

What Version Should I Use?

1. When you watch a foreign film/anime, which do you prefer watching: The original language and English Subtitles or English Dubs?
2. Why do you like your Bible Version?

Translation : an act, process, or instance of translating: as **a** : a rendering from one language into another; *also* : the product of such a rendering **b** : a change to a different substance, form, or appearance : conversion *c (1)* : a transformation of coordinates in which the new axes are parallel to the old ones (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

1. The English Bible we read today was originally in Hebrew and Aramaic for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament. As the Jewish world change historically and culturally, translating from the original Hebrew language to the language spoken in that era became necessary.
2. These manuscripts became the sources biblical scholars used to translate the Bible into English Versions. Some of these sources includes:
 - a. *Septuagint*: A group of Jewish scholars in Alexandria (intellectual center) translated the Pentateuch into Greek. Tradition says that 70 Jewish scholars worked on the translation.
 - b. *Masoretic Text*: These are considered the authoritative Hebrew Scriptures for the Jewish Bible. The masoretes were scribes and scholars in the 7th to 11th Century in Jerusalem that preserved and copied Hebrew Scriptures.
 - c. *Dead Sea Scrolls*: A collection of manuscripts discovered in 1946 in a series of caves near the Dead Sea.
 - d. *Greek Manuscripts*: thousands of New Testament manuscripts exist today for study, which have been collected into books such as the Greek New Testament Textus Receptus, and Novum Testamentum Graece or known as Nestle-Aland editions.

“Theory of Translation has to do with whether one puts primary emphasis on formal or on functional equivalency, that is, the degree to which one is willing to go in order to bridge the gap between the two languages, either in use of the words and grammar or in bridging the historical distance by offering a modern equivalent.” (How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth p. 41)

1. Translators need to take the **original language** and transfer them to the **receptor language** (the receiving language); English is our receptor language. The translator must express the original ideas conveyed in the original text to the receptor language. The translator has to cross the **historical distance** that exists between the two languages such as weights and measures, slang and cultural traditions.

2. This has led to three approaches of translation that the scholars would follow as they decide how to translate a text.
 - a. **Formal Equivalence:** is the translation approach that tries to keep the form in grammar and words of the original Hebrew or Greek text. The figures of speech, cultural and historical distance are transferred into the receptor language.
 - i. ¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind and said,² "Who is this that darkens counsel By words without knowledge?³ "Now gird up your loins like a man, And I will ask you, and you instruct Me! Job 38:1-3 (NASB)
 - ii. ¹⁴ "Make for yourself an ark of gopher wood; you shall make the ark with rooms, and shall cover it inside and out with pitch.¹⁵ "This is how you shall make it: the length of the ark three hundred cubits, its breadth fifty cubits , and its height thirty cubits . Gen 6:14-15 (NASB)
 - iii. ³⁵ She said to her father, "Let not my lord be angry that I cannot rise before you, for the manner of women is upon me." So he searched but did not find the household idols. Gen 31:35 (NASB)
 - b. **Functional/ Dynamic Equivalence:** is the translation approach that keeps the meaning of the original languages but conveys their original figures of speech, grammar, monetary, weights and measures to what we would use in our language. The cultural distance is a closer than the Formal Equivalence.
 - i. ¹ Then the LORD answered Job out of the storm. He said:
² "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge? ³ Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. Job 38:1-3 (NIV)
 - ii. ¹⁴ So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. Gen 6:14-15 (NIV)
 - iii. ³⁵ Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry, my lord, that I cannot stand up in your presence; I'm having my period." So he searched but could not find the household gods. Gen 31:35 (NIV)
 - c. **Free Translation:** is the translation approach that keeps the meaning and ideas of the original text and with a low priority on the original words and closes the historical distance between the two languages. This is often called paraphrase.
 - i. ¹ And now, finally, GOD answered Job from the eye of a violent storm. He said:
² "Why do you confuse the issue? Why do you talk without knowing what you're talking about? ³ Pull yourself together, Job! Up on your feet! Stand tall! I have some questions for you, and I want some straight answers. Job 38:1-3 (MSG)
 - ii. ¹⁴ "Build yourself a ship from teakwood. Make rooms in it. Coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵ Make it 450 feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. Gen 6:14-15 (MSG)
 - iii. ³⁵ Rachel said to her father, "Don't think I'm being disrespectful, my master, that I can't stand before you, but I'm having my period." So even though he turned the place upside down in his search, he didn't find the household gods. Gen 31:35 (MSG)
3. These three theories guide scholars in how they make choices in how to translate a text. Even the most literal translations do paraphrase when the need arises.

“...even the KJV, often viewed as the most literal of Bible translations, occasionally resorts to

paraphrase, as in 1 Peter 1:18, where the one Greek word *patroparadotou* (father-tradition) must be rendered “receive by tradition from your fathers.” (Introduction to Biblical Interpretation p. 126)

- The chart below is an example of a comparison of modern bible versions found in “How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth” Fee p. 42

Formal Equivalence (Literal)			Functional Equivalence (Dynamic)				Free Translation (Paraphrase)	
KJV	NASB	RSV	NIV	NAB	GNB	JB	NEB	LB
NKJV	NASU	NRSV ESV	TNIV	NJB	REB	NLT		The Message

King James Bible Only Movement

The movement believes for various reasons that the KJV is the authoritative biblical version. This means that other modern bible versions not based on the KJV manuscript sources are inferior or in error.

“But, in fact, most of these manuscripts come from the “Byzantine” family of texts (a collection of manuscripts with similar readings and geographic origins suggesting that they all derived from one or a few exemplars) associated with the world power that ruled from Constantinople after the fall of Rome. So naturally, their manuscripts of the NT were most widely copied and well preserved. But none of the oldest manuscripts, most were discovered since 1611, come from this tradition, and so our knowledge of what the biblical writes themselves actually wrote has improved greatly since the days of the KJV” (Introduction to Biblical Interpretation p. 127)

How Do I Choose a Version?

I would recommend that you read from one reliable version most of the time. Reading one version consistently helps you in memorization and familiarity with the Bible. Many people choose multiple versions to gain a broader understanding what a passage meaning is or exegetical studies. I have included on the last page a table of common modern English versions and their manuscript source as a resource.

Modern Bible Versions

Bible	Approach	Date	Source
American Standard Version	Formal Equivalent	1901	Masoretic Text, Westcott and Hort 1881 and Tregelles 1857
English Standard Version	Formal Equivalent	2001	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia; Greek New Testament; Novum Testamentum Graece</i>
Good News Bible	Functional Equivalent	1976	
King James Version	Formal Equivalent	1611	Masoretic Text, Textus Receptus.
The Living Bible	Functional Equivalent	1971	American Standard Version (paraphrase)
The Message	Free Translation	2002	
New American Standard Bible	Formal Equivalent	1971	Masoretic Text, Nestle-Aland Text
New International Version	Functional Equivalent	1978	Masoretic Text, Greek New Testament.
New King James Version	Formal Equivalent	1982	Masoretic Text, Textus Receptus
New Living Translation	Functional Equivalent	1996	Masoretic Text, Greek New Testament
New Revised Standard Version	Formal Equivalent	1989	Revision of the Revised Standard Version.
Revised Standard Version	Formal Equivalent	1952	Masoretic Text, Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament.
Today's New International Version	Functional Equivalent	2005	Revision of the New International Version.