**Choose Your Bible**

**(Seekers June 7, 2024)**

We may believe that the Bible is the divinely inspired, inerrant word of God, or we may believe that it is composed of anthropogenic myth, but we probably can agree that the Bible contains messages of peace and hope scattered amongst tales of barbarism and amorality, along with some historically accurate reporting.

Let's take a brief look at the history of the book that we have come to know as *The Holy Bible* and compare some of the translations into English.Then we can share our thoughts and preferences related to the available translations of the Bible.

**Queries**

* **Does one Bible version speak to you more than others? Which one?**
* **How do you employ the Bible in your spiritual practice?**

**Compare These Translations of Genesis**

***The Vulgate - 382 CE and onward - Translated by Jerome and others into Latin for the Catholic church.***

*With English in parentheses.*

in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram

(In the beginning God created heaven and earth)

terra autem erat inanis et vacua et tenebrae super faciem abyssi et spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas

(And the earth was void and empty, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God moved over the waters.)

Dixitque Deus fiat lux et facia est lux.

(And God said: Be light made. And light was made.)

et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona et divisit lucem ac tenebras.

(And God saw the light that it was good; and he divided the light from the darkness.

appellavitque lucem diem et tenebras noctem factumque est vespere et mane dies unus.

(And he called the light Day, and the darkness Night; and there was evening and morning one day.)

***The Wycliffe Bible - 1382 - Translated by John Wycliffe et al.***

In the bigynnyng God made of nouyt heuene and erthe. Forsothe the erthe was idel and voide, and derknessis weren on the face of depthe; and the Spirit of the Lord was boron on the watris. And God seide, Liyt be maad, and liyt was maad. And God seiy the lyt, that it was good, and he departide the lyt fro derknessis; and he clepide the lyt, dai, and the derknessis, nyyt. And the euentid and morwetid was maad, o daie.

***The Tyndale Bible - 1536 - Translated by William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale***

In the begynnynge God created heaven and erth. The erth was voyde and emptie and darcknesse was vpon the depe and the spirit of god moved vpon the water. Than God sayd: let there be lyghte and there was lyghte. And God saw the lyghte that it was good: and devyded the lyghte from the darknesse and called the lyghte daye and the darcknesse nyghte: and so of the evenynge and mornynge was made the fyrst daye.

***The Geneva Bible - 1560 - Translated by William Whittington et al.***

In the beginning God created the heauen and the earth. And the earth was without forme and void, and darknesse was vpon the depe, and the spirit of god moued vpon the waters. Then God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light that it was good, and God separated the light from the darknes. And God called the Light Day, and the darkness he called Night. So the euening and the morning were the first day.

***The King James Version - 1611 - Commissioned by King James I.***

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

***Revised Standard Version - 1951 - National Council of the Churches of Christ***

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

***New World Translation - 1950 - Jehovah's Witnesses***

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and desolate, and there was darkness upon the surface of the watery deep, and God's active force was moving about over the surface of the waters. And God said: "Let there be light." Then there was light. After that God saw that the light was good, and God began to divide the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, but the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.

***The New American Bible - 1970 - United States Conference of Catholic Bishops***

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth - and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and a mighty wind sweeping over the waters - Then God said: Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." Evening came, and morning followed - the first day.

***New International Version - 1973 - Biblica, Inc. - Evangelical Christian***

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. and God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning - the first day.

***The Living Bible Paraphrased - 1971 - Tyndale House Publishers***

When God began creating the heavens and the earth, the earth was a shapeless, chaotic mass, with the Spirit of God brooding over the dark vapors. Then God said, "Let there be light." And light appeared. And God was pleased with it and divided the light from the darkness. He called the light "daytime," and the darkness "nighttime." Together they formed the first day.

A distinguished German theologian [J. Schniewind] has defined myth as "the expression of unobservable realities in terms of observable phenomena." All stories which occur in the Bible are myths for the devout Christian, whether they correspond to historical fact or not. All human societies have myths in this sense, and normally the myths to which the greatest importance is attached are those which are the least probable. The nonrationality of myth is its very essence, for religion requires a demonstration of faith by the suspension of critical doubt.

from *Genesis as Myth and Other Essays* by Edmund Leach

**Compare John 3:16 from Early English Translations**

* Vulgate - Latin:
  + "Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret : ut omnis qui credit in eum, non pereat, sed habeat vitam aeternam."
* Rushworth Manuscript (c.950) - Old English (Mercian):
  + "Swa forðon lufade god ðiosne middengeard //þte sunu his ancenda gisalde //þt eghwelc soðe gilefeð in hine ne losað// ah hifeð lif ecce"
* Wessex Gospels (c.950-1175) - Old English (West Saxon):
  + "God lufode middan-eard swa //þæt he sealde hys akennedan sune //þæt nan ne forwurðe þe on hine gelefð. Ac hæbe þt eche lyf."
* Wycliffian Early Version (c.1382) - Middle English:[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wycliffe%27s_Bible#cite_note-13)
  + "Forsoþe god lovede so þe worlde, þat he ȝave hıs one bıgotun sone, þat ech man þat bıleveþ into hym perısche not, but have everlastynge lıȷf."
* Wycliffian Later Version (1394) - Middle English:
  + "For God lovede so the world, that he ȝaf his oon bigeten sone, that ech man that bileveth in him perische not, but have everlastynge lıȷf."
* King James Version (1611) - Early Modern English:
  + "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."

Compiled by John Barstow