HISTORY OF
THE BIBLE

LESSON 11 – THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH
(FROM TYNDALE)
FROM GOD TO US

INSPIRATION

CANONIZATION

TRANSMISSION

TRANSLATION
Translation of the Bible
The Bible in English
The first complete printed English Bible
Compiled by Miles Coverdale in 1535
Based on Tyndale’s NT translation and his Pentateuch and Jonah. The rest of the OT and Apocrypha was translated by Coverdale from Luther’s German Bible & Latin Vulgate
Tyndale’s portion superior but Coverdale occasionally improved phraseology
Dedicated to king & queen with no serious opposition

Beginning of Genesis from the Coverdale Bible (1535)
Matthew’s Bible (1537)

- Published by John Rogers under the pen name of Thomas Matthew in 1537
- Uses Tyndale’s NT and published (Gen-Deut; Jonah) and unpublished (possibly through 2Chronicles) OT trans.
- Uses Coverdale’s translation from German and Latin for the rest of the OT
- Has become the basis of every English translation to present
- Protestant reformer Rogers was burned at the stake in 1555 under the catholic Mary Tudor

Beginning of Mark from Matthew’s Bible (1537)

Taverner’s Bible (1539)

- First Bible to be printed entirely in England.
- A minor revision of Matthew’s 1537 Bible
- Edited by Richard Taverner, who was imprisoned in the Tower of London for translating the Bible
- He later regained favor and was given a license to preach
- Taverner’s revisions had little influence on later translations
The Great Bible (1539)

- First authorized English translation (by Henry VIII) to be read aloud in the churches
- Prepared by Miles Coverdale mostly as a revision of Matthew’s revision
- Contains much from Tyndale’s translation (with some objectionable material revised)
- Coverdale translated the rest of the Bible from the German and Latin
- Called the Great Bible because of its large size

End of Mark and beginning of Luke from the Great Bible (1539)

Image from http://www.nwcu.edu/academics/library/rare-bible-collection/
Becke’s Bible (1549, 51)

- Edmund Becke was a publisher/printer
- Essentially Taverner’s OT and Tyndale’s NT, which carries over many of the mistakes that Taverner corrected
The Geneva Bible (1560)

- By English protestants who fled Mary’s persecution to Geneva where Calvin taught – Calvinistic influence (esp in copious margin notes)
- Basically a revision of Tyndale and Coverdale
- First Bible with all of OT translated from Hebrew
- The first Bible to have verse numbers (after Stephanus’ 1551 Greek edition)
- Very popular among lay people – Bible of Bunyan, Shakespeare, Cromwell, Mayflower Pilgrims and Jamestown colonists
The Geneva Bible’s Anti-papal Notes

Notes on Rev. 11 saying the Pope has his power from Hell
Image from http://www.kingscollections.org/exhibitions/specialcollections/bible/elizabethan-bible/geneva-bible

Notes on Rev. 17:4 saying the Pope is the Antichrist
The Bishop’s Bible (1568)

- The Geneva Bible was deemed too Calvinistic for the established church of England
- The 2nd Bible authorized by church and translated by bishops in the church
- Basically a revision of the Great Bible of 1539 (1st authorized)
- Found in the churches from 1568-1611
- Revised in 1602, the text of which was prescribed as the base text of the King James Version of 1611
Mary’s successor, Queen Elizabeth I, caused English Catholics to flee to Flanders – ultimately founded a seminary in Douay (France)

- Catholic scholars worked on a translation from the Latin Vulgate, NT published in Rheims, France in 1582
- Considered too Latinized and too literal for public worship
- A polemic version whose margin notes rival those of Geneva Bible (notes on Matt. 6:24 – cannot serve two masters: God & Baal, Christ & Calvin)
King James Bible (1611)

- Commissioned by King James I of England in 1604 to replace the Geneva Bible (popular with the people) and the Bishop’s Bible (popular with the clergy)
- 54 translators chosen and instructed to use Bishop’s Bible as base text unless another translation better suited the original language
- A revision “appointed to be read in the churches”
- Most popular English translation of all-time, unrivaled until ‘modern’ translations (1885-pres)

Beginning of Hebrews from the King James Version (1611) – note the reference to Paul as the author!

