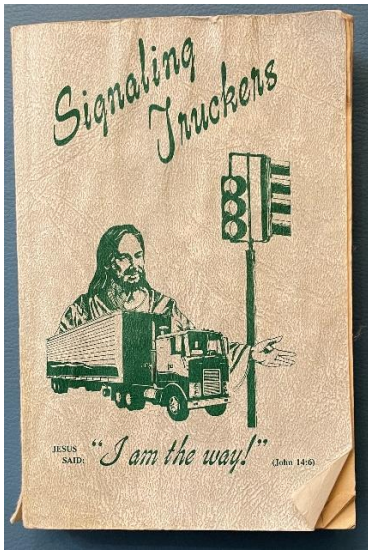


Title Slide



The choice of a bible is an important decision and should not be based solely upon a blog post or going along with the crowd.

That was a funny spoof on lawyer commercials but, like most jokes, there is some truth in there. This message is a brief education on how to select a bible, particularly if you are just getting interested in Christianity or want to get serious on studying. There is a dizzying amount of bible translations today and I'm sure many are viable options. I've been studying for over 20 years now and want to share my experiences so you can benefit. I'm going to address what your should look for in a bible, make a recommendation, and then tell you what to avoid. And I'll give you litmus tests so you can quickly tell if one is worthy.

The biggest reason for this teaching is one of human nature: the first bible you read is going to set the baseline. Every other translation and even many doctrines will be judged against the first translation you read. Wherever possible we should set the baseline as strong as possible so you are don't end up having to re-establish that baseline. This happened to me and I still remember scriptures that I know are mistranslated as I first read them. I want to help new folks not have to work through my mistakes.

Slide 2 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (Eph 4:11-13)

The purpose of teachers, and all biblical offices, is to equip the saints. In my view, a teacher should prepare people so they can exceed the knowledge of their teacher. Frankly, I want you to learn what I learned faster, and skip the stuff I had to unlearn or research, so you can go further than me. That said, I don't regret my journey at all. I am blessed with a relationship with Yahweh and Yeshua because of the studies. I just want to pass on my lessons of experience so others can benefit!

In my walk, I started with the bible in the picture. It was some time in 1999 and I saw a pile of these free at a truck stop in California. I'm a jokester. I love sarcasm and silliness. This bible was corny enough for me to read. This was the beginning of my walk. Today, I know my "Trucker's Bible" is an NIV translation of the New Testament.

After reading the NIV NT, I quickly realized I had only read the end of the book. I felt a very strong need to read the entire bible from Genesis to Revelation. I believe this was the pushing of the Holy Spirit. So I read a translation called the MKJV. Yes, that's an M, not an N. Cover to cover. Genesis to Revelation. I needed to know the entire Word of God and I do not know why I chose that particular translation. But I felt a huge draw to read the whole thing cover to cover. If you get anything out of this message, this is it. Whatever translation you end up getting, you need to read the whole thing starting at page one until the end. My first unlearning started because I read the Bible out of order. Realizing how much of the NT is directly from the OT is something I wish I knew the first time I read the NT.

God decided the primary way He would communicate to us in these days is through His written Word, miraculously compiled and preserved starting in the Days of Noah. The Holy Spirit is going to talk to you and guide you through whichever Bible you choose. Trust me, that's going to happen. But the best way to not be deceived is to simply read the whole thing cover to cover. This way when charlatans and false teachers show up, you are prepared.

However, while you will be guided by the Holy Spirit in whichever translation you use, the first time you read the Bible cover to cover is setting a foundation. It's almost 100% sure that you will reference every other translation against the first one you read. If you only take two things away from this message, let this be number two. Reading the most literal and accurate version you can get your hands on first sets the best baseline possible.

After my reading of the MKJV, I discovered bible software. Oh boy did this open up the scriptures! The software I found is called e-sword, it's free, still available, and it's my primary tool for these messages. This was an enormous blessing because it allowed me to do searches and find patterns. It also comes stock with a version that associates each word with it's Hebrew or Greek equivalent through the Strong's numbers.

The screenshot shows the e-Sword software interface. The main window displays the Bible text for John 3:16: "For God So Loved the World". The text is color-coded with Greek and Hebrew word numbers (e.g., G1063, G2316, G3779, G25, G3588, G2889, G5620, G1325, G848, G3439, G5207, G2443, G3056, G4100, G1519, G846, G3361, G622, G235, G2192, G4982, G4100, G1519, G846, G2919, G1161, G3361, G4100, G1519, G3588, G3686, G1519, G3588, G2889, G2532, G444, G2532, G4655, G3123, G2228, G5457, G1063, G846, G2041, G2258, G4190). A pop-up dictionary window for G25 is open, showing the Greek word ἀγαπάω (agapao) and its definition: "Perhaps from ἀγαν (much; or compare [H5689]); to love (in a social or moral sense): - (be-) love (-ed). Compare G5368." It also lists "Total KJV occurrences: 142" and "Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries".

