

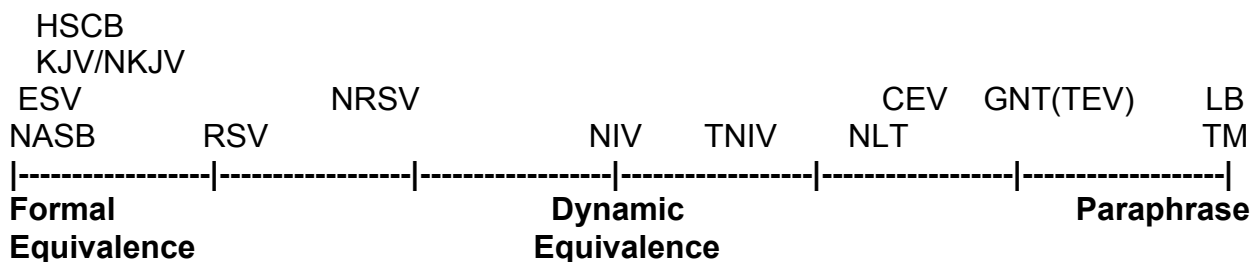
Bible Translations

1. *Which Bible should I use?*
 - a. Wrong Question: “Which translation is the best?”
 - b. Better Questions:
 - i. What was the philosophy of the underlying translation in question?
 - ii. How will this translation be put to use?

2. *What are the three primary translation philosophies?*
 - a. **Formal (Functional) Equivalence:** the focus is more on the original text. This translation philosophy seeks, as much as possible, to reach a word-for-word equivalency and to retain grammatical structures. In other words, there will be less interpretive decisions made for you and the original grammatical structures will more often be left intact. (NOTE: because languages don’t transfer word-for-word, all translations involve some degree of interpretation.)
 - i. Ex: *New American Standard Bible (NASB), King James Version (KJV), New King James Version (NKJV), Revised Standard Version (RSV), English Standard Version (ESV), Holman Christian Standard Bible (HSCB).*

 - b. **Dynamic Equivalence:** the focus is more on the target audience. A dynamic equivalent translation is a “thought for thought” translation that seeks to translate the original words and phrases into the equivalent words and phrases in our language. This translation philosophy seeks as much as possible to reach an “equivalence of response” rather than an equivalence of form. Original grammatical structures may or may not be maintained to make the translation more readable.
 - i. Ex: *New Revised Standard Edition (NRSV), New International Version (NIV), Today’s New International Version (TNIV), Good News Translation (GNT) also known as Today’s English Version (TEV), Contemporary English Version (CEV), New Living Translation (NLT).*

 - c. **Paraphrase:** A paraphrase translation communicates the main idea of the text by saying it in a different way with less concern about following the original words and phrases. It is also called a “free” translation.
 - i. Ex: *The Living Bible (LB), The Message (TM).*



3. *Example: Romans 3:23-25a*

a. *Greek New Testament*: paζnteß ga»r h¢marton kai« uJsterouvntai thvß
do/xhß for all sinned and come short
of the glory

touv qeouv dikaiou/menoi dwrea»n thØv aujtouv caζriti dia» thvß
aÓpolutrwζsewß thvß
of God being justified freely by the of him grace through the redemption

e`n Cristw`Δ Δhsouv: oJn proe÷qeto oJ qeo\ß i`lasth/rion dia» [thvß]
pi÷stewß e`n tw`Δ
in Christ Jesus; whom set forth God a propitiation through faith by the

aujtouv ai`mati
of him blood...

b. *English Standard Version (ESV)*: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith.”

c. *New International Version (NIV)*: “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.”

d. *New Living Translation (NLT)*: “For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard. Yet God, with undeserved kindness, declares that we are righteous. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood.

e. *The Message*: “Since we’ve compiled this long and sorry record as sinners (both us and them) and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we’re in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ. God sacrificed Jesus on the altar of the world to clear that world of sin. Having faith in him sets us in the clear.”

4. *Why do we recommend the ESV Bible?*

a. **Reliability in the details.** The ESV is an "essentially literal" translation, meaning that the translators attempted to render not just the main point of each verse but

every detail of meaning. The result is a translation where you can trust every word, not just the main idea.

- b. **Readability.** The ESV is the "great-grandchild" of the King James Version, and while all the language has been modernized and more accurate ancient texts have been used, the ESV still has a similar English style to the King James and it retains much of the rhythm of language and smooth flow of wording that made the King James the standard translation for over 300 years.
- c. **Consistency in rendering terms.** The ESV has sought to reach a new standard of consistency in translating the same Hebrew or Greek word by the same English word wherever context and meaning would allow it. This means that English readers will have more access to the repetition of key terms in certain books where the author intended readers to see the connection, and where readers in the original language already could see the connections.
- d. **Retention of metaphors.** When the original author used a metaphor, the ESV has brought that metaphor over into English wherever possible. For example, "walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16) has not been translated "live by the Spirit" (NIV) but the term "walk" has been retained in English, thus preserving the rich metaphorical idea of "walking" as a picture of the Christian life, and thus preserving the connections with many Biblical passages about walking in paths of righteousness, not walking in the counsel of the wicked, etc.
- e. **Accuracy in gender language.** The ESV has retained words such as "man," "father," "son," "son of man," and "he, him, his" whenever there was a male meaning in the original Hebrew or Greek text. But it has used terms such as "person," "whoever," and "anyone" whenever there was no male-specific meaning in the original. In this way the ESV seeks to reach a new standard of accuracy and trustworthiness in the rendering of words related to gender.
- f. **Academic and doctrinal reliability.** The ESV was produced by an extensive group of some of the best evangelical scholars today, many of whom have published major commentaries on the books for which they made recommended changes, and all of whom are committed to the complete inerrancy of the Bible.
- g. **Sustainability.** Because of the translation philosophy, the ESV provides confidence in the theological commitments behind this translation, including both broader evangelical commitments as well as complementarian truths.