

Choosing a Bible

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What is a Study Bible, how is it different from a standard Bible?

- A standard Bible contains a translation of Scripture – plain and simple.
- A good study Bible has lots of extras: Timeline, Headnotes, Footnotes, Cross references, Text notes, Maps, Charts, Pictures and Indexes and a small Concordance. All are very useful tools for studying and understanding the Scripture you are reading.

Good Bibles rely on the oldest available source material – such as the Dead Sea Scrolls

- And will have a large team of translators drawn from a broad range of Christian theologies with the intent of minimizing theological bias.

There are two basic strategies that are used to translate the Bible. Literal or [word-for-word] vs. dynamic equivalence or [thought for thought]. (Smith and Writebol)

- Literal translations are more accurate but can be harder to read whereas dynamic translations are more readable but somewhat less accurate.
- Before looking for a Bible you must first decide if you want a literal or dynamic equivalent translation.
- Next you have to decide which translation you prefer.
- Truth is that because of the Internet we have access to almost every translation of the Bible ever published.
- What you are really looking for is a primary Bible to work from.
- One **that** you will always start your study from.

Most literal

- King James Version (KJV) – Over 60 (1600's)
- New King James Version (NKJV) (Over 130) The goal was a new translation that maintained the literary integrity of the KJV. [Armstrong]
- New American Standard Bible (NASB) – over 100 translators.

Literal/Dynamic

- *Revised Standard Version (RSV) (32) [Revision of the ASV – not a completely new translation] [Preface to the Revised Standard Version]

- Christian Standard Bible (CSB) (Over 100) [CSB Frequently...]

Dynamic/Literal

- New International Version (NIV) - over 100 translators.
- New Living Translation - dynamic - 90 translators (NLT) [About]
- New American Bible (NAB) [Catholic/Septuagint - includes the apocrypha] [Bible Translations Guide]

Very dynamic

- Contemporary English Version (CEV) – most recent translation - over 100 translators [Contemporary English Version]
- Today's English Version (TEV) ["Good News Bible,"]

Paraphrase [Extreme dynamic]

- The Message - Eugene Peterson
- The Living Bible (TLB) ["The Book."]

Bibles to avoid

- *New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) Revision of the RSV that uses gender neutral language and questions about the methods of translations - they did not use the Dead Sea Scrolls but relied on copies made in more recent centuries. [New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition]
- *ESV - English Standard Version - literal - latest revision of the RSV. - 50 translators Revision of the RSV not a new translation [English Standard Version]
- New English Translation (NET Bible) - Had only 20 translators all drawn from the same theology school. [What is] [Bible]

Types of Study Bibles

- General Study Bible
- Theme: Life Style, Archeology, Leadership, 12 Step Bible, Women/Men, Couples, Teens, etc. With the exception of the 12 Step Bible, I have found most themed Bibles to be of questionable value.

Special:

- Chronological Bible - has the books ordered according to when they are written. Some have the Scriptures placed in the order in which the events occurred. This means parts of different books are included in other books to sync with the events in those books. For example parts of the various books of the prophets would be included with Kings and Chronicles.
- Inductive Bible - this Bible is specifically structured around the inductive Bible study method, which is discussed as part of this study.

Topical Bibles (Examples):

- Naves – the most widely known and most broadly indexed of any topical Bible available with over 20,000 topics and references more than 100,000 verses. This topical Bible was compiled by Rev. Orville Nave and U.S. Army chaplain covering 14 years of effort. This Bible is often referred to as a topical concordance. [“Nave’s Topical Bible”]
- Rainbow (12 topics: God, Discipleship, Love, Faith, Sin, Evil, Salvation, Family, Outreach, Commandments, History, Prophecy – categories are overly broad and too general to be of much use.)

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