

## How Accurate are our English Bible Translations?

Which English translation of the Bible is best for the sincere person? How faithful is it to the Testament in the original Hebrew/Aramaic (or Greek)? And how much should he entrust himself to that translation?

[Tabulation below represents accuracy in 68 representative Old Testament texts]

Old-Testament English Translation	Accuracy
American Standard Version (ASV, or ARV, 1901)	84
New American Standard Bible (NASB, 1963)	82
(British) Revised Version (RV, 1881-1885)	77
English Standard Version (ESV, 2001)	83
Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1952)	82
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989)	76
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (Rhm, 1902)	82
Sacred Name restoration Bible (Traina, modified Rhm, 1963)	82-
Stern, Complete Jewish Bible (CJB, 1998)	81
Amplified (1965)	79
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB, 1999)	79-
New World (NWT, J.W.; 1960)	78-
Jewish Publication Society (Margolis; JPS, 1917)	76
Jewish Publication Society - Revised (JPS2, 1985)	64
Berkeley (Verkuyl, 1959)	76
Darby (Plymouth Brethren)	75
New International Version (NIV, 1973)	73
New King James Version (NKJV, 1979)	73
Revised English Bible (REB, 1989)	71
New English Bible (NEB, 1970)	69
God's Word (Lutheran; 1995)	71-
Anchor Bible (1964- )	est. 70
New Century Version (NCV, 1987)	69
New Living Translation (NLT, 1996, 2004)	68+
Smith-Goodspeed (1927)	68
Jay Green diaglott (1979)	67
Byington (1972)	67-
New American Bible (NAB, RCC; 1970)	67-
Jerusalem (RCC; 1966)	66
Leeser (Jewish; 1854)	61
Moffatt (1924)	60-
Basic English (Hooke, 1949)	58+
Today's English Version (TEV, = GNB, 1976)	57
Young's Literal (1863)	54
Contemporary English Version (CEV, 1995)	52
Living Bible (K. Taylor, 1971)	51+
Ferrar Fenton (1903)	48
Knox (RCC; 1950)	40+
Douay-Rheims/Confraternity (Latin Vulgate, RCC; 1609/1950)	40
Brenton (Greek Septuagint, 1851)	40
Thomson (Greek Septuagint, 1808)	39
Companion Bible (annotated AV)	35
Lamsa (Aramaic = Syriac, 1957)	35-
Harkavy (Jewish; 1916)	32
Authorized Version (AV = KJV, 1611, 1614, 1762, 1769)	14

## Relative Accuracy of English-Language Bible Translations

Based on 209 selected texts

Complete-Bible English Translation	Accuracy
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (Rhm, 1902)	83½
Sacred Name restoration Bible (Traina, modified Rhm, 1963)	81
New World (NWT, J.W.; 1960)	76 <sup>+</sup>
Stern, Complete Jewish Bible (CJB, 1998)	75
New American Standard Bible (NASB, 1963)	75
American Standard Version (ASV, or ARV 1901)	74½
(British) Revised Version (RV, 1881-1885)	70½
English Standard Version (ESV, 2001)	75
Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1952)	72
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989)	69
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB, 1999)	72
Amplified (1965)	68
New International Version (NIV, 1973)	67½
Anchor Bible (1964– )	est. 67
Berkeley (Verkuyl, 1959)	66
Darby (Plymouth Brethren)	65 <sup>+</sup>
Smith-Goodspeed (1923, 1927)	65
Revised English Bible (REB, 1989)	64½
New English Bible (NEB, 1970)	62½
Byington (1972)	64 <sup>+</sup>
New American Bible (NAB, RCC; 1970)	63½
God's Word (Lutheran; 1995)	63
New Century Version (NCV, 1987)	61½
Moffatt (1924)	61 <sup>+</sup>
New Living Translation (NLT, 1996, 2004)	61
Today's English Version (TEV, = GNB, 1976)	60½
Jerusalem (RCC; 1966)	59 <sup>+</sup>
Basic English (Hooke, 1949)	54½
Ferrar Fenton (1903)	54
Jay Green diaglott (1979)	53
New King James Version (NKJV, 1979)	52½
Contemporary English Version (CEV, 1995)	51
Young's Literal (1863)	49½
Living Bible (K. Taylor, 1971)	45
Douay-Rheims/Confraternity (Latin Vulgate, RCC; 1609/1950)	44½
Knox (RCC; 1950)	40 <sup>+</sup>
Companion Bible (annotated AV)	36
Lamsa (Aramaic = Syriac, 1957)	32 <sup>+</sup>
Authorized Version (AV = KJV, 1611, 1614, 1762, 1769)	9
<b>Old Testament only</b>	
Jewish Publication Society (Margolis; JPS, 1917)	76
Jewish Publication Society - Revised (JPS2, 1985)	64
Leeser (Jewish; 1854)	61
Brenton (Greek Septuagint, 1851)	40
Thomson (Greek Septuagint, 1808)	39
Harkavy (Jewish; 1916)	32

Differences of  $\pm 5\%$  should be considered insignificant, but above  $\pm 10-15\%$  should be quite significant.

