

## Bible Translations

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by Wayne Goff

Choosing an acceptable Bible translation from the myriads of choices in the Bible bookstore and online requires a bit of understanding about the original text and translations. Generally speaking, there are two schools of translation: (1) word-for-word, and (2) thought-for-thought. The *more literal the translation*, the more sure we are that we have the message from the Holy Spirit. If we trust in a translator or group of translators to tell us what they *think* the Holy Spirit meant, then we are one step further from the message itself. Yet this is the very thing we are doing when we accept a thought-for-thought translation. Consequently, Christians should seek to find the most reliable, literal translation possible. The **King James Version** fits this description best of all in the English language, but its *archaic* English makes it difficult to study. Just the same, many generations of Christians have grown up with it, and learned the peculiar language and are well-grounded in the Faith. It is possible to study the **King James Version** and understand well what God meant for you to know! For those unwilling to put in the extra time to learn the older expressions, then I would recommend the **New King James Version** simply because it stays closest to the trustworthy **King James**.

Furthermore, it must be understood that even with a literal translation, care must be given to express properly the nuances of any language. Each language has its own figurative expressions, slang words, and grammatical quirks. That is why it takes language scholars to well translate the Bible from Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek into any other language — even English. Scholars spend the greater portion of their lives learning the language they intend to translate, and we are indebted to them for their labor. Take a look sometime at an **Interlinear New Testament** which places the literal translation of each word underneath the Greek without the benefit of rearranging the sentence structure. It will help you to understand the task of arranging the words and sentences into their proper sequence in the receiving language. It's not an easy task, and only the best linguists can do it well. Take your time to do a little research before buying a translation.

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