



Adult Learning Opportunity
Next Steps with the Bible: Going Deeper and Growing Stronger

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September 18: Understanding Bible Translations: What's the Difference?

1. Why do we need Bible translations?

- The Old Testament was written mostly in ancient **Hebrew**. A few sections were written in a similar, related language, called **Aramaic** (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Dan 2:4-7:28). In Old Testament times Aramaic was the international language of the world, and the Jews used Hebrew in religious contexts.
- The New Testament was written in ancient **Greek**, which had become the international language of the world through the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE.
- As the early Christians spread the good news of Jesus, the Bible began to be **translated** into other languages (e.g. Syriac, Latin, Coptic) as early as the second century CE.
- Key early translations into English include John **Wycliffe's** Bible (1384), William **Tyndale's** New Testament (1525), Miles **Coverdale's** Bible (1535), the **Geneva** Bible (1560), and the **King James** Version (1611).

2. Comparing three popular translations of Jude 3-4:

ESV 2001-16 (72 words)	NIV 2011 (80 words)	NLT 2015 (91 words)
Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation,	Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share,	Dear friends, I had been eagerly planning to write to you about the salvation we all share.
I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.	I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people.	But now I find that I must write about something else, urging you to defend the faith that God has entrusted once for all time to his holy people.
For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.	For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.	I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God's marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

3. Why are the translations different?

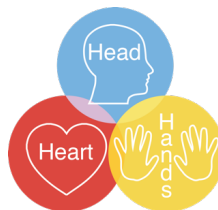
- Two approaches to translation
 - Some translations (e.g. KJV, NASB, ESV) match up an English **word** to each ancient Hebrew and Greek **word**. These are called **formal correspondence** translations. Such *word-for-word* translations are usually marketed on their **accuracy**.
 - Other translations (e.g. NIV, NLT) transfer the **ideas** conveyed by the original languages into English. These are called **functional equivalence** translations. Such *phrase-by-phrase* translations are usually marketed on their **readability**.
- Linguistics: how do words convey meaning?
 - Which came first, the ~~chicken~~ idea or the ~~egg~~ word? We think before we speak or write, so *how* we "word" meaning is the issue, not *what* words mean.
 - Languages are systems of *conventional* signs (words) that mark ideas or concepts.
 - Why do we look *down* if someone says "Look at this beautiful *floor*"?
 - How do we know what a "butterfly" is?
 - Words mark ideas or concepts in connection with associated words in phrases, clauses, and sentences. Individual words, in isolation from other words, do not convey meaning clearly. The context rules the meaning, not *vice versa*!
 - What is the meaning of the word "battery"?
- Theology: God guided the writing of every word in the Bible (verbal inspiration), but he also guided the arrangement of the words in phrases, clauses, sentences, and larger discourses. God's revelation in the Bible is verbal and propositional.



WE BELIEVE *WE BELIEVE* the Scriptures, both Old and New Testament, to be the verbally inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:19-21; Proverbs 30:5). [<https://chapel-pointe.org/beliefs/>]

4. So, why do Bible translations matter?

- Many biblical texts underline the power of God's word when accurately understood, including Neh 8:1-12; Ps 1; 119:105, 130; Isa 55:8-11; 2 Tim 2:15; 3:16-17
- The "still small voice" of conscience and the "impressions" we *think* we receive from Jesus and the Spirit are not a reliable foundation for our beliefs or a clear guide for our lives.
- If Adam and Eve needed God's words even before they sinned in the garden of Eden, *how much more* today do we need an *accurate* word from God!
- *Sola Scriptura!* 500 years ago our spiritual ancestors, the "protestants" whose views led to the reformation, affirmed that the Bible alone was sufficient for our faith and practice.
- Let's thank God for good Bible translations and rededicate ourselves to understanding and obeying the Bible! To whom much is given, much will be required (Luke 12:48).



Sanctify them through your truth; your word is truth. (John 17:17)