

Lesson 10 - Bible Translations

Main Point: There are many different Bible translations and it is important to know the difference between them including their translation philosophy and what manuscripts they used for their translation.

REVIEW: We know that the Bible is reliable. All we have to do is use the MAPS acronym to help us. **M**anuscript evidence tells us that the documents we have are very trustworthy and the events in the Bible have also been confirmed by secular historians throughout history (Josephus acknowledges Jesus lived and died on a cross). **A**rcheology also confirms that the places and events that are talked about in the Bible were real places and the events really did happen. This has been proven over and over again. **P**rophecies have been told in the Bible and it is incredible that the prophecies always come true just as the Bible predicted. One great example was Ezekiel prophesying about the city of Tyre in Ezek. 26. **S**tatistics: If the chance that only 8 prophecies of Jesus being fulfilled is 1 in 800,000,000,000.

What You'll Need

- materials for power-point if possible (T.V. or projector and computer)
- Make copies of handout for all the teens.
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HOOK:

To start off this morning I would like to read you a rendition if you will of a popular passage of Scripture from a modern translation and you tell me where this is from. (If you want to get a guy or girl from your youth group to read it and put some attitude in it to make it funny that would be good also).

Jesus raps with his brothers on the Hill

One day as folks were starting to press all round Jesus, He decided to go up on a hill for a minute to rap with His chosen brothers.

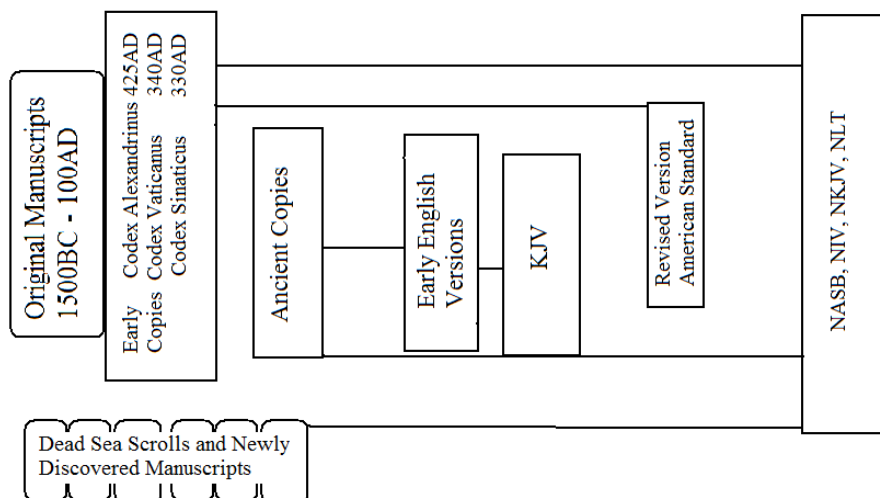
He wanted them to know what was up. "You know, there's a little something for everybody," Jesus told `em. "Brothers who are down in the way they feel, they ain't got nothing to worry `bout `cuz the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them. Even those who feel like they've lost, can be on the one again `cuz there will be arms `round `em to make `em feel better. And you know those brothers who seem weak and on the bottom of the tadpole, the world is theirs. No kidding. And those folks who always do right, got a kind word to say, a good deed or two to do, it's coming back to `em in spades. If a brother shows kindness and mercy, it's coming back to him more than he can count.

Righteousness is given to those whose hearts are pure and good, for in the end they shall see the Almighty. And those that keep the peace, my brothers, shall be called the Almighty's children. But, those who are dissed and stepped on `cuz they are trying to do the right thing, the kingdom of heaven is theirs. And here's the kicker," Jesus told them. "If you have to suffer `cuz you're main brothers, no matter what it is, ou gotta know that in the end, the ultimate is gonna be laid on you. It'll be worth more than gold." - Black Bible Chronicles (Matthew 5:1-12)

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There are also, and usually more outspoken people who think that newer translations are corrupt and pervert the gospel. One such quote says:

In “Challenging Dangers of Modern Versions” Taylor criticizes modern translations by saying, “*So-called Bibles now come in all sizes, in all shapes and with an INFAMOUS variety of conflicting sentiments expressed and outright perversions conveyed. This is NOW true and WE ARE ONLY AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS MOUNTING MULTIPLICITY, THIS PERSISTENT PROLIFERATION!!!*”



I guess one of the best ways for us to look at English versions is to look at how they came about. In this picture that you see you can kind of see how we got our different Bible translations. Now really it is a lot more complicated than this but I wanted to simply it so it would be easy to read. In a little bit we are going to talk about kind of the philosophy behind them and how they can sound so different.

