

Timeline of Bible Translation History

- 1,400 BC: The first written Word of God: The Ten Commandments delivered to Moses.
- 500 BC: Completion of All Original Hebrew Manuscripts which make up The 39 Books of the Old Testament.
- 200 BC: Completion of the Septuagint Greek Manuscripts which contain the 39 Old Testament Books AND 14 Apocrypha Books.

The first ever known Bible translation is the Septuagint, the first Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures. The Septuagint was created for Greek-speaking Jews for the Jewish community in Egypt when Greek was the common language throughout the region. and included books Jews eventually decided weren't authoritative. But Christians at the time accepted these books as having some kind of authority, even though eventually Christians would come to disagree about this. These texts are the Apocrypha, scripture for Catholics and Orthodox, not for Protestants.

- 315 AD: Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, identifies the 27 books of the New Testament which are today recognized as the canon of scripture.
- 382 AD: Jerome's Latin Vulgate Manuscripts Produced, which contain All 80 Books (39 Old Test. + 14 Apocrypha + 27 New Test).

The Latin Vulgate was translated by St. Jerome in 382 CE. This was the first complete Latin version of the entire Old and New Testaments plus the Apocrypha, translated for use in the Latin-speaking church at the time. Although there were other Latin versions of the Bible before this, the Vulgate standardized them. Additionally, different versions of the Vulgate have existed throughout church history, such as the Gutenberg Bible published in the 1450s but not used by many Christians today.

- 500 AD: Scriptures have been Translated into Over 500 Languages.
- 600 AD: LATIN was the Only Language Allowed for Scripture.

Decree of the Council of Toulouse (1229 C.E.): *"We prohibit also that the laity should be permitted to have the books of the Old or New Testament; but we most strictly forbid their having any translation of these books."*

Ruling of the Council of Tarragona of 1234 C.E.: *"No one may possess the books of the Old and New Testaments in the Romance language, and if anyone possesses them he must turn them over to the local bishop within eight days after promulgation of this decree, so that they may be burned..."*

Proclamations at the Ecumenical Council of Constance in 1415 C.E.: *Oxford professor, and theologian John Wycliffe, was the first (1380 C.E.) to translate the New Testament into English to "...helpeth Christian men to study the Gospel in that tongue in which they know best Christ's sentence." For this "heresy" Wycliffe was posthumously condemned by Arundel, the archbishop of Canterbury. By the Council's decree "Wycliffe's bones were exhumed and publicly burned and the ashes were thrown into the Swift River."*

Fate of William Tyndale in 1536 C.E.: William Tyndale was burned at the stake for translating the Bible into English. According to Tyndale, the Church forbid owning or reading the Bible to control and restrict the teachings and to enhance their own power and importance.

10th Century: The Masoretic Text, produced in the 10th century CE, was the first complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. This text is still used in synagogues today and is the complete Hebrew manuscript on which all modern English translations of the Old Testament are based.

995 AD: Anglo-Saxon (Early Roots of English Language) Translations of The New Testament Produced.

1384 AD: Wycliffe is the First Person to Produce a (Hand-Written) manuscript Copy of the Complete Bible; All 80 Books.

John Wycliffe emerged in 14th century England as a high profile opponent of privilege and power in the Church. Towards the end of his life he gave expression to his convictions by translating the Scriptures from the Vulgate into Middle English for the ordinary people. After his death Wycliffe was excommunicated, his body exhumed and burnt. But unlike those before him, Wycliffe had an effect that rippled across Europe: Jan Hus and others in Prague produced Scriptures in Hungarian and Bohemian. Hus was declared a heretic and promptly burnt at the stake.

1455 AD: Gutenberg Invents the Printing Press; Books May Now be mass-Produced Instead of Individually Hand-Written. The First Book Ever Printed is Gutenberg's Bible in Latin.

1516 AD: Erasmus Produces a Greek/Latin Parallel New Testament.

1522 AD: Martin Luther's German New Testament.

1526 AD: William Tyndale's New Testament; The First New Testament printed in the English Language.

William Tyndale's New Testament became the first printed part of the Protestant Bible translated directly from Hebrew and Greek.

