

Which Bible Translation(s) Should I Use?

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It's an oversimplification to say that some Bible versions are formal equivalence translations and that some of them are dynamic equivalence translations. A better way to evaluate them is to ask how often they use formal equivalence and how often they use dynamic equivalence. We can put them on a spectrum between 1 and 100, with 1 representing perfect formal equivalence and 100 representing perfect dynamic equivalence.

Translations that lean toward dynamic equivalence tend to be easier to read and understand. They're generally more helpful for faster reading and getting the big idea. They're well suited for kids, non-Christians, and new believers. Translations that lean toward formal equivalence tend to have a stronger connection to the original text. They're generally more helpful for careful Bible study and focusing on the details. They're well suited for educated readers and mature believers.

The Septuagint was the first translation of the Bible. It's a Greek translation of the Old Testament that was made in the second and third centuries B.C. Eventually the books of the New Testament were combined with the Septuagint to form a Greek Bible. It was the predominant Bible of the early church for several centuries.

In A.D. 405 Jerome finished translating the Bible into Latin. This translation was called the Vulgate, and it quickly became the most popular version of the Bible in the western part of the Roman Empire. It reigned supreme among Bible translations for over a millennium.

The Protestant Reformation sparked an explosion of new Bible translations, and it was facilitated by the invention of the printing press. These new translations were in a variety of languages, including English. In 1526 William Tyndale published the first printed New Testament in English. Then he began working on the Old Testament, but he didn't get to finish it. He was condemned as a heretic and put to death in 1536.

Here are some of the earliest English Bible translations:

- Tyndale's New Testament (1526)
- The Coverdale Bible (1535)
- Matthew's Bible (1537)
- The Great Bible (1539)
- The Geneva Bible (1560)
- The Bishops' Bible (1568)
- The King James Version (1611)