As you can see in this picture we started out with the original manuscripts or autographs which we of course do not have anymore. After those the closest thing we have to them is the Big 3 (Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, Sinaiticus). After those came many ancient copies and other translations such as the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac that we already mentioned and there were many other very early Bible translations. But once the Vulgate was written and completed in the early 400s it became the official Bible of the church and no others were allowed to be used. There were then these early versions of the English Bible all of which led up to the KJV. However, as you can see from this chart the KJV only used earlier English versions and ancient copies for its text for its version. It worked off of a Greek text known as the Textus Receptus which means “Received Text.”

One of the biggest concerns of the KJV is that the Greek translation used for the KJV, the Textus Receptus, is a faulty text. The Textus Receptus was compiled by Erasmus and first



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Formal equivalence

A literal translation tries to remain as close to the original text as possible, without adding the translators' ideas and thoughts into the translation. Thus, the argument goes, the more literal the translation is, the less danger there is of corrupting the original message. This is therefore much more of a word-for-word view of translation. The problem with this form of translation is that it assumes a moderate degree of familiarity with the subject matter on the part of the reader. The King James Version (KJV) and English Standard Version (ESV) are two examples of this kind of translation. For example, most printings of the KJV italicize words that are implied but not actually in the original source text, since words must sometimes be added to have valid English grammar. Thus, even a formal equivalence translation has at least some modification of sentence structure and regard for contextual usage of words. But where the English idiom does not correspond with the original text, the words often come out sounding cumbersome and not understandable.

Dynamic equivalence

A dynamic equivalence (free) translation tries to clearly convey the thoughts and ideas of the source text. A literal translation, it is argued, may obscure the intention of the original author. A free translator attempts to convey the subtleties of context and subtext in the work, so that the reader is presented with both a translation of the language and the context. The New Living Translation (NLT) is an example of a translation that uses dynamic equivalence. The New International Version (NIV) attempts to strike a balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought.

Paraphrase

A paraphrase, or thought-for-thought, translation goes even further than dynamic equivalence, and attempts to convey some key concepts while not retaining even a dynamic equivalence with the text. Paraphrases may even omit large sections of text, or add other explanatory material not in the original as part of the main text. Paraphrases are typically not intended for in-depth study, but are instead intended to put the basic message of the Bible into language which could be readily understood by the typical reader without a theological or linguistic background. What would be an example of a paraphrase? The Message Bible is an example of this kind of translation. The Living Bible is a paraphrase in the sense of rewording an English translation, rather than a translation using the paraphrase method.

Look at this chart below and you can kind of see how the different Bible versions would fit on this scale ranging from the most literal to the most paraphrastic. Do you have a Bible that is not on here that you read? What is it and I will tell you where it goes. I remember when I was studying Greek they would give us passages of Scripture to translate from Greek to English and so I would be sitting there trying to translate Acts 4:5-11 and what was really funny is that after I translated it from the original Greek just word for word as it was written without changing anything or even trying to make it flow or make more sense it many times was exactly what the NASB had. That is just how literal the NASB is. It was also a great way to get the right answers on your homework but we won't talk about that.

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Let's look at a few different versions and see the differences between them. John 1:1-5

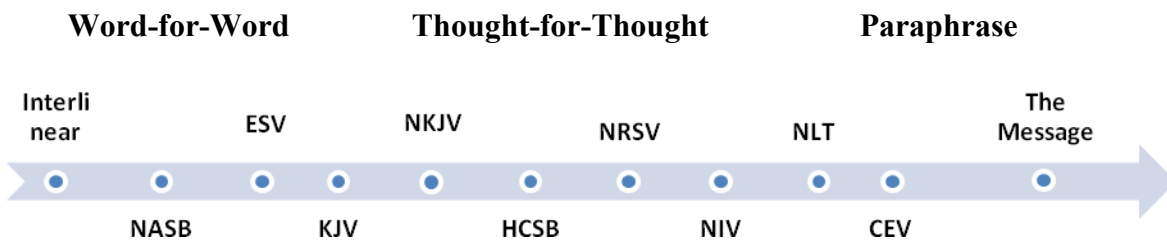
¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (NIV)

