



Bible Translations

Formal Equivalence

Formal equivalence seeks to follow the original Hebrew or Greek as closely as possible in a word-for-word pattern. The strength of this method is verbal accuracy.

- ESV
- NASB
- NKJV

Dynamic Equivalence

Dynamic equivalence, also called functional equivalence, follows a more thought-for-thought pattern. The goal is to have a more readable translation.

- CSB
- NIV

Paraphrase

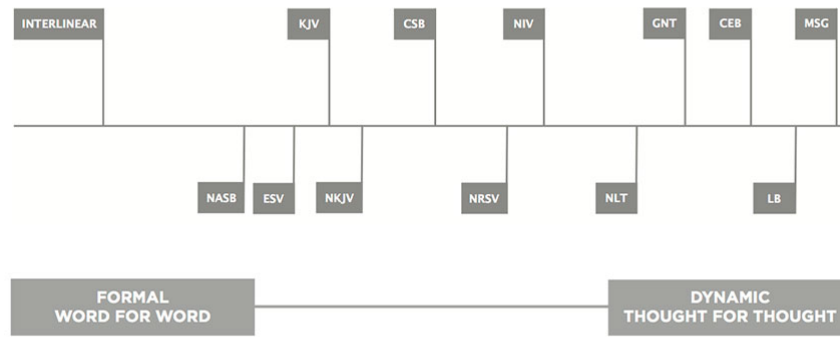
Paraphrase, also called free translation, takes thought-for-thought to the extreme. The original languages are not ignored, but the goal is to retell the message in modern thought patterns.

- Good News Translation (GNT)
- The Living Bible (LB)
- The Message



Translation Continuum

BIBLE TRANSLATION CONTINUUM



Bible translations shown in the top half of the chart are original translations directly from ancient languages to English. Versions shown below the line began with the English text of another Bible translation.

Many versions explain their translation philosophy.

- ESV – <https://www.esv.org/translation/philosophy/>
- CSB - <https://csbible.com/translation-optimal-equivalence/>
- NIV - <https://www.thenivbible.com/about-the-niv/niv-translation-philosophy/>
- LSB - <https://lsbible.org/preface/>

Romans 3:22

- ESV – the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction;
- NASB – even *the* righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;
- CSB – The righteousness of God is through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe, since there is no distinction.
- NIV – This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,

Romans 3:25 footnotes.

- NASB – whom God displayed publicly as a ^[f]propitiation ^[g]in His blood through faith
 - [f] Or a *propitiatory sacrifice*
 - [g] Or *by*
- CSB – God presented him as the mercy seat^[e] by his blood, through faith
 - [e] Or *propitiation, or place of atonement*



- NIV – God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,^[b] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.
 - [b] The Greek for *sacrifice of atonement* refers to the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant (see Lev. 16:15,16).

Punctuation

Watch for punctuation differences. Ephesians 1:4-5 is an example.

- ESV – (4) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. ***In love*** (5) he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
- NASB – (4) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. ***In love*** (5) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will.
- CSB – (4) For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless ***in love*** before him. (5) He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.
- NIV – (4) For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. ***In love*** (5) he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.
- NKJV – (4) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him ***in love***, (5) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.

Headings

Paragraph or section headings are not a part of the original text. Sometimes these headings are just descriptive, but sometimes they move into interpretation. Also, headings can divide the text where it should not be divided.

Study Bibles

The most important resources apart from the Bible itself are study bibles. Study bibles are like mini commentaries. There are cross references, explanatory notes, book introductions, and special articles



Commentaries

Commentaries are extremely useful, but how valuable a commentary is depends on who wrote it and for whom it was written.

- Best commentaries by Tim Challies: <https://www.challies.com/best-commentaries-on-each-book-of-the-bible/>
- Expository commentaries are like reading sermons. They typically do not get into technical details but take a small section of a book and help helping you understand the doctrine and application of that passage.
- Exegetical commentaries typically will not only explain the text but will also include extensive book introductions. They usually will also look at the individual verses down to the actual words.

Other Resources

Concordances list every word found in the Bible and every place where each word is used. Software tools are the most comprehensive bible study resources.