Image from https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/1611_Hebrews-Chapter-1/
Early English Printed Bibles

- Great Bible (1539)
- Matthews Bible (1537)
- Coverdale Bible (1535)
- Tyndale Bible (1526)
- Geneva Bible (1560)
- Bishop’s Bible (1568)
- King James Version (1611)
- Douay-Rheims (1610) from Latin

Erasmus Greek NT
5 editions

Image from https://www.lcoggt.org/Bible%20Origin.htm
Revised Version (1885)

- The only authorized and recognized revision of the King James Version in Britain
- British work with cooperation from some American scholars
- Most famous among the translation committee were Westcott & Hort
- Goal was to update the KJV to “adapt it to the present standard of biblical scholarship”
- Greek text basis was thought to be higher quality than the textus receptus and NT had 30,000 changes from KJV
American Standard Version (1901)

- An American revision of the KJV
- The American scholars on the RSV committee agreed not to publish for 14 years
- Incorporates many revisions rejected by the RV committee (mostly for a more American vs. English usage)
- Uses “Jehovah” for the Hebrew Tetragrammaton instead of “LORD”
- Uses “Holy Spirit” rather than “Holy Ghost”
- Basis for the RSV, NRSV, ESV, NASB & the Living Bible
English Version Comparisons

Who to believe in?

John 6:47

KJV – 1611
47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath everlasting life.

ASV - 1901
47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth hath eternal life.

ESV – 2001
47 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.

The modern English translations of the 20th century have come under attack for “removing” the words “on me,” saying this is a heretical attempt to remove faith in the person of Jesus Christ as necessary for salvation. However…

John 6:40 (ASV 1901)
40 For this is the will of my Father, that every one that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Just seven verses before, all modern versions contain the exact phrase that is missing in verse 47. This indicates that there is no theological tampering with the verse, but rather the phrase “on me” was added in the later manuscripts to harmonize with verse 40.
English Version Comparisons

Colossians 1:14

KJV – 1611
14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

ASV - 1901
14 in whom we have our redemption, the forgiveness of our sins:

ESV – 2001
14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The modern English translations of the 20th century have come under attack for “removing” the words “through his blood,” saying this is a heretical attempt to remove the blood of Christ as our atoning sacrifice. However…

7 in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, [Ephesians 1:7 (ASV 1901)]

In Ephesians (a very similar book to Colossians), all modern versions contain the exact phrase that is missing in Colossians. This indicates that there is no theological tampering with the verse, but rather the phrase was added in Colossians in the later manuscripts to harmonize with the verse in Ephesians.
Revised Standard Version (1952)

- Revision of the ASV
- Considered by some to be a theologically liberal translation
- Used the NA17 Greek text, newly discovered DSS for Isaiah
- Controversially translated “young woman” instead of “virgin” in Is. 7:14
- Reverted back to “LORD” rather than the ASV’s “Jehovah”
- Basis for the NRSV & ESV
New World Translation
(1961)

- Published by the Watch Tower Society (Jehovah’s Witness)
- An original translation from the Greek and Hebrew
- The translating team members requested their names not be made known saying they did not want to, “advertise themselves but let all the glory go to the Author of the Scriptures, God.”
- Only one member, Frederick Franz, was later found to have any sufficient knowledge of the original languages
- A heretical translation that diminishes the person of Jesus Christ
# English Version Comparisons

## Who is Jesus Christ?

**John 1:1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KJV – 1611</strong></td>
<td>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ESV - 2001</strong></td>
<td>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Jerusalem Bible (Catholic)</strong></td>
<td>In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New World Translation (Jehovah’s Witness)</strong></td>
<td>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was <em>a god</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The presence of an indefinite article in the Jehovah’s Witness translation reduces Jesus from 100% God in the flesh to just “a god.”
Colossians 1:15-17

ESV - 2001
15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.  16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.  17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

New World Translation (Jehovah’s Witness)
15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him.  17 Also, he is before all other things, and by means of him all other things were made to exist.

