Preserved In Translations

> But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4

The Bible has been preserved to the very word However, in order to live by every word, you must read every word.   There are two ways to read the Bible, in the original languages directly, and via translations.   Reading the Bible directly in the original Greek and Hebrew requires a thorough knowledge of these languages. Most people do not understand the original Biblical languages. Translations put the text of the Bible in the languages of everyday people. The Protestant Reformers sought to put the hand of the common man, bypassing the gatekeepers of the day. But is a translation still the Word of God? The New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament frequently. In doing so, they translated the OT Hebrew in to NT Greek. Which of these is the Word of God? It is self-evident, that both the OT Scripture and NT quotation are the Word of God. Therefore, a translation can be just as much the Word as the original, bearing the authority thereof.

Translation is necessary. You can't live by every Word if you can't understand the language. Can you understand the original Greek?:

> ουτως γαρ ηγαπησεν ο θεος τον κοσμον ωστε τον υιον αυτου τον μονογενη εδωκεν ινα πας ο πιστευων εις αυτον μη απολη ται αλλ εχη ζωην αιωνιον

> – John 3:16, original Greek

However, in translating the Bible, there are generally three accepted methods of translation: word-for-word, or formal equivalence, thought-for-thought or dynamic equivalence, and paraphrase.

Literal (KJV)	Light Dynamic (NKJV)	Dynamic (NIV)	Paraphrase (NLT)
He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he **that believeth not** the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.	He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he **who does not believe the** Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.	Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but **whoever rejects** the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.	And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't **obey** the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment.

This example of John 3:36 shows varying degrees between FE, DE, and paraphrase. The KJV is a literal translation. The NKJV uses DE in restructuring "that believeth not" to "who does not believe." The NIV replaces "he that" with the (gender neutral) "whoever," and replaces "does not believe" with "rejects," changing the meaning of the text.[1] The paraphrase NLT, however, changes belief into obedience, turning salvation by faith into salvation by works.

Translations can vary in style from very loose to very literal. Which of these is best? More importantly, which of these does God demand? Which of these styles can be truly called the Word of God? To determine this, the most common translation styles will be examined in the light of God's

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[1] It may be argued that not believing Christ is equal with rejecting Christ, however, the connection with the "believe" of the first half of the verse is lost. A person may not believe in Christ, but not conscientiously reject Him either. According to the NIV and NLT, this person is neither saved nor lost!

Word.

An **interlinear**, or **word-for-word** translation simply exchanges each word in the original language for it's equivalent in the receptor language. While conveying every word of God, it can be difficult to understand.

> So for loved God the world, so as the Son of Him, the only-begotton, He gave, that everyone believing into Him not may perish but have life everlasting.

> *- John 3:16, Green's Interlinear*

A **literal** or **formal** translation arranges the translated words as necessary to make meaningful sentences in the receptor language. A literal translation has two components: Verbal equivalency (VE) seeks to translate word-for-word wherever possible. Formal equivalency (FE) seeks to preserve the grammatical structure of the original. Nouns are translated to nouns and verbs to verbs where possible. Both VE and FE are part of a literal translation.

> 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.

> *- John 3:16, KJV*

> For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

> *- John 3:16, NASB*

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son[2], that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

> *- John 3:16, ESV*

Sometimes words are *added* to translations if necessary for clarification or sentence structure. However, the original structure is kept intact and and added words kept at a a minimum. Honest translations indicate which words are added, usually by *italics* or [brackets].

Note the following example from Psalms 32:1-3. The added text is bolded for emphasis. In verses 1 and 2, the KJV and NASB add the text "is he whose," "there is," "whose," and "is." The KJV italicizes these words, while the NASB does not. In verse 3, the NASB adds the words "about my sin," while the KJV does not. It is important to note that ALL translations have added words to the text so that it will be grammatically correct. However, of the Bible versions listed here, only the KJV and NASB indicate which words have been added. Even the formal equivalent ESV does not flag it's added words. If the dynamic equivalency Bibles, such as the NIV, were to highlight their added words, much more of the text would be italicized, and possibly stir up the suspicions of the reader.

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2   The Greek word here is monogenes. This is a compound word. Mono means sole, single, only, alone. Genes means born, begotton, sired. Dynamic Equivalence translations translate "mono" but ignore "genes," resulting in Jesus Christ becoming God's "only Son" or "one and only Son." This creates a contradiction with Romans 8:14-17 among other Scriptures. We, as Christians, are God's adopted sons and daughters. Christ is NOT God's ONLY Son; Christ is God's only NATURAL Son. Instead of being easier to read, these dynamic Bibles have created a serious doctrinal contradiction here.

KJV	NASB
A Psalm of David, Maschil. 1. Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven, *whose* sin *is* covered. 2. Blessed *is* the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit *there is* no guile. 3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.	1. *A Psalm* of David. A Maskil. How blessed **is he whose** transgression **is** forgiven, **Whose** sin **is** covered! 2. How blessed **is** the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit **there is** no deceit! 3. When I kept silent ***about my sin***, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long.