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ⁵The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (NASB)

The Word was first, the Word present to God, God present to the Word. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. ⁵Everything was created through him; nothing—not one thing!— came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out. (The Message)

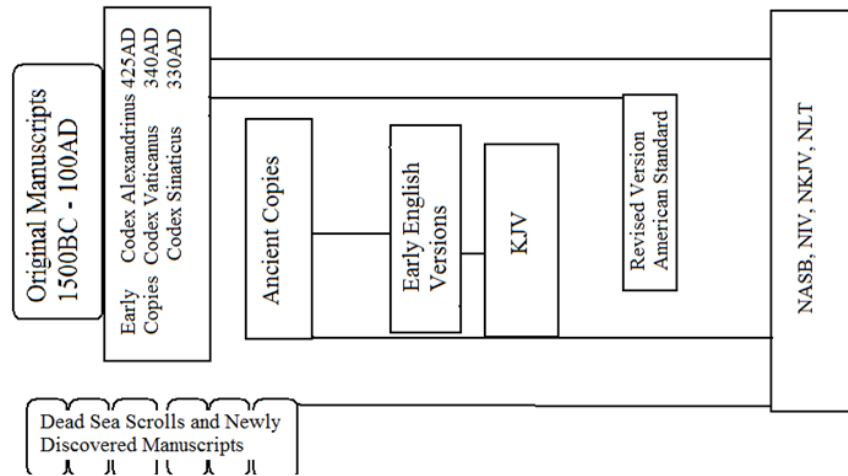
¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it (ESV)

You can tell from these translations how they each sound different and how in verse 5 two versions translate the word comprehend or understand and the other two translate it overcome. Not only is the wording different but sometimes they even translate a Greek word differently.



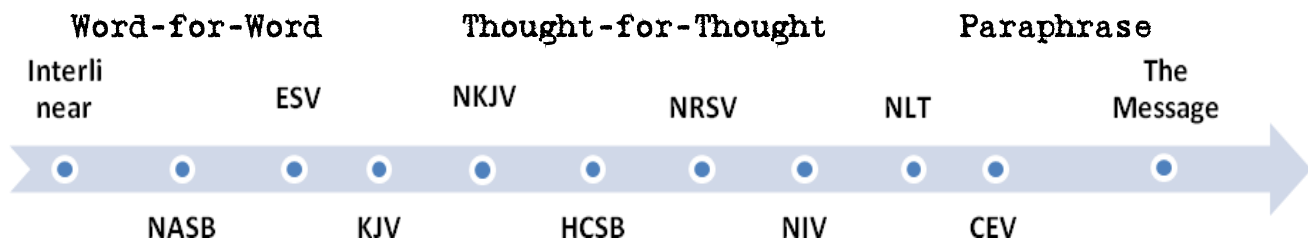
Really the best thing to do would be to read the Bible from a few different versions. To read a Word-for-Word Bible such as the NASB, ESV, or KJV then read a Bible from a Thought-for-Thought perspective such as an NIV or NLT then a Paraphrase such as the CEV or the Message. By doing this you can really get a good perspective on the Bible by looking at it from different angles. I hope this has helped you to have a better understanding of the different translations that are used and how they can sound so different.

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Question, if the translators were using the Textus Receptus and it was using manuscripts from the 900s-1200s was the KJV reliable? Yes it was because we have talked about how the Bible was faithfully transmitted over the centuries. However, there were some small mistakes in the KJV that are corrected by later translations and to be fair the KJV has gotten some things right that some of the newer translations have gotten wrong.

Another reasons we have so many translations is because there are two different ways to look at translating a text: (1) literal, or "word-for-word" in which translators use the original manuscripts to interpret word for word from the original language; (2) dynamic interpretation, or "thought-for-thought" in which translators render meaning by meaning. Because thought-for-thought is not as concerned with strict adherence to the original text as to a more natural rendering in the target language, it is sometimes used when the readability of the translation is more important than the preservation of the original wording.



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