William Tyndale's translation of the Bible into the English of the 1530s stands out for English speakers. He coined so many expressions that communicated powerfully. At the time, it was illegal to translate the Bible into a vernacular language, although Tyndale did so anyway to make the Bible more accessible for reading. Because of this, he was executed by the Catholic Church in 1536, prior to the completion of his Bible translation. Miles Coverdale completed the translation for him, finishing the first ever complete translation of the Bible in English.

1535 AD: Myles Coverdale's Bible; The First Complete Bible printed in the English Language (80 Books: O.T. & N.T. & Apocrypha).

1537 AD: Tyndale-Matthews Bible; The Second Complete Bible printed in English. Done by John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers (80 Books).

1516 AD: Erasmus Produces a Greek/Latin Parallel New Testament.

- 1539 AD: The "Great Bible" Printed; The First English Language Bible Authorized for Public Use (80 Books).
- 1560 AD: The Geneva Bible Printed; The First English Language Bible to add Numbered Verses to Each Chapter (80 Books).
- 1568 AD: The Bishops Bible Printed; The Bible of which the King James was a Revision (80 Books).
- 1609 AD: The Douay Old Testament is added to the Rheims New Testament (of 1582) Making the First Complete English Catholic Bible; Translated from the Latin Vulgate (80 Books).
- 1611 AD: The King James Bible Printed; Originally with All 80 Books. The Apocrypha was Officially Removed in 1885 Leaving Only 66 Books.
- 1782 AD: Robert Aitken's Bible; The First English Language Bible (KJV) Printed in America.
- 1791 AD: Isaac Collins and Isaiah Thomas Respectively Produce the First Family Bible and First Illustrated Bible Printed in America. Both were King James Versions, with All 80 Books.
- 1808 AD: Jane Aitken's Bible (Daughter of Robert Aitken); The First Bible to be Printed by a Woman.
- 1833 AD: Noah Webster's Bible; After Producing his Famous Dictionary, Webster Printed his Own Revision of the King James Bible.
- 1841 AD: English Hexapla New Testament; an Early Textual Comparison showing the Greek and 6 Famous English Translations in Parallel Columns.
- 1846 AD: The Illuminated Bible; The Most Lavishly Illustrated Bible printed in America. A King James Version, with All 80 Books.
- 1885 AD: The "English Revised Version" Bible; The First Major English Revision of the KJV.
- 1901 AD: The "American Standard Version"; The First Major American Revision of the KJV.
- 1952 AD: The Revised Standard Version is an authorized revision of the American Standard Version, published in 1901, **which was a revision of the King James Version, published in 1611.**

The Revised Standard Version Bible seeks to preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the years. It is intended for use in public and private worship, not merely for reading and instruction. We have resisted the temptation to use phrases that are merely current usage and have sought to put the message of the Bible in simple, enduring words that are worthy to stand in the great Tyndale-King James tradition. We are glad to say, with the King James translators: "Truly (good Christian Reader) we never thought from the beginning, that we should need to make a new Translation, nor yet to make of a bad one a good one ... but to make a good one better."

1971 AD: The "New American Standard Bible" (NASB) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Word for Word English Translation" of the Bible.

The NASB does not attempt to interpret Scripture through translation. Instead, the NASB adheres to the principles of a formal equivalence translation. This is the most exacting and demanding method of translation, striving for the most readable word-for-word translation that is both accurate and clear. This method more closely follows the word and sentence patterns of the biblical authors in order to enable the reader to study Scripture in its most literal format and to experience the individual personalities of those who penned the original manuscripts.

NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE 2020 UPDATE

After completion in 1971, the NASB was updated in 1977, 1995, and most recently in 2020. This brand new update of the widely respected NASB 1995 builds upon its strengths by further improving accuracy, modernizing language, and improving readability. The NASB 2020 is an important update because it utilizes advances in biblical scholarship over the past 25 years and it incorporates changes necessary to keep pace with the ever evolving English language. This refreshed text is designed to speak accurately and clearly to current and future generations.

The long-established translation standard for the NASB remains the same as it always has been, that is to accurately translate the inspired Word of God from the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts into modern English that is clearly understandable today.

