

Which English language Bible should I use?

Many people ask which is the best Bible translation to use.

Although this is an excellent question to ask, we must understand that there is not a single ‘correct’ translation of the Bible. We simply cannot say ‘This is the only version you should use.’ or even ‘This is the best version to use.’

All translations have their strengths, weaknesses, and flaws; which is why it is best to have a range of translations available when possible which allow us to make comparisons and come to a better understanding of what the Bible says.

However, whilst we do not wish to be prescriptive, it is part of our duties to give people the best advice that we can, based on our researches on currently available translations.

Bibles that we recommend.

General use

- **New International Version (NIV)**
This is widely recognized as the modern standard Bible for the English speaking world. The current version was published in 2011, replacing that of 1986. It has the advantage of having an Anglicised version available (one adapted to British and International English spelling and usage). This is the translation that we use in Faros Christian Fellowship as our primary Bible, and we especially urge people to use this version in the meetings to ensure commonality.
- **Christian Standard Bible**
Generally regarded as similar to the NIV, but it does not have an anglicised version.

For **study** purposes, there are four translations that we regard as especially useful.

- **New English Translation (NET)**
This was designed from the outset as an online Bible, freely available to all; although it is also available as a printed book. Its great strength is the inclusion of a great number of critical notes, which helps readers to understand why a phrase was translated in a particular way, why some words were excluded or included, and differences in the available documents. It is highly recommended.
- **Berean Standard Bible (BSB)**
A new translation that has been placed in the Public Domain, and is therefore free of charge. It has multiple tiers that cover interlinear, literal, study, and emphasised translations. The Study version is suitable for most purposes.
- **New American Standard Bible (NASB)**
A version that sticks close to the original languages. However, this results in a style that makes it rather unnatural to read at times.
- **English Standard Version (ESV)**
This also aims for a more literal translation than some, but the readability is generally better than the NASB

There are many more translations available in English, many of them good ones, but these are six that we would recommend, bearing in mind the limitations of each.

How to get them

The NET Bible is available in print and online (free for noteless version) at www.bible.org

The BSB translations are available at www.bereanbibles.com, as well as various Bible Study programs and apps

Other translations are available by mail order from Christian bookshops or Amazon, and are also available to read online at **www.biblegateway.com**.

Also, there are programs available for computers, tablets, and smartphones such as the **YouVersion** app, **Xiphos** (Linux), **Wordsearch Basic** (Windows), **Olive Tree** (Android, iOS, and Windows). These are free downloads.

Various translations of the Bible (either free or paid for) are available for download and incorporation into these programs, allowing you to read and search through these versions.

Even the paid versions are likely to be considerably cheaper than printed copies.

Also, some translations are available at Amazon and Barnes & Noble for e-book readers.

Bibles that we do not recommend

Roman Catholic Translations (e.g. Jerusalem Bible).

These, whilst they can be quite good, have two problems associated with them.

- One is that they can distort what the Bible says in order to support Roman Catholic doctrine.
- The second is that they usually include the Apocrypha (or deuterocanonical books). These are books additional to the 66 canonical books of the Bible listed at the end of this document.
As Evangelicals, we do not accept the Apocrypha as being part of Scripture, and regard their inclusion with Scripture as confusing.

New World Translation.

This is a version produced by the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Although they claim to be Christians, they are actually heretical, and the New World Translation quite often twists Scripture in order to support their heresies.

It is therefore unsuitable for use by true Christians, except as a source of information concerning the heresies of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Authorised Version / King James Version

Although this is still regarded as the standard English language Bible by many people, and is often praised for the beauty of its language, it has a number of serious problems that mitigate against its use today.

There are too many to go into in a short guide such as this, but they include:-

- the generally acknowledged weakness of the various versions of the *Textus Receptus* (on which this translation it is based)
- the lack of original language documents available when the translation was carried out

- the lack of knowledge about how to translate some of the original languages at that time
- the lack of historical and archaeological knowledge at the time
- the bias towards the state Church of England hierarchy
- known uncorrected errors
- the simple fact that the English language has itself changed since 1611, which means that many words no longer mean what they used to mean, or have dropped out of current usage altogether.

Information on all these problems is freely available on the Internet.

We recognise that this is an emotive subject for many people, but in the light of these shortcomings, we regard the AV / KJV as unsuitable for use in the twenty first century church, as there are several better translations available.

In passing, we may note that we completely reject the teachings of the **King James Only** heresy.

New King James Version

The strength of the New King James Version is in how it updates the archaic language of the AV while maintaining much of its beauty and eloquence.

The New King James Version is very literal in its rendering, resulting in a very good ‘word-for-word’ translation.

The weaknesses of the New King James Version are:

1. its use of the Textus Receptus instead of more modern manuscript compilations and
2. its commitment to ‘complete equivalence’, which can sometimes result in the concepts behind the literal words not being communicated adequately.

Books included in the Bible

We recognise the following books as canonical (to be included in the Bible)

Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The Acts of the Apostles, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, I Timothy, II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, The Epistle to the Hebrews, The Epistle of James, The First and Second Epistles of Peter, The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John, The Epistle of Jude, The Revelation

We reject any other books as being Scripture.

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