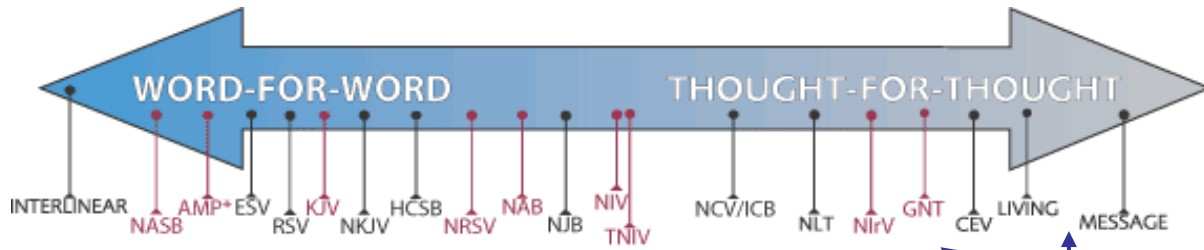


# Choosing a Bible Translation

(adapted from Zondervan's website.)



## Paraphrases (paraphrases, not direct translations)

- Paraphrase help people who are new to the Bible understand it.
- *They are not taken from the Heb./Grk. manuscripts, but are "paraphrasing" other translations.*

## Literal translations (word for word)

- Literal translations are helpful for people who want to study each word.
- *They are translated from the best Hebrew/Grk. manuscripts and are translated to be as accurate on a word to word basis to the Heb./Grk.*

## NIV (thought for thought translation)

- The NIV is literal where possible and "thought-for-thought" where necessary to help the reader understand
- The NIV is the best balance between accuracy and readability. (Zondervan's opinion)
- *NIV is also translated from Heb./Grk. manuscripts, but is translated to be accurate "thought for thought". You don't obtain the same accuracy as with a "word by word" translation.*

## Legend:

*Normal type is Zondervan's simple statement from their website.*

*Italized is expanded description of the most popular translations today. Editor*

**Click on name for more information on most used translations.**  
*Alphabetically*

- [Amplified Bible](#)
- [Contemp. English Version](#)
- [God's Word](#)
- [King James Bible](#)
- [Living Bible](#)
- [New American Bible](#)
- [New American Std. Bible](#)
- [New Intl. Readers Vers.](#)
- [New Intl. Version](#)
- [New King James](#)
- [New Living Translation](#)
- [New Revised Standard](#)
- [Today's English Version](#)
- [The Message](#)

## Translation Titles:

### NASB New American Standard Bible

**Reading [Grade] Level: 11.00** [Back to Top](#)

**Readability:** Formal style, but more readable than the King James Version.

**Reference Support Material:** Medium

**Number of Translators:** 54

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to word translation rather than meaning Verse for Verse with poetry

**Notes:** A highly respected formal translation of the Bible. Purpose of the work was to update the American Standard Version into more current English. Published in 1971. Updated in 1995.

### NIV New International Version [Back to Top](#)

**Reading [Grade] Level: 7.80**

**Readability:** A highly accurate and smooth-reading version in modern English

**Reference Support Material:** High

**Number of Translators:** 115

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Balance between word-for-word and thought-for-thought Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** The best-selling translation, widely accepted by evangelical Christians. Purpose in translation was to "produce an accurate translation, suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing, and liturgical use." Published in 1978.

### NIRV New International Reader's Version

**Reading [Grade] Level: 2.90** [Back to Top](#)

## Comparison Passages:

- The LORD your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

Zephaniah 3:17

- The LORD, your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

**Readability:** Very easy to read and understand; uses simple, short words and sentences

**Reference Support Material:** Low, but NIV materials can be used

**Number of Translators:** 40 (includes stylists and simplifiers)

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Balance between word translation and meaning, with an emphasis on meaning where necessary for simplification  
Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** A thorough, scholarly simplification of the NIV, the NIRV was specifically designed to help young children and new readers understand the Bible for themselves and create an easy stepping-stone from a children's Bible to an adult Bible.

**KJV** King James Version [Back to Top](#)

**Reading [Grade] Level: 12.00**

**Readability:** Difficult to read due to 17th-century English vocabulary and word order

**Reference Support Material:** High

**Number of Translators:** 54

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to word translation rather than meaning Verse for Verse

**Notes:** Traditionally loved and accepted by all Christians. Purpose in translation was "to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue which they can understand." Published in 1611.

**NKJV** New King James Version [Back to Top](#)

**Reading [Grade] Level: 9.0**

**Readability:** Easier word usage, but somewhat choppy because it maintains 17th century sentence structure

**Reference Support Material:** Low, but some KJV materials can be used

**Number of Translators:** 119

- The LORD your God is with you. He is mighty enough to save you. He will take great delight in you. The quietness of his love will calm you down. He will sing with joy because of you.