The NASB 2020 is a Bible that is accessible to all readers and is presented in a way that clearly and accurately communicates the content, so it is understood in the same way it would have been to the original audience. Most importantly, the NASB 2020 provides a literal translation of the Bible that clearly communicates God's message to the modern English reader so that everyone can continue to grow in their knowledge and love of our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

1973 AD: The "New International Version" (NIV) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Phrase for Phrase English Translation" of the Bible.

<https://vimeo.com/298416205>

<https://www.biblica.com/articles/do-modern-bibles-such-as-the-niv-leave-out-verses/>

The Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), the team of translators responsible for the New International Version (NIV) Bible, is composed of world-class scholars and leaders in their respective fields. Their goal is to accurately translate the Word of God in a way that enables readers and listeners to hear the Bible as it was originally written, and understand the Bible as it was originally intended.

From the beginning, the translators have been committed to getting the words right. That means being true to the original Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic of the Bible while at the same time capturing the Bible's original meaning in natural, everyday English. Each NIV translator believes that the Bible is God's inspired Word. That conviction, along with their years of studying biblical languages, has helped them capture the depth of meaning in the Bible in a way that is accurate, clear, and trustworthy.

When comparing the NIV with the King James Version (KJV), it would seem that there are some verses “missing” in the NIV (and other trusted translations such as the CEV, CSB, ESV, GNB, HCSB, NET, NLT, etc.). Actually, that is not the case. In 1611, the translators of the KJV used the best resources available to them at that time. For their day, the King James translation was a monumental achievement. However, one of its shortcomings is that the KJV translation committee of 50 scholars drew heavily on William Tyndale’s New Testament. As much as 80% of Tyndale’s translation is reused in the King James version. Tyndale used several sources in his translation of the Old and New Testaments. For the New Testament, he referred to the third edition (1522) of Desiderius Erasmus’s Greek New Testament, often referred to as the *Textus Receptus* (“Received Text”).

In the years since 1611, many older manuscripts have been discovered and carefully evaluated by scholars. Their conclusion is that the older manuscripts are more reliable. This has given modern translators unprecedented access to manuscripts much closer in time to the original documents. Therefore, translations such as the NIV actually reflect better Bible scholarship than was available in 1611 when the KJV was published.

The verses or phrases that appeared in the KJV but have been “omitted” in most trusted translations today, are not found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts. Modern translators include or reference them in footnotes. These footnotes are intended to help the reader understand that certain perceived differences in the text are due to improved biblical scholarship. The treatment of these verses has not changed recently and reflects a consensus among the majority of Bible scholars.

It is important and comforting to note that no doctrines of the Christian faith are affected by differences between the KJV and translations such as the NIV that follow more reliable sources.

Here is a illustrated video we created to better explain:

<https://www.biblica.com/resources/bible-faqs/>

1976 AD: The Good New Bible

The *Good News Bible*, also known as the *Good News Translation* and *Today’s English Version*, was first published as a full Bible in 1976 by the American Bible Society as a “common language” Bible. It was conceived because of a need in Africa and the Far East for a version of the Bible that was friendly to non-native English speakers. In 1979, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books were added to the *Good News Bible* and published as *Good News Bible: Today’s English Version with Deuterocanonicals/Apocrypha*. In 1992, the translation was revised with inclusive language. It is described by the publishers as a clear and simple modern translation that is faithful to the original Hebrew, Koine Greek, and Aramaic texts.

Good News Bible - Translation method

The translation style of the *Good News Bible* is dynamic equivalence. That is, the meaning of the Hebrew and Greek is expressed in a “thought for thought” translation rather than “word for word.” The GNB is written in a simple, everyday language, with the intention that everyone can appreciate it, and so is often considered particularly suitable for children and for those learning English. Included in the *Good News Bible* are introductions to each book of the Bible.

1982 AD: The “New King James Version” (NKJV) is Published as a “Modern English Version Maintaining the Original Style of the King James.”

1901 Revised Standard Version

The RSV is a comprehensive revision of the King James Version (KJV), the Revised Version (RV) of 1881-85, and the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, with the ASV being the primary basis for the revision.

2002 AD: The English Standard Version (ESV) is Published as a translation to bridge the gap between the accuracy of the NASB and the readability of the NIV.

https://www.tcseagles.org/faculty/nchilds/editoruploads/files/Timeline_of_Bible_Translation_History.pdf