

Understanding Bible Translation

1. Translation is taking one language and wording its truth into another.
2. The King James Bible 1611 A.D.
 - a. King James, King of England, authorized the Church of England to make a translation of the Bible.
 - b. This is the first translation ever authorized by a king in the language of the common people. It was done by a committee and took 12 years to finish.

Definitions:

1. **Autographs:** The original writings penned by the inspired Bible authors. The original handwritten manuscripts produced by the human authors of Scripture were probably circulated and copied so many times that they wore out. None of them are now known to exist. It is also believed because of *Biblio-Idolatry* God has seen fit to allow all of the *autographs* (original handwritten manuscripts) to be lost, probably to avoid the religious human tendency to focus on relics, articles, and geographic places rather than on God Himself.
2. **Biblio-Idolatry:** The worship of the Bible in any form. This is a form of idolatry because it takes the focus off of Christ. The sacred scriptures are to be loved, cherished, studied, meditated upon, and appreciated, but never worshiped.
3. **Scribe:** Individual whose sole job was to copy the scriptures exactly, word for word. Listed are just a few of the many rules the Jewish scribes had to follow:
 1. For example, they had to use a special mixture of black ink.
 2. The transcription had to be done on the parchment of a clean animal.
 3. The exact number of words and letters on each line had to match the original.
 4. Every word and letter was counted.
 5. Each column had to have no fewer than 48 and no more than 60 lines.
 6. Scribes were not allowed to copy from memory.
 7. Nor could they copy sentence for sentence or even word for word.
 8. Scripture had to be copied letter for letter.

9. The work was inspected by at least three senior specialist scribes.
10. If there was an omission or if two letters touched, the entire script was rejected.
11. Other particulars involved width and height; exact spaces between letters, words, and pages and between numbers of columns and lines to the column; and much more.
12. The process was scrupulously strict.
13. Such was the standard to maintain the integrity of the copied work.

Four Kinds of Translation

The Bible versions listed below for each translation is not an all-inclusive list

1. **Literal or Total Equivalent Translation:** This is a word-for-word rendering from the Greek and Hebrew texts with any added words of phrases italicized. The goal is first of all accuracy to the Greek, and secondly readability and understanding. Bible examples of this are: **King James (KJV), New King James (NKJV), New American Standard (NASB).**
2. **Dynamic Equivalent Translation:** This is a thought-for-thought rendering from the Greek and Hebrew texts. In this type of translation, emphasis is placed on readability, occasionally at the expense of literal accuracy. While a very valuable form of Bible translation, it allows for more of the translator's personal bias and opinion to enter in. Bible examples of this are: **New International Version (NIV), New Revised Standard Version (NRAV), Moffatt's, New English Bible (NEB), Barclay's, the New Living Translation (NLT).**
3. **Modern English Translation:** This is a concept-for-concept translation. Often verse divisions are lost in an attempt to format the text in modern sentence and paragraphs style. The primary concern of the translators is that the general sense of the Text is brought forth in a highly readable manner. While valuable and often accurate, it can no way replace a literal translation for serious Bible students because it often relies too heavily on the translator's personal bias and opinion. Bible examples of this are: **J.B. Phillip's – The New Testament in Modern English, New Century Bible, Good News for Modern Man.**

4. **Paraphrase Translation:** This is not a translation at all, but a rewording of the Bible in the same language with little or no attempt made to study the original languages. For new converts and young believers a paraphrase can be valuable. Unfortunately, much of man's opinion enters into the text. Bible examples of this are: **The Living Bible, Baxter's, Hammond's, or The Message Bible.**

When teaching, I prefer to use the New King James Version of the Bible. It is a complete, word-for-word equivalent translation of the Bible, noting any information added by the translators with italics.

It is important to note that all honestly translated versions have incredible worth. No serious Bible student should be without a good literal translation of the Bible such as the King James Version, New King James Version, or the New American Standard Version.

The important thing is that you correctly understand the Word. Find a **Literal or Total Equivalent Translation** that speaks to you for study, but for your devotional qualities and for aid in understanding, use a **Dynamic Equivalent Translation, or Modern English Translation, or a Paraphrase Translation.**

Pastor David M. Campbell Sr.