

# Which Bible Translation(s) Should I Use?

June 4, 2023

Here are some of the most popular Bible translations:

- Christian Standard Bible (CSB)
- English Standard Version (ESV)
- King James Version (KJV)
- Legacy Standard Bible (LSB)
- New American Standard Bible (NASB)
- New English Translation (NET)
- New International Version (NIV)
- New King James Version (NKJV)
- New Living Translation (NLT)

A translation is wording that has been converted from one language to another.

The Bible was not originally written in English. The New Testament was written in Greek, and the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and a little Aramaic (portions of Ezra and Daniel).

There are two basic approaches to translation: formal equivalence, which gives a literal or word-for-word translation, and dynamic equivalence, which gives an idiomatic or thought-for-thought translation.

For example, in Amos 4:6 some Bible versions have the literal translation “cleanness of teeth” (ESV; KJV; LSB; NASB; NKJV), while others have an idiomatic translation like “absolutely nothing to eat” (CSB), “no food to eat” (NET), or “empty stomachs” (NIV).

Both formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence are legitimate and appropriate to use. All Bible translations use both of these approaches to a certain degree.

For example, in Numbers 11:1 a literal translation from the original Hebrew says about God that “his nose became hot.” But all nine translations listed earlier have the word “anger” here instead of “nose.” They’re all giving us an idiomatic translation at this point.

An anthropomorphism is a statement in which a human body part is attributed to God in order to communicate one of his attributes more vividly. Another example is found in Psalm 89:13, which refers to God’s arm and hand to emphasize his power.

God is “slow to anger” (Psalm 145:8), and the Hebrew phrase here literally means “long of nose.” The idea is that God’s long nose takes a while to get hot. So he doesn’t get angry too quickly.