

The Bible: Translation Philosophy

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Language(s)

- Language withing a specific people group changes.
- Words within a specific people group change.
- There are different languages within a country.
- With literacy in areas of the world very low, ease of language is important when teaching/learning.
- Some people groups do not have a written language.
- When the Jews were in exile, the language used changed (Hebrew to Aramaic) then to Greek (later).

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Bible Translation Philosophy

- The early Hebrew Bible was in Paleo Hebrew.
- That changed to "Square" Hebrew while in Exile to preserve the sacred documents. Consonants only.
- Aramaic was now the language.
- Later, vowels were added; translation was required.
- With many Jews not speaking the older language, it needed a Greek translation (Septuagint).
- Meaning of the Hebrew brought into the Greek.

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Bible Translation Philosophy

- When translating from one language to another, it follows the "science of translation."
- It's not always easy to take a language from a specific culture and translate the meaning of words into a new language in a different culture.
- Frequently there are revisions after publishing.
- As language and the meaning of words change, so must the translation.

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Bible Translation Philosophy

- Scholars go to the oldest/best documents available and translate from that base point.
- Translation is of these documents and not based off of a previous translation (beyond consulting).
- This way, the 'meaning' of the original documents carries over into new languages/cultures.
- This translation philosophy eliminates the incorrect statement that "*the Bible has been rewritten.*"

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Early Translation

- After the fall of the Roman Empire, migration from Germany (378-600 AD) greatly influenced the area.
- There were parts of the Bible that were translated into Anglo-Saxon (Old English) c. 675 AD.
- Over the years, more was translated, and then some into French.
- In 1382 a complete Bible, from Latin, was translated into English by John Wycliffe.

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Translation

- In 1408 in England, it becomes illegal to translate or read the Bible in common English without permission of a Bishop. (Translation Tension)
- In 1455 in Germany, Johann Gutenberg invents moveable metal type.
- First book ever printed; the Gutenberg Bible is a copy of the Latin Vulgate.
- Copying of translations is now easier/cheaper.

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English Translation History

- 1525 – William Tyndale smuggles English Bibles into England. Executed in 1535.
- 1535 – Miles Coverdale translates first complete Bible to be printed exclusively in English.
- 1537 – Matthew’s Bible. Borrows heavily from the Tyndale Bible.
- 1539 – The Great Bible – in every church in England.
- Queen Mary bans Protestant Bibles.

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English Translation History

- 1560 – Geneva Bible.
- 1620 – Geneva Bible is with the Pilgrims
- 1640 – Geneva Bible omits the Apocrypha.
- 1569 – Bishop’s Bible – England’s answer to Geneva.
- 1611 – King James Version
 - 54 scholars undertake a new translation.
 - Used the Bishop’s Bible, Tyndale Bible, & available Greek & Hebrew writings available. (1769 rev. = today).

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English Translation History

- Between 1629 – 1947 earlier copies are discovered.
- 1885 – Revised Version – Scholars in England revise the KJV using older Greek/Hebrew manuscripts.
- Most subsequent translations would refer to older translations and also oldest language documents.
- The KJV was itself never updated with the discovered older documents.
- The NKJV uses older and younger manuscripts.

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Evolution of Language – Ps. 32:1-2

Old English (800-1066)

- Drihten me raet, ne byth me names godes wan.
- And he me geset on swythe good feohland.
- And fedde me be waetera stathum.

Middle English (1100-1500)

- Our Lord gourneth me, and nothing shal defailen to me.
- In the sted of pastur he sett me ther.
- He norissed me upon water of fyllyng.

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Evolution of Language – Ps. 32:1-2

King James Bible (1611)

- The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
- He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Modern English (1984) - NIV

- The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
- He makes me lie down in green pastures,
- he leads me beside quiet waters,

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Bible Sales By Version Or Translation 2022

Bible Version	Percentage of Bible readers purchased
King James Version	31%
New International Version	13%
English Standard Version	9%
New King James Version	7%
Amplified	7%
Christian Community	4%
New American Standard	3%
New Living Translation	2%
Revised Standard	2%
Contemporary English Version	2%
New American Bible	2%
All others	9%
Not Sure	8%

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Modern Translations

- Ridiculous to argue over a Bible translation.
- Different translations have a target audience in mind in reference to the original language.
- Closer to original, harder to read.
 - Formal Equivalence: ASV (1901), NASB (1995), KJV (1611)
 - Optimal Equivalence: ESV (2001)
 - Dynamic Equivalence: NIV (1978, 1984, 2011), NLT (1996) HCSB (1999), CSB (2017),
 - Paraphrase: The Message (1993, 2002)

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Considerations

- Some Bibles do not have the same verses. Look for brackets or footnotes and the explanation for it.
- The best Bible is the one you actually read.
- Different Bibles serve different specific purposes.
- Avoid:
 - New World Translation (Jehovah’s Witness)
 - Joseph Smith Translation of the King James Bible.
 - Queen James Bible, Our Bible App, etc.

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Considerations

- It is good to have a literal Bible (NASB) and one that is a dynamic equivalent translation (CSB/NIV, NLT).
- Read the text first.
- Study Bibles can help.
- Commentaries can help. (be careful)
- Watch and/or listen to sound teachers. (be careful)
- Unity on essentials, liberty on non-essentials, and love in all things.