A **dynamic equivalent** (or **functional equivalent**) translation is a translation of sense or meaning, without concern for actual words. The emphasis of the translation work is placed on the thoughts or meanings, and not on the very words being translated. It gives the translators liberty to read their own interpretations into the text.

> For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
>
> – John 3:16, NIV

> For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.
>
> - John 3:16, GNT/TEV

An **optimal equivalent** or **complete equivalent** translation is more literal than a dynamic equivalent, but less literal than a formal equivalent. It still grants translators some freedom to read their own interpretations into the text.

> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.
>
> - John 3:16, NKJV

> For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.
>
> - John 3:16, HCSB

A **paraphrase** is a complete rewrite of the text in the translator's own words. It allows them maximum license to interpret the text.

> For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.
>
> - John 3:16, NLT

> This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this

is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.

<div align="right">John 3:16, The Message</div>

All the Words of God

A formal equivalency translation gives the receptor language a transparent view of the original. When it comes to selecting a Bible translation, we need to use Biblical guidelines. We are to live by *every word* that proceeds out of the mouth of God (Matt 4:4). The ideal Bible translation must give us every word of God, with no words of man. The paraphrase is excluded immediately, because it is an interpretation, not a translation. It is rewritten in the words of man. The Scripture text can have many layers of meaning. When it is interpreted, often only one or few of these layers are considered. When a text is translated by interpretation, some of it's deeper meaning is lost.

> O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this. Psalm 92:5,6

As for thought-for-thought dynamic translations, consider what God has to say about His thoughts and our thoughts. God's thoughts are very deep. Man cannot know them, unless He chooses to reveal them. Man cannot read God's mind. God's thoughts are not our thoughts. Yet can man really claim to know the very thought of God when He inspired His Word? The only way for man to know God's thoughts is through Divine revelation. The means by which God reveals truth have already been touched on: a) general, or nature; b) special, or the written Word; c) Personal, or the Living Word, Jesus Christ. For a translator to claim to be translating God's thoughts means he is receiving new inspiration from God. Since the cannon of Scripture is closed, new inspiration is clearly not occurring. Excepting inspiration, the only way to know God's thoughts is to read His Word!

Where does God place the emphasis, the thoughts or the words? He clearly emphasizes the WORDS:

> **Every word** of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Proverbs 30:5

> And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by **every word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live. Deuteronomy 8:3

> Exodus 4:28-30

> 28. And <u>Moses told Aaron **all the words**</u> of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded him.
> 29. And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:
> 30. And <u>Aaron spake **all the words**</u> which the LORD had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

> Exodus 24:3-8

> 3. And Moses came and told the people **all the words** of the LORD, and all the

judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, **All the words** which the LORD hath said will we do.

4. And Moses wrote **all the words** of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

5. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6. And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, **All that the LORD hath said** will we do, and be obedient.

8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning **all these words**.

Note how Moses and Aaron were careful to transmit ALL of God's Words.

Therefore thou shalt <u>speak **all** these words</u> unto them; but they will not hearken to thee: thou shalt also call unto them; but they will not answer thee. Jeremiah 7:27

Then the LORD said unto me, <u>Proclaim **all** these words in the cities</u> of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, Hear ye the words of this covenant, and do them. Jeremiah 11:6

Thus speaketh the LORD God of Israel, saying, <u>Write thee **all** the words that I have spoken</u> unto thee in a book. Jeremiah 30:2

Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, **all** <u>my words</u> that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. Ezekiel 3:10

After a period of persecution, the early church comforted by an angel, who told them to continue preaching about new life in Christ:

Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people **all** <u>the words</u> of this life. Acts 5:20

God puts His emphasis on His very words, and not His thoughts. Thus, a translation needs to be word-for-word. Does this mean that we all must use interlinear Bibles? No, it does not. As mentioned before, an interlinear is a word-for-word exchange into the receptor language. However, as it retains the word order of the original, it can be very difficult to read. There is nothing wrong with interlinear Bibles. They can be very helpful when learning the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. A formal translation, however, takes a word-for-word translation, rearranges the words into meaningful sentences in the receptor language. It adds words if needed for clarity. But what about God's multiple warnings to not add to His Words? As mentioned before, honest translations flag their added words, usually with italics. (Do we accept the added words as Scripture? This can be argued either way.) However, those producing optimal, dynamic, and paraphrase translations should take heed, because they are offering their own words in place of Gods. Dynamic and paraphrase translations may make the text seem more understandable, but there is a huge difference between arranging words into coherent sentences and placing one's own interpretation into the text. Yes, the dynamic Bibles may seem easier to read, but it is not God's very words. These profess to be Bibles, but are, at best, Bible commentaries. Therefore, a word-for-word translation gives all the words of the original; a formal translation makes these words understandable.