

Why so many translations?

The Bible in English Translations

History of English Translation

- 1,400 BC: The Ten Commandments delivered to Moses.
- 500 BC: Completion of all original Hebrew manuscripts which make up the 39 Books of the Old Testament.
- 200 BC: Completion of the Septuagint Greek Manuscripts which contain the 39 Old Testament Books AND 14 Apocrypha Books.
- 1st Century AD: Completion of All Original Greek Manuscripts which make up the 27 Books of the New Testament.
- 315 AD: Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, identifies the 27 books of the New Testament which are today recognized as the canon of scripture.
- 382 AD: Jerome's Latin Vulgate Manuscripts Produced which contain All 80 Books (39 Old Test + 14 Apocrypha + 27 New Test).
- 500 AD: Scriptures have been translated into over 500 Languages.
- 600 AD: Latin was the only language allowed for scripture according to Catholic church.
- 995 AD: Anglo-Saxon (early roots of English language) translations of the New Testament produced.
- 1384 AD: Wycliffe is the first person to produce a (hand-written) manuscript in English of the complete Bible; all 80 books.
- 1455 AD: Gutenberg invents the printing press. The first book ever printed is Gutenberg's Bible in Latin.

History of English Translation

- 1516 AD: Erasmus produces a Greek/Latin parallel New Testament.
- 1522 AD: Martin Luther's German New Testament.
- 1526 AD: William Tyndale's New Testament becomes the first New Testament printed in the English language.
- 1535 AD: Myles Coverdale's Bible becomes the first complete Bible printed in the English language (80 Books: O.T. & N.T. & Apocrypha).
- 1537 AD: Tyndale-Matthews Bible is the second complete Bible printed in English. Done by John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers (80 books).
- 1560 AD: The Geneva Bible becomes the first English language Bible to add numbered verses to each chapter (80 Books).
- 1611 AD: The King James Bible is printed, originally with all 80 books. The Apocrypha was officially removed in 1885 leaving only 66 books.
- 1782 AD: Robert Aitken's Bible **becomes the first English language Bible (KJV) printed in America**

The Current Situation

- There are more versions of the Bible in English than any other language.
- At least twenty-five different English translations of the entire Bible and approximately forty of the New Testament.
 - Revisions of existing translations
 - Original translations which are based only upon the Hebrew and Greek scriptures.

The Current Situation

- Some of the major ones:
 - Revised Standard Version (NT 1946; complete Bible, 1952)
 - J. B. Phillips' The New Testament in Modern English (1958)
 - Amplified Bible (1965)
 - Jerusalem Bible (1966)
 - New American Bible (1970)
 - New English Bible (1970)
 - New American Standard Bible (1971)
 - The Living Bible (1971)
 - New International Version (1973)

The Current Situation

- There have even been revisions of these versions.
 - NASB was updated in 1995.
 - The NIV has been recently updated with the TNIV, Today's New International Version.
 - The RSV has been updated with the ESV.
 - The Living Bible has been updated with the New Living Translation, which itself has recently been revised.
- Currently in production are the NET Bible and the Holman Christian Standard Bible.

Why does this situation exist?

- There are different translation philosophies at work.
 - **Functional Equivalence:** Word for word. The translation of one language into another retaining as much as possible the original forms of the first language.
 - **Dynamic Equivalence:** Phrase for phrase. The translation of one language into another with a goal of translating the meaning of the original without regard to the forms of the first language.

Functional and Dynamic Equivalence

- quand les poulets aient les dents
- when chicken have teeth
- when pigs fly
- That will never happen.

Examples of Extremely Literal Translation

■ Matthew 1:18

- Tou/ de. Vhsou/ Cristou/ h` ge,nesij ou[twj h=nÅ mnhssteuqei,shj th/j mhtro.j auvtou/ Mari,aj tw/| Vlwsh,f(pri.n h' sunelqei/n auvtou.j eu`re,qh evn gastri. e;cousa evk pneu,matoj a`gi,ouÅ
- "Of the but Jesus Christ the birth thus was. Being betrothed the mother of him, Mary, to Joseph, before or to come together them she was found in belly having from Spirit Holy."

Examples of Extremely Literal Translation

- John 4:15
 - le,gei pro.j auvto.n h` gunh,\ ku,rie(do,j moi tou/to to. u[dwr(i[na mh. diyw/ mhde. die,rcwmai evnqa,de avntlei/nÅ
 - “Says to him the woman, ‘Sir, give to me this the water that not I thirst nor I come here to draw.’”

Comparisons: Functional Equivalence

- Romans 3:21
 - NASB “But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets”
 - NRSV “But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets”

Comparisons: Dynamic Equivalence

- NIV "But now a righteousness from God, apart from the Law, has been made known, to which the Law and Prophets testify"
- NLT "But now God has shown us a different way of being right in his sight-- not by obeying the law but by the way promised in the Scriptures long ago"

Comparisons: Functional Equivalence

- Ecclesiastes 11:4
 - NASB "He who watches the wind will not sow and he who looks at the clouds will not reap."
 - NRSV "Whoever observes the wind will not sow; and whoever regards the clouds will not reap."

Comparisons: Dynamic Equivalence

- NIV “Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap”
- NLT “If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done”

Why does this situation exist?

- There is a very heated battle about which is more appropriate for Bible translation. There is a place for both, though, and their advantages and disadvantages should be carefully understood.

How should we respond to this situation?

- Dynamic equivalence translations are good for getting to the idea of the passages and getting used to basic biblical concepts.
- Functional equivalence translations are good for those who understand biblical concepts and want to understand more carefully the exact wording of the text.