You can see that the word loved in John 3:16 is agapao in the Greek. This tool right here opened up a brand new world. Because some words aren't represented properly in English. Translators have biases and some even had orders to present the Word in such a way as to represent doctrines rather than just what the text says.

Tell me, who wants to be fed doctrine, meaning man's teachings, through a translation? Who wants to unknowingly consume false teachings that are represented as the Word of God? Nobody, that's who. This software that shows the Greek and Hebrew words behind the English coupled with a study I did on the word judgment is where I a) expanded my knowledge exponentially and b) got really upset. My knowledge expanded because there are several Greek words that are translated into the word judgment or its synonyms. I wanted to understand the second resurrection, which is called the resurrection of judgment, so I did an extensive study on all these Greek words and realized the world is convinced of wrong doctrine because the most famous bible was translated improperly on purpose. Did I mention I don't want to be fed doctrine? Yeah, I really do not want to be fed doctrine. And I don't want you to be fed doctrine, either. I want you to be able to study on your own and be able to test all things. Here is the first litmus test:

Joh 5:22 "For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son,
Joh 5:23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.
Joh 5:24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.
Joh 5:25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.
Joh 5:26 "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;
Joh 5:27 and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is *the* Son of Man.
Joh 5:28 "Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice,
Joh 5:29 and will come forth; those who did the good *deeds* to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil *deeds* to a resurrection of judgment.

Witnesses to Jesus

Joh 5:22 For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:
Joh 5:23 That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
Joh 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.
Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.
Joh 5:26 For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;
Joh 5:27 And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.
Joh 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,
Joh 5:29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

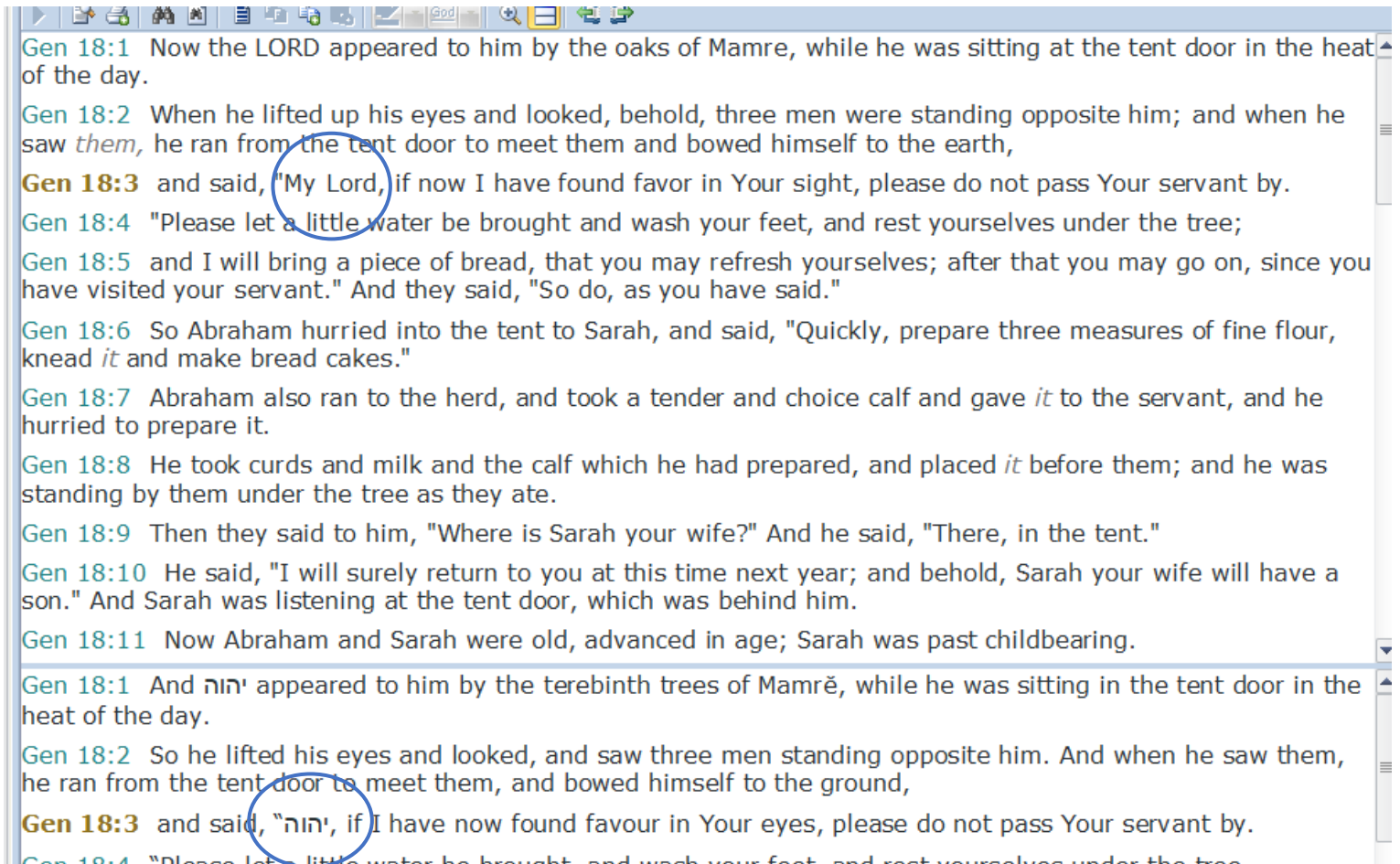
The top version is right, and the bottom version is wrong. The word judgment in verses 22, 24, and 29 are the same exact Greek word G2920 krisis. The Messiah was saying the exact same word all three times but the translators of the bottom version decided to change the words to paint a picture that isn't there. This was my big discovery. The word damnation doesn't actually exist in the bible. There is a word for condemnation, but it's something else. This is your first litmus test for choosing a bible. John 5: 22-29 needs to read the same and the conclusion at verse 29 needs to be "resurrection of judgment". If these passages read differently, then you can know whatever translation you are reading isn't worth your time and will steer you in a direction.

