

Understanding the Bible

Bible Translations

The central truths of the Bible are simple and easy to understand. They are summarized in what we call the "gospel" as set forth in verses such as John 3:16. The first step in gaining a more detailed knowledge of the Bible is to simply read, read and read the Bible itself so as to build an overall "scope" of the Bible as a whole. The details will then fit within this overall understanding. Since few of us have the ability to read in the original languages of the biblical writers we must use the next best alternative - Bible translations or versions. To avoid

confusion and to help with memorization it is probably a good idea to use one particular version as one's basic text for reading and study (this is a matter of choice since they all have their good and bad points), but it is also helpful at times to use different versions for *comparative* purposes. In this way one gets the benefit of the understanding of different translators. Some versions are meant to be more literal while others are meant to be more "free." In between the two is a sort of golden mean - "dynamic equivalence." The following chart illustrates graphically many modern versions. Each version has its own particular translation goal and should be read in that light.

<u>Literal (word for word)</u>	<u>Dynamic Equivalence</u>	<u>Free (Meaning for meaning)</u>
Interlinear NASB KJV RSV NAB NIV NEB GNB JB Phillips LB NKJV NRSV REB		

[Revised from Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for all its Worth*, 2nd ed. p.36, Zondervan]

Compare the Versions

Titus 3:4-7

KJV

But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done , but according to his mercy he saved saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to hope of eternal life.

GNB

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior was revealed, he saved us. It was not because of any good deeds that we ourselves had done, but because of his own mercy that he saved us, through the Holy Spirit, who gives us new birth and new life by washing us. God poured out the Holy Spirit abundantly on us through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that by his grace we might be put right with God and come into possession of the eternal life we hope for.

NRSV

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

REB

But when the kindness and generosity of God our Savior dawned upon the world, then, not for any good deeds of our own, but because he was merciful, he saved us through the water of rebirth and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit, which he lavished upon us through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, justified by his grace, we might in hope become heirs to eternal life.

NAB

But when the kindness and generous love of God our savior appeared, not because of any righteous deeds

we had done but because of his mercy, he saved us through the bath of rebirth and renewal by the holy Spirit, whom he richly poured out on us through Jesus Christ our savior, so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

Phillips

But when the kindness and love of God our savior dawned upon us, he saved us in his mercy - not by virtue of any moral achievement of ours, but by the cleansing power of a new birth and the renewal of the Holy Spirit, which he poured upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. The result is that we are acquitted by his grace and can look forward in hope to inheriting life eternal.

NIV

But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous

things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

The Unvarnished NT

But then the kindness of our savior God appeared, His love for us humans. Not because of any redeeming deeds we did ourselves but of his own mercy he saved us. Through the washing that bestowed new life, the renewal brought by the holy spirit, which God poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our savior, that we might be acquitted by means of his grace and be heirs to the hope of everlasting life.

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