Zephaniah 3:17

- The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

- The LORD your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to word translation rather than meaning Verse for Verse

**Notes:** A modern language update of the original KJV. Purpose was to update and modernize the original KJV but preserve the KJV as much as possible. Published in 1982.

Living Living Bible

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**Reading [Grade] Level: 8.33**

**Readability:** A popular, readable paraphrase, at times quite interpretive

**Reference Support Material:** Low

**Number of Translators:** Kenneth N. Taylor

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Meaning all-important Paragraphs

**Notes:** A very popular paraphrase of the Bible. The purpose of the work was to explain the Bible in simple, everyday English. Originally intended for personal devotional use only. Published in 1971.

NLT New Living Translation

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**Reading [Grade] Level: 6.30**

**Readability:** A readable translation, uses vocabulary and language structures commonly used by the average person

**Reference Support Material:** Low

**Number of Translators:** 90

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to meaning rather than word translation Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** The New Living Translation is a dynamic equivalence translation based on the work of 90 Bible scholars and a smaller team of English stylists. These scholars and stylists went back to the original languages and sought to produce the closest natural equivalent of the message in natural, contemporary English.

- For the Lord your God has arrived to live among you. He is a mighty Savior. He will give you victory. He will rejoice over you with great gladness; he will love you and not accuse you. Is that a joyous choir I hear? No, it is the Lord himself exulting over you in happy song.

Zephaniah 3:17

- For the LORD your God has arrived to live among you. He is a mighty savior. He will rejoice over you with great gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will exult over you by singing a happy song.

Zephaniah 3:17

## NRSV New Revised Standard Version

**Reading [Grade] Level: 10.40** [Back to Top](#)

**Readability:** Contemporary, dignified with generic language in reference to humans

**Reference Support Material:** Medium

**Number of Translators:** 30

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Balance between word translation and meaning Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** A widely accepted translation in the tradition of the King James Version. Purpose was to "make a good one better." Published in 1990.

## Amplified

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**Reading [Grade] Level: NA**

**Readability:** Expanded and "amplified" by means of a system of brackets and parentheses, which sometimes make for abrupt reading

**Reference Support Material:** Low

**Number of Translators:** Frances E. Siewert, plus 12 others

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to word translation plus additional amplification of word meaning Verse for verse

**Notes:** A popular translation used to understand the hidden meaning of Greek and Hebrew words. Published in 1964 (updated in 1987).

## NAB New American Bible

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**Reading [Grade] Level: 6.60**

**Readability:** A clear and straightforward translation that reads smoothly. Written in basic American English.

**Reference Support Material:** Low

- The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory: he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.

Zephaniah 3:17

- The LORD your God is in the midst of you, a mighty One, a Savior - Who saves! He will rejoice over you with joy; He will rest (in silent satisfaction) and in His love He will be silent and make no mention (of past sins, or even recall them); He will exult over you with singing.

Zephaniah 3:17

- The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love, He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.

Zephaniah 3:17

**Number of Translators:** 55

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to word translation rather than meaning Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** Published under the direction of Pope Pius XII, this Catholic version of the Bible represents more than 25 years of effort by the Catholic Biblical Association of America. All editions include the deuterocanonical books. Published in 1970.

**TEV** Today's English Version [Back to Top](#)

**Reading [Grade] Level:** 7.29

**Readability:** Very simple, readable version. Uses a limited vocabulary.

**Reference Support Material:** Low

**Number of Translators:** R. Bratcher (NT) Bratcher plus six others (OT)

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Meaning all-important Paragraphing with poetry and other special indentations

**Notes:** "A translation intended for people everywhere for whom English is either their mother tongue or an acquired language." Published in 1976.

**CEV** Contemporary English Version [Back to Top](#)

**Reading [Grade] Level:** 5.40

**Readability:** Clear, simple English that a child can understand, but with a mature style that adults can appreciate

**Reference Support Material:** Low

**Number of Translators:** Over 100 (including reviewers)

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Meaning all-important. Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** Written at an elementary-school reading level, the CEV is readable and understandable for the modern reader. Published in 1995.

- The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior; He will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love, He will sing joyfully because of you, as one sings at festivals.

Zephaniah 3:17

- The LORD your God wins victory after victory and is always with you. He celebrates and sings because of you, and he will refresh your life with his love.

Zephaniah 3:17

# God's Word

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**Reading [Grade] Level: 5.80**

**Readability:** A readable, accurate translation; employs natural English expressions to convey the meaning of the original languages

**Reference Support Material:** Low

**Number of Translators:** 75

**Translation Philosophy/Format:** Priority to meaning rather than word translation  
Paragraphs with poetry

**Notes:** Using a linguistically based translation method, the work on God's Word was done by a denominationally diverse, 75-member team of translators, linguists, English experts, and independent biblical-language scholars. Published in 1995.