

The Bible has been translated into many languages from the biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

The Latin Vulgate was dominant in Western Christianity through the Middle Ages. Since then, the Bible has been translated into many more languages. English Bible translations in particular have a rich and varied history of more than a millennium.

As Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible, have idioms and concepts not easily translated, there is an on going critical tension about whether it is better to give a word for word translation or to give a translation that gives a parallel idiom in the target language. For instance, in the English language Catholic translation, the New American King James Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the New American Standard Bible are seen as fairly literal translations (or “word for word”), whereas translations like the New International Version and New Living Translation attempt to give relevant parallel idioms. The Living Bible and The Message are two paraphrases of the Bible that try to convey the original meaning in contemporary language.

Using the Scripture from the Book of John, Chapter 3, Verse 16 (John 3:16) as one of the most familiar scriptures as the example to show some differences in today’s Bible translations.

John 3:16

The Message

This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

The Amplified Bible (ABV)

For God so greatly loved and dearly prized the world that He [even] gave up His only begotten (^[a]unique) Son, so that whoever believes in (trusts in, clings to, relies on) Him shall not perish (come to destruction, be lost) but have eternal (everlasting) life.

The King James (KJV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

The New International (NIV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,^[a] that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Worldwide English New Testament (WEV)

God loved the world so very, very much that he gave his only Son. Because he did that, everyone who believes in him will not lose his life, but will live for ever.

Bible Resource Online

Bible Gateway Bible Translations

<http://www.biblegateway.com>