The comparative accuracies of English language Old Testaments is compiled from a list of sixty-eight representative test passages for translation, which are in the texts below:

Ge 1:20	Dt 7:12	Ps 4:2	Is 30:1
1:28	13:13	22:17	30:7
4:23	27:16	144:7	41:7
25:8	Josh 8:35	Pr 8:22	53:8
Ex 3:22	Jg 16:11	20:30	54:6
7:15	2Sa 3:33	24:11	Jr 8:8
12:6	6:19	27:16	9:7
12:26	22:6	29:24	Da 12:11
26:9	2Ki 25:27	Is 1:25	Hos 4:18
27:21	Job 3:8	7:14	6:9
28:8	6:10	9:1	10:10
28:11	11:20	9:5	14:2
29:41	17:6	10:23	Am 3:12
39:32	19:26	11:1	5:9
Nu 6:7	22:25	16:3	5:26
24:14	37:11	25:5	Nah 2:7
31:28	39:13	28:25	Zc 12:10

**Table X**  
**How Well English Translations Do with Manuscripts and Translation**

Results of a previous study of accuracies of several dozen English language translations of the New Testament are given in the table below, based on a selection of 91 texts for use of the manuscripts, and another 50 for faithfulness of translation. Differences of more than 5 should be considered significant (or 7 in the case of translation).

**Comparative Accuracies of English-Language Versions of the New Testament**

New Testament English Translation	Accuracies		
	Overall	Manuscripts	Translation
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1872, 1902)	<b>85</b>	99	80.5
Sacred Name restor. Bible (Traina, mod. Rhm, 1950)	<b>80</b>	84-	79
Marshall diaglott (1958)	<b>81</b>	97	75.5
Concordant diaglott (universalism; 1975)	<b>80</b>	81	80
Concordant Literal (1926, 1944)	<b>76</b>	73	77
Kingdom Interlinear diaglott (J.W.; 1969)	<b>80</b>	99	73.5
New World (NWT, 1950)	<b>75-</b>	99	66.5
Douglas diaglott (1990)	<b>76</b>	97	69
Wilson diaglott (1864)	<b>75</b>	72	76
Bowes (1870)	<b>74+</b>	94-	68
Panin (numerics, 1914)	<b>74</b>	95	67
Wuest (1961)	<b>71</b>	94	63.5
Weymouth (1902) 5th/3rd edition	<b>71/69</b>	92/90	63.5/61.5
Stern ("Jewish New Testament," 1989)	<b>69</b>	95	60.5
Schonfield ("Original N.T.," Jewish; 1985)	<b>69</b>	88	62.5
New American Standard Bible (NASB, 1963)	<b>68</b>	95	59
American Standard Version (ASV, or ARV, 1901)	<b>65</b>	94	55.5
(British) Revised Version (RV, 1881-1885)	<b>64</b>	94.5	53.5
English Standard Version (ESV, 2001)	<b>67</b>	97	57
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV, 1989)	<b>62+</b>	97	51
Revised Standard Version (RSV, 1946)	<b>62</b>	98-	50
Inclusive Version (modified NRSV, 1995)	<b>61</b>	≈ 96	49.5
Ballantine (Riverside, 1923)	<b>66</b>	95	56.5
Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB, 1999)	<b>65</b>	86	58
Today's English Version (= Good News for Modern Man; Bratcher)	<b>64</b>	88	56.5
Anchor Bible (1964 - )	est. 63+	est. 95-	≈ 53
Moffatt (1913)	<b>63</b>	93	53
C. Kingsley Williams (N.T. in Plain English, 1952)	<b>63</b>	93	52.5
Chas. B. Williams (N.T. in the Language of the People, 1937)	<b>63</b>	93	52.5
Horner (Coptic: Sahidic [southern], 1911-1922)	<b>62.5</b>	84	55.5
Horner (Coptic: Bohairic [northern], 1898-1905)	<b>61</b>	85+	52.5
Smith-Goodspeed (1923)	<b>62</b>	96	51
Byington (1972)	<b>62</b>	94.5	51
New International Version (NIV, 1973)	<b>62</b>	92	51.5
The Translator's N.T. (TNT, 1973)	<b>61</b>	90-	52
Broadus (ABU, Baptist; 1863)	est. 61		est. 52

