"The following is a direct script of a teaching that is intended to be presented via video, incorporating relevant text, slides, media, and graphics to assist in illustration, thus facilitating the presentation of the material. In some places, this may cause the written material to not flow or sound rather awkward in some places. In addition, there may be grammatical errors that are often not acceptable in literary work. We encourage the viewing of the video teachings to complement the written teaching you see below."

Which Bible?

What version of bible is best? What version do you use?

We often receive this question. In our teachings, we have often used the KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV, and the ESV. It is possible that we may have used other versions as well, but if we did, it certainly would have been rare, if it even occurred at all. The NASB and the ESV are the most common versions that we use.

There is a lot that can be said here, but we will make every attempt to keep this rather basic.

Though it is debated, as a general rule, it is understood that the best versions or translations use the oldest manuscripts, as the oldest manuscripts are often interpreted as being the most accurate. When it comes to the Greek New Testament texts, there are many differences between manuscripts and codices that are supposed to be referencing the same text.

Translators have done a fairly good job of sorting those things out. The KJV uses manuscripts that are not as old, and that does present problems from time to time. Versions such as the NASB, NIV, ESV and a few others, use manuscripts that are understood to be more reliable. That is simply a general rule. Different manuscripts have changed, added, or even deleted text. Sometimes translators go with the most common text, or the most sensible. Other times they include text, but note that certain manuscripts might provide alternate readings. The NASB does a fairly good job of offering such information in the footnotes.

The NASB also makes every attempt to translate as "word for word" from the original language. This offers a fairly accurate translation, but it can be rather difficult to read and understood from a practical standpoint. Sometimes, the English rendering is simply

quite awkward or difficult to understand. That presents challenges from time to time. At that point, one might be tempted to visit a different translation that is easier to read.

The NIV is a rather popular translation. The reason for this is because the English is written in such a way that it is much more understandable. It is often said that it is written as "thought for thought" versus "word for word." As you can imagine, this appeals to many people. However, we are then placing more trust in the "thoughts" and "interpretations" of the translator than the "word for word" versions. Generally, we try to avoid this translation.

The ESV attempts to offer a "word for word" translation and still offers a better readability. It actually does this fairly well, and it has become one of our more favored translations.

So basically, our rule of thumb is to use the ESV. If it appears that translator bias has made the text difficult to understand, or created contradictions, then it leads us to consult an interlinear to examine the original language of the manuscripts being used. That is a fair practice.

On rare occasions, other manuscripts might provide insight, such as excluded text or minor differences in words. Most footnotes in the ESV or NASB already highlight such manuscript differences. For the New Testament, or Brit Hadasha, the Aramaic Peshitta is also worthy of consultation, regardless if one subscribes to Hebrew/Aramaic primacy of select New Testament books or not.

The CJB, or Complete Jewish Bible is another Bible favored by many in Hebrew Roots. It can slant more toward a thought for thought translation. In some instances it relies more on Jewish tradition than the text itself. However, it is often a better alternative than many typical mainstream Christian translations.

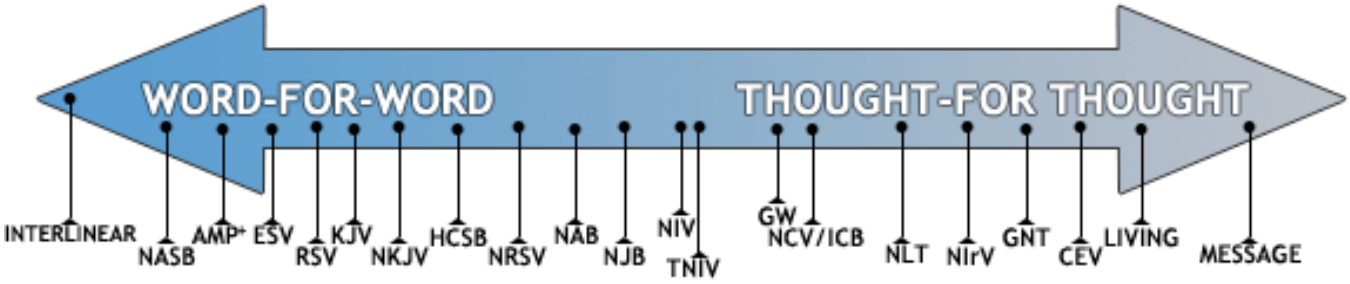
In many of our teachings, we often pull in many different translations, or go straight into the original Hebrew or Greek word from an interlinear to gain insight.

The point is this. There is absolutely no perfect Bible translation, but there are certainly translations that one should always avoid, such as the Message Bible, for example.

There are several interlinears to consider as well. Strong's is one of the most popular ones, but it has its strengths and weaknesses. Thayer's interlinear is also one that is recommended. Thayer's often seems to have less bias when defining a Greek or Hebrew word. From time to time, you will find that one interlinear over another, really does a better job at bringing clarity to an issue. However, just like the fact that there is no perfect Bible translation, there is no perfect interlinear either.

There are many Bible translations to choose from.

Take a look at this chart for example.



Generally, within your comfort level, going as far left on this chart as possible is considered best practice, unless the readability of the English text is too difficult for you. If it is too difficult, find a version that suits you for daily reading and study.

We recommend trying not to go any further right than the NIV.

Then, once you have found your version for daily reading, there may be times in which you realize that the translator intentionally or unintentionally inserted some bias in the English reading. You might have a feeling that something is just off, or not right. Or perhaps you noticed a difference between two or more versions.

In such cases, begin proceeding to versions on the left until some clarity is gained. This will happen, and everyone should have access to an interlinear to support daily study. There are fantastic free tools online, such as the Blue Letter Bible. If you have a PC or a MAC, we recommend E-Sword. It's a free program that does not require Internet to use daily. If you do not mind spending some money, the software called "Accordance" is an excellent resource in nearly every possible way.

We hope that this was all of some value to you. This by no means was intended to serve as an all-inclusive commentary of the value or non-value of different translations, but we hope that it serves as a general foundation. As you continue to move forward in testing everything, you will naturally begin to see the value in different translations and interlinears. Really, the most important factor is the ability to see problems in various translations and then have the desire and motivation to seek out solutions when these textual tensions occur.

We hope that you enjoyed this teaching, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For

more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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