



IF THE BIBLE IS GOD’S WORD, WHY ARE THERE MULTIPLE TRANSLATIONS?

Understanding Why Different Versions Exist—and Why You Can Trust Them.

Based on Written and Read – Season 1, Episode 5

A teaching ministry of Dr. Robert C. Crowder

INTRODUCTION

You open a Bible app or walk into a bookstore, and instead of finding just one Bible, you find dozens.

- The King James Version.
- The New International Version.
- The English Standard Version.
- The New Living Translation.

And naturally, a question comes to mind:

If the Bible is really God’s Word, why are there so many translations?

Shouldn’t there just be one? Underneath that question is an even deeper concern: Has the Bible changed? Can we really trust what we’re reading? The answer is not only reassuring—it actually strengthens your confidence in Scripture. **THE BIBLE WAS NOT ORIGINALLY WRITTEN IN ENGLISH** One of the most important things to understand is this: The Bible was not written in English. • The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, with small portions in Aramaic • The New Testament was written in Koine Greek English as we know it today did not exist when the Bible was written. That means if we want to understand the Bible, it must be translated into our language. A teaching ministry of Dr. Robert C. Crowder **1 Translation Is Not Changing the Bible Translation is not altering God’s Word. It is communicating it. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God...” (2 Timothy 3:16) God inspired the original writings. Translation carries that message into other languages so people can understand it. TRANSLATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN PART OF GOD’S PLAN** Some people assume translation is a modern development. It is not. Around 200 years before Christ, Jewish scholars translated the Old Testament into Greek. This translation is known as the Septuagint. Why was this necessary? Because many Jews no

longer spoke Hebrew fluently. Greek had become the common language. Here's what is remarkable: The New Testament writers sometimes quoted from this Greek translation. That means translation was already being used within the biblical world itself. "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning..." (Romans 15:4) From the beginning, God's Word was meant to be understood by people in their own language.

WHY ARE THERE MULTIPLE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS? This is where confusion often comes in. If translation is necessary, why not just one English version? The answer has to do with how translation works.

Different Approaches to Translation There are generally two approaches: 1. **Word-for-Word (Formal Equivalence)** These translations aim to stay as close as possible to the original wording and structure. 2. **Thought-for-Thought (Dynamic Equivalence)** These translations aim to express the meaning in a way that is easier to understand in modern language. Both approaches are trying to communicate the same truth. The message does not change, but the wording may vary slightly for clarity.

A teaching ministry of Dr. Robert C. Crowder 2 **God's Word Does Not Change** Jesus said: "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law..." (Matthew 5:18) God's Word is fixed and unchanging. Translations do not alter that truth. They are simply different ways of expressing the same message.

HAS THE BIBLE BEEN CHANGED? This is one of the most common concerns. If there are multiple translations, does that mean the Bible has been altered over time? The answer is no.

The Role of Manuscripts Modern translations are based on ancient manuscripts that preserve the original text. We have thousands of these manuscripts, and when they are compared, they confirm the wording of Scripture with a very high level of accuracy.

God's Promise to Preserve His Word "The words of the LORD are pure words... Thou shalt keep them... for ever." (Psalm 12:6-7) God did not only inspire His Word. He preserved it.

A Simple Truth Here is a helpful way to think about it: Translations may differ in wording, but they agree in doctrine. The core message of Scripture has not changed.

WHY TRANSLATIONS MATTER Instead of being a problem, translations are part of how God's Word reaches the world. "The word of our God shall stand for ever." (Isaiah 40:8) That promise is not limited to one language. If the gospel is going to reach every nation, then Scripture must be understood in every language. Translation is not a weakness. It is part of God's mission.

A teaching ministry of Dr. Robert C. Crowder 3 **WHICH TRANSLATION SHOULD YOU USE?** This is a practical question many people ask. Here are a few simple guidelines:

- **Choose a Faithful Translation** Pick a translation that is known for accuracy and faithfulness to the original text.
- **Choose One You Will Actually Read** The goal is not to own a Bible. It is to read it, understand it, and live by it.
- **Use Multiple Translations as a Tool** Comparing translations can often bring clarity to a passage.

A Personal Note For careful study and teaching, many prefer a more word-for-word translation because it stays closer to the structure of the original text. At the same time, readable translations can be helpful for understanding. The key is not finding the "perfect" version. The key is engaging with the Word of God.

THE MOST IMPORTANT TRUTH At the heart of this

discussion is something simple but powerful: “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17) That is true in any language. Whether someone reads the Bible in English, Spanish, or another language, the message is the same. God’s Word speaks.

CONCLUSION So why are there multiple Bible translations? Not because the Bible has been changed. But because the Bible has been faithfully translated so people can understand it. God gave His Word in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Through translation, that same message has reached people all over the world. And that means when you open a faithful translation of Scripture, you can read it with confidence. A teaching ministry of Dr. Robert C. Crowder 4 You are reading the Word of God.

LOOKING AHEAD In the next study, we’ll take another step and ask: How do we know the Bible has not been corrupted over time?