The Jehovah’s Witness translation adds the word “other” which is not found in any Greek manuscript in order to reduce Jesus to a created being.
The Jerusalem Bible (1966)

- First Catholic translation from the original biblical languages (follows the *divino afflante spiritu* by Pope Pius XII in 1943 which allowed this for the first time)
- J. R. R. Tolkien translated the book of Jonah
- First widely-accepted English version for Catholics since the Douay-Rheims in 1610
- Translates the Hebrew tetragrammaton as *Yahweh*
- New Jerusalem Bible (NJB) published in 1985
New American Standard Bible (1971)

- A new translation from the original languages in the style of the ASV
- Considered the most literal of all major 20th century translations
- Well known for its fidelity to original languages
- Uses the NA23 Greek text and the *Biblia Hebraica* text as well as the DSS
- Significant revision in 1995 to modernize
The Living Bible (1971)

- A paraphrase based on the ASV
- Created by Kenneth Taylor, who’s children were the inspiration for the Living Bible as he would paraphrase the KJV during their devotions so they would understand
New International Version (1978)

- Began in 1956 to produce a Bible in the common language of the American people
- A balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought methodology
- One of the first to break the Tyndale-King James chain
- Most popular translation in any language in history
- 2011 update removes much of the gender-neutral language of previous versions
**New King James Version (1982)**

- Conceived by Arthur Farstad with the aim to update the language and grammar of the King James Version.
- Replaces 2nd person pronouns such “thee” and “thine”, and corresponding verb forms such as “speakest” with modern equivalents.
- Uses the Leningrad Codex for OT text, which was not used by KJV.
- Uses the *textus receptus* for the NT, just as the KJV, but acknowledges different readings of the modern critical texts in the center column.

- A revision of the RSV
- Intended to serve as a translation for devotional, liturgical, scholarly needs of the broadest number of religious adherents
- The version most popular among liberal scholars and in scholarly publications
New Living Translation (1996)

- Started as a revision of the Living Bible, but became a new translation from the original languages
- 2nd most popular English Bible currently based on unit sales
- A thought-for-thought paraphrase in simple English
English Standard Version (2001)

- A revision of the 1971 RSV text (6% change)
- To fill a stated need for a new literal translation for scholars and pastors
- Translates the NA27 Greek text in the NT and the BHS for the OT
- Becoming more and more popular, catching up to the NIV
- Now used by the Gideons (but with ~50 changes back towards the textus receptus)
The Message (2002)

- Created and translated by Eugene Peterson to stimulate his congregation who was getting bored with the biblical text as they knew it.
- A highly idiomatic paraphrase from the original languages using contemporary slang rather than neutral international English.
- Not a study Bible, rather it reads like a pastor preaching a sermon on the Bible. It is a devotional. **It is not the Word of God**.
Matthew 6:9–13 (The Message)
With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this:

Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what’s best—
as above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others.
Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil.
You’re in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You’re ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.
Misleading Passages in the Message?

John 3:5 (The Message)
5–6 Jesus said, “You’re not listening. Let me say it again. Unless a person submits to this original creation—the ‘wind-hovering-over-the-water’ creation, the invisible moving the visible, a baptism into a new life—it’s not possible to enter God’s kingdom.

James 4:7 (The Message)
7–10 So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper.
The History and Popularity of English Bible Translations

(according to Wikipedia)

Middle English

- Wycliffe's Bible

John Wycliffe led the way in translating the Bible from Latin to the English, the language of the common man, in 1380.