New Testament English Translation	Accuracies		
	Overall	Manuscripts	Translation
Lattey/Westminster (RCC; 1913-1935)	<b>61</b>	93	50.5
New American Bible (NAB, RCC; 1970)	<b>60+</b>	89	51
Montgomery (ABU: Centenary, Baptist; 1924)	<b>60</b>	88	51
Cunnington (1926)	<b>60</b>	96	48
Ferrar Fenton (1895)	<b>59.5</b>	71	55.5
Revised English Bible (REB, 1989)	<b>58</b>	95	45.5
New English Bible (NEB, 1961)	<b>56</b>	92	44.5
Simple English Bible (SEB, 1983)	<b>57.5</b>	89	47
Kleist-Lilly (RCC; 1954)	<b>57+</b>	86	48
Barclay (1976)	<b>57</b>	91.5	46
Cassirer (Hebrew Christian; 1989)	<b>57</b>	91.5	46
Amplified (1958)	<b>57</b>	75	50.5
Berkeley (Verkuyl, 1945)	<b>56</b>	62	53.5
Twentieth Century New Testament (1901)	<b>56</b>	94	43.5
Darby (Plymouth Brethren; 1871)	<b>56-</b>	62-	53.5
New Living Translation (NLT; 1996, 2004)	<b>54</b>	91	42
New Century Version (NCV, 1987)	<b>54</b>	88+	42.5
God's Word (GWN revised, Lutheran; 1995)	<b>55.5</b>	87	45
God's Word to the Nations (GWN; Beck revised, Lutheran; 1988)	<b>53</b>	90	41
Beck (Lutheran; 1963)	est. 50		est. 39
Jerusalem (RCC; 1966)	<b>52.5</b>	91+	39.5
Phillips (1958)	<b>52</b>	83	41.5
Basic English (Hooke, 1941)	<b>51-</b>	87	38.5
Contemporary English Version (CEV; ABS, 1995)	<b>50</b>	91.5	36
Douay-Rheims/Confraternity (RCC; 1582, 1950)	<b>49</b>	71	41.5
Bagster's diaglott (1877; reprinted by G.R. Berry, 1958)	<b>49-</b>	26	56
Peterson (The Message, 1993)	<b>49-</b>	83	37
Young's Literal (Presbyt.; 1862)	<b>45</b>	2	59
Greber (ex-RCC, spiritist; 1937)	<b>44</b>	59	38.5
Knox (RCC; 1944)	<b>43</b>	54	39
Norlie (1961)	<b>42</b>	34	45
Living Bible (K. Taylor, 1966)	<b>39-</b>	67	29
Jay Green diaglott (1976)	<b>39</b>	3	51
Companion Bible (annotated AV)	<b>37</b>	42	35.5
New Life Testament (G.H. Ledyard, 1969)	<b>33</b>	52	26.5
New King James (NKJV, 1979)	<b>32</b>	26	34
Lamsa (Aramaic, 1940)	<b>30</b>	27	31
Tyndale (1524)	<b>12-</b>	4	15.5
Authorized Version (AV, = KJV, 1611)	<b>5</b>	1	<b>6</b>

84<sup>-</sup> means slightly less than 84, though more than 83.5; 85<sup>+</sup> means slightly more than 85, though less than 85.5.

The numbers in each column refer to each version's degree of improvement over the AV text. [The Authorized Version (AV) margin allows the AV to be slightly better than the AV text alone.]

The comparative accuracies of English language New Testaments is compiled from a list of representative test passages, which are given below:

Manuscripts	
Mt 6:13	Ac 20:28
18:11	24:6-8
19:17	28:29
20:22-23	Ro 7:6
23:14	9:28
24:42	11:6
25:6	14:6
25:13	1Co 5:7
Mk 3:29	6:20
6:11	7:5
7:8	9:20
9:31	10:28
9:44, 46	11:24
10:29	2Co 4:14
10:34	Ga 3:17
15:28	5:1
16:9-20	Ep 5:21
Lk 2:5	5:30
2:40	Php 3:16
5:38	Col2:11
5:39	3:17
9:54	1Ths 4:1
9:55-56	2Ths 2:4
11:4	1Tm 3:16
17:36	2Tm 4:14
Jo 1:18	Hb 7:21
3:13	10:34
3:15	Jas 4:4
5:3-4	1Pt 3:15
5:16	3:18
7:53-8:11	4:14
8:59	1Jo 5:7-8
9:4	5:13
9:35	Jude 3
12:25	4
16:16	25
Ac 2:30	Rv 1:5
3:26	1:11a
4:25	1:11b
8:37	5:10
9:5-6	8:13
13:19-20	14:5
15:24	16:17
15:34	20:5
17:26	21:24
18:21	

Translation	
Mt 1:18	1Co 1:7
5:22	15:22
13:39	15:23
16:19	2Co 5:21
23:33	Ep 1:4-5
24:3	1:11
24:33	5:20
24:50	Php 2:6-7
27:50	Col 2:8-9
Mk 12:40	3:16
Lk 23:43	2Ths 2:8
Jo 1:13	2:9
3:3, 7	1Tm 6:10
5:29	Hb 7:3
14:26	9:2
Ac 3:19	9:28
4:27	2Pt 2:1
5:32	2:3
13:19-20	2:4
17:29	Rv 3:3
Ro 1:20	20:10
5:18	22:12
5:19	
8:15	
8:19-21	
9:27-28	
14:23	