theological understanding and commitment that the CBT, standing in concert with the Church throughout the ages, considers inviolable.

There are passages in the TNIV, however, in which the contemporary English rendition used to refer to men and women has been translated to accurately reflect the original language, context, and understanding. Where the NIV previously used "he," "man," or "men" to indicate all people, the TNIV, in many cases, renders these passages as "person," "people," or other terminology that reflects the meaning of the original language. In no cases do these updates impose upon or change the doctrinal impact of Scripture.

So, for example, in Paul's letter to Titus, referring to God's saving grace, the TNIV renders 2:11 this way: "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all people."

## Increased Understanding:

Christ and Messiah: Two terms that declare Jesus as the "anointed one" are employed in the New Testament. The Greek *Cristos* and the Hebrew *Messiah* received careful evaluation. When used as the Messianic title for Jesus, the translators used the title of "Messiah." In other passages, where the title does not reflect a particularly Messianic overtone, translators utilized the Greek "Christ." Jews versus Jewish Leaders: The Greek word *loudaioi*, based on context, can be used to refer to a more precisely identifiable group within the whole of Judaism. So the TNIV translates the term *loudaios* in John 5:16 to read ". . . the Jewish leaders began to persecute [Jesus]" in order to accurately indicate those directly responsible. Saints: The TNIV presents an updated translation of the Greek term for *hagios*, traditionally translated as "saints." The TNIV translations were concerned to reflect the original sense of the term and avoid confusion with the process of canonization within religious tradition. Therefore, the TNIV replaces the word "saint" with terms such as "God's people," "people of God" and "believers." Other textual updates in the TNIV reflect simple revisions in punctuation, copy editing details, and treatment of footnotes.

For a more thorough review and information about the TNIV translation, please visit [TNIV.info](http://TNIV.info).

Watch a video about Bible translation and Today's New International Version.

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