I've never doubted scripture but when I realized translations could be this wrong, I was very motivated to find a translation that was as accurate and readable as possible. One of the teachers at the church I was attending read from a Bible that matched what I was discovering. Yahweh spared me from having to sort through translation after translation by having one of my own teachers use the best one I've found so far, which is the NASB 1995. That's the top version in the picture. I've raised my kids on this bible and it's my primary source. I've used the first litmus test a couple times and only recall it passing once, with the ESV. Bottom line, though, is if you want to read the bible cover to cover and have confidence what you are reading is representing the Hebrew and Greek properly, the NASB 1995 gets that job done and I recommend it.

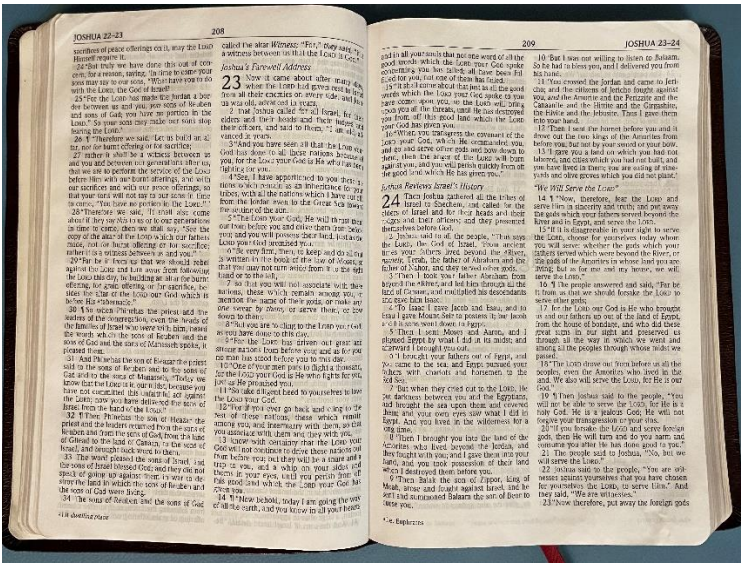
Before I close I want to address the second litmus test. This is in reference to Sacred Name Bibles or Bibles that are made with a Messianic or Hebrew Roots emphasis. I generally steer clear of this because I don't want to be fed doctrine. The New Testament was written in Greek, not Hebrew. If you see Hebrew in the NT, then that raises a yellow flag. It's possible to put Hebrew in the NT if the NT verse is citing the Tanakh, the Old Testament as we call it. Then you can look at the verse being cited and bring Hebrew words in through there. But if the verses are originally penned in Greek, or

we have no Tanakh reference for the citation, then the translators are portraying a Hebrew flavor that's not really there.

However, there are some Sacred Name Bibles out there that have laughable errors in them. Here's the litmus test for that:



Some in the Sacred Name Movement have a strong bias against using the word Lord or it's Hebrew equivalent Adonai, when referencing Yahweh. In this case, Abraham literally called Yahweh "Adonai" meaning "My Lord" and there is nothing wrong with that. Yahweh is called My Lord many times in scripture. The top version is the correct one. The bottom one has inserted YHWH in Hebrew in verse 3 where it doesn't belong. Putting YHWH's Name where it doesn't belong is a very bad thing to do. The point of bringing this up is to show that our team isn't immune from pushing things that aren't true, either. We need to test ALL things and hold fast to the good. While I prefer the Sacred Names of Yahweh and Yeshua myself, I'd rather have it say LORD in all caps where YHWH should be and have the rest of the book be accurate rather than be spoon fed somebody else's thoughts. But that's just me.



To wrap it up, when searching for a bible translation, I recommend the NASB95. This is due to years of study and discovering that one is accurate, literal, and readable. Also, use the tools to study verses deeply and understand why words are chosen when they are. This path we are in is long. Enjoy it and grow in the knowledge of truth