

WHICH BIBLE IS THE RIGHT ONE?

The English speaking world has more than 78 different translations of the Bible available. With so many English Bible translations an important question to ask is, “How do I know which Bible translation is right for me?” This short guide is intended to give members of Church of the Savior a brief overview of the Bible translations we use and recommend good Study Bibles. It is not an exhaustive list but is intended to help you make an informed decision.

WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible isn't one book, it's actually a collection of 66 books written by 40 different authors as diverse as kings, doctors and fishermen. It was written over a period of 1,500 years (imagine reading a book that started being written when the Roman Empire fell and was completed this week) in three different languages and on three different continents. That in itself is rather impressive. But when you consider a book written by 40 authors over 1,500 years in three different languages on three different continents has **the same consistent message throughout...that's amazing!** And it points to the most important thing about it: **the Bible is the Word of God.**

If you want to know who God is, what He's like, what He thinks of you, what His will is, how to live His way or anything about Him it's all there in the Bible because they are His Words.

IS THERE AN OFFICIAL TRANSLATION?

The first widespread English translation of the Bible was the King James Version (KJV) of 1611 which immediately became the standard English Bible and remained so until the 20th century. The impact of the KJV on English-speaking culture is incredible and cannot be underestimated. Starting in the 20th Century as a result of more accurate ancient manuscripts and a desire for more contemporized English, dozens of new English Bible translations have been made.

DOES THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH HAVE AN OFFICIAL TRANSLATION?

No, it does not have a single official translation. The most frequently used translation among Episcopalians is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

DOES CHURCH OF THE SAVIOR HAVE AN OFFICIAL TRANSLATION?

Most often we use the NRSV however we also frequently use the New Living Translation (NLT) and the English Standard Version (ESV). Additionally, the translation of the Psalms we use during our Sunday liturgy is from *the Book of Common Prayer*. Though we don't use it often at COTS, another widely used, reliable translation is the *New International Version*.

SO WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

- Uses a more literal, “word-for-word” method of translation.
 - The language is less conversational.
 - It leaves theological terms like “justification” as-is.
- Uses phrases like “brothers and sisters” and “humankind” when the original word for a mixed group was “brethren” or “man” (as is “mankind”).
- Does *not* have a large number of print or online resources (like Study Bibles) available.

English Standard Version (ESV)

- Very similar to the NRSV.
- Uses a more literal, “word-for-word” method of translation.
 - The language is less conversational in style.
 - It leaves theological terms like “justification” as-is.
- It typically does not use gender-inclusive words for mixed groups of people.
- It has wonderful print and online resources available.

New Living Translation (NLT)

- Uses a “phrase-by-phrase” method of translation.
 - The language is much more conversational in style.
 - It uses helpful phrases for theological terms:
 - ex: “justified” is translated “made right in God’s sight.”
- Uses phrases like “brothers and sisters” and “humankind” when the original word for a mixed group was “brethren” or “man.”
- It has wonderful print and online resources available.

New International Version (NIV)

- One of the most widely-used Bibles in America from the 1980’s until recently. It is being “replaced” in the marketplace by the ESV and the NLT.
- It is in-between a word-by-word method and a phrase-by-phrase method of translation.
- It has had many excellent print and online resources available in the past.

STUDY BIBLES

A study Bible is the Bible text combined with helpful notes. Kind of like having an Encyclopedia embedded into your Bible. A Study Bible is an excellent resource to help you navigate questions about a difficult passage, learn about the culture it was written in, why things are worded a certain way and all types of things we could use help understanding. Having a Study Bible is a bit like the difference between using a hand saw and a power saw. They’re both tools, but one will help you build a foundation a lot quicker!

There are all kinds of Study Bibles that can be very specific in their focus (Men’s, Women’s, Prophecy, Archaeology, Spirit-filled, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, etc.) We recommend a good “general use” (non-topical) Study Bible which has helpful tools like:

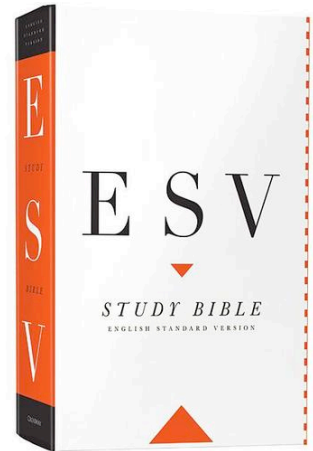
- An introduction to each book of the Bible: who wrote it, when, where, and why.
- Outlines and maps.
- Definitions of major theological words and ideas.
- Helpful commentary and explanations of the verses you’re reading.

COTS RECOMMENDS...

If you do not already have a Study Bible, we recommend the following two as excellent choices.

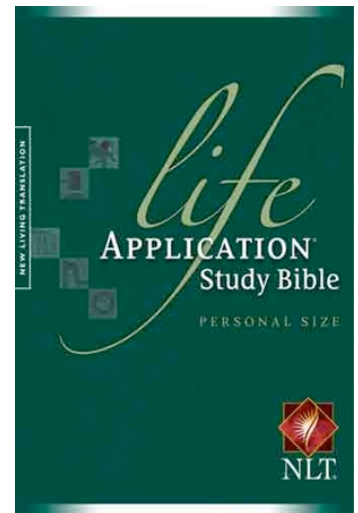
THE ESV STUDY BIBLE

- The ESV is a more word-for-word translation.
- This is full of excellent resources.
- It is less devotional:
 - “What is this saying to me personally?”
- It is more theological:
 - “What is this saying in general to the whole world?”



THE LIFE APPLICATION STUDY BIBLE

- Available in NLT and NIV translations which are more conversational translations.
- Equally full of excellent resources.
- It is more devotional:
 - “What is this saying to me personally?”
- It is less theological:
 - “What is this saying in general to the whole world?”



WHERE DO I GET ONE?

Amazon.com - Mardel - Family Christian Stores - Lifeway

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING!

...is not having the “right” translation or Study Bible.

The most important thing is simply that you open whatever Bible you have everyday and spend time reading it, listening to Your Heavenly Father speak to you: learning who He is, what’s He’s like & how much you matter to Him.