Early Modern English

- The King James Version (KJV) is highly popular despite its age and less familiar language.
- AV or KJV
- Geneva Bible
- Tyndale Bible
- Douay-Rheims Bible
- Great Bible
- Coverdale Bible
- Matthew's Bible

Modern English

- The New International Version (NIV) is the most popular modern translation but the English Standard Version (ESV) may soon take its place.
- NIV
- ESV
- ESV
- MSG
- NKJV
- ASV
- RSV (ERV)
- JB
- HCSB
- NLT
- YLT
- RV
- WEB
- EBR
- YLT
- DBY
- Recent decades have seen a large increase in new translations.


# English Bible Translation Comparison

**Formal Equivalence (Word for Word)**
- **theory**: 'literal' or 'word-for-word'
- **aim**: to retain the form, i.e. the words and structure, of the original text as much as possible
- **result**: an English translation that is primarily accurate, yet also comprehensible

**Intermediate**
- **theory**: mediating between 'literal' and 'idiomatic'
- **aim**: to retain the form of the original text where possible, without compromising its function, i.e. to convey meaning
- **result**: an English translation that is both accurate and clear

**Functional Equivalence (Meaning for Meaning)**
- **theory**: 'idiomatic' or 'meaning-for-meaning'
- **aim**: to retain the function of the original text, i.e. to convey meaning, as much as possible
- **result**: to produce an English translation that is primarily natural and easy to understand

Paraphrase = re-wording a text in the same language, rather than translating it from one language to another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formal Equivalence</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Functional Equivalence</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>NASB 1971</td>
<td>NAB 1978</td>
<td>GNT 1995</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJV 1611</td>
<td>JB 1966</td>
<td>GW 1995</td>
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<td>ASV 1955</td>
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<td>NKJV 1982</td>
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<td>RSV 1952</td>
<td>NJB 1985</td>
<td>CEV 1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESV 2001</td>
<td>REB 1989</td>
<td>TLB 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Abbreviations**
- ASV = American Standard Version
- Esv = English Standard Version
- KJV = King James Version
- NASB = New American Standard Bible
- NKJV = New King James Version
- NRSV = New Revised Standard Version
- RSV = Revised Standard Version
- HCSB = Holman Christian Standard Bible
- JB = Jerusalem Bible (Roman Catholic)
- NAB = New American Bible (Roman Catholic)
- NEB = New English Bible
- NET = New English Translation (online translation)
- NIV = New International Version
- NJB = New Jerusalem Bible (Roman Catholic)
- TNIV = Today's New International Version
- REB = Revised English Bible
- CEV = Contemporary English Version
- GNT = Good News Translation (Good News Bible)
- GW = God’s Word
- MSG = The Message
- NCV = New Century Version
- NLT = New Living Translation
- TLB = The Living Bible

*Image from https://relevancy22.blogspot.com/2011_11_30_archive.html*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Manuscripts</th>
<th>Variation in Original Manuscripts</th>
<th>Translation Variants</th>
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<td>NET</td>
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Notes on Reading this Chart:

I've created this chart for my own personal reference, and as a teaching tool. All variations are described in reference to the King James Version. This is not to imply that the reading of the KJV is superior to the others, but only to make comparison easier. Please understand that there are many, many variations among the translations. For this chart, I've chosen only a few verses for Comparison, to show the preferences of the translators and the variation between the different manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments.

The translations I chose to compare are by no means an exhaustive list. I chose a sampling of old English translations that are freely available, as well as some of the most popular recent translations that people are reading today. For brevity, I have omitted many mid-20th century which have been replaced by newer versions, such as the RSV and many older variants of the NIV.

On the inclusion of the Douay-Rheims: This purpose of this chart is not to show the differences between the Latin text and the texts generally accepted by protestant Christians—that would be a study for another time. However, I have included the DR in this comparison to show how the Latin text renders the selected verses in comparison. Many people claim that the modern translations follow the “Latin Vulgate,” but it can be seen from this chart that, in fact, the Vulgate and the TR agree in many places where both vary from the critical text.

I hope and pray you find this chart useful. If you have corrections or suggestions, please email me: filforms@gmail.com.
English Bible Translation Chart

Image from https://www.pinterest.com/kelseydyck/bible-history/