

Back to Basics: The Bible



Welcome

We are starting the year in Faith Formation with a return to the basics, and for Christians that means the Bible

Next week we'll split into THREE classes, so there will be THREE options, and we'll tell you about them a bit later.

The Bible is...



As Christians - we base a lot of what we believe and what we do on the Bible.
People do all sorts of things for good or bad based on how they understand the Bible.
And that starts with the Bible itself
So what is the Bible?

The Bible is...

Big

Complex

A bit messy

Not just one book - a collection of books

Ancient writings in multiple genres

Written and translated by human hands

What is the Bible for? (in 7 words or less)

Helping us to ask the right questions - Amy-Jill Levine

A rip-roaring library to inspire ongoing conversation - Brian D. McLaren

A library of human encounters with divinity - Barbara Brown Taylor

Encountering God's grace - M. Craig Barnes

Connecting God's people across millenia through story - Celeste Kennel-Shank

Telling us what men thought about God - Jessica Mesman

Last year, Christian Century magazine asked a number of noted faith leaders
What is the Bible for? – In seven words or less.
Here is what some of those wise folks said.

M. Craig Barnes is the retired president of Princeton Seminary
Kennel-Shank is a pastor, journalist, and author
Mesman is an associate editor of Christian Century

What do you think the operative word in each of these is?

Source: <https://www.christiancentury.org/sections/more/93772?page=0>

What goes into making a Bible?

Source	Translator	Method	Reading Level	Context
Oldest in original language Generally accepted Another version	Team (but who's on it) Individual	Word for word Thought for thought Paraphrase	5th - 6th grade 11th grade and above	Original writing Translator Other contributors Readers

Sources

- There are many available - not all in original languages
- No 'originals' - all copies or translations of some sort - oldest about year 300 CE
- Some relatively newly discovered - Dead Sea Scrolls (1947-1956)

Translator or better yet a Team

- Not a one-to-one correspondence between original languages and modern English
- Decisions and choices are made - can reflect a theological bias

Method

- Word for word = verbal equivalence = formal — trying to be accurate
- Thought for thought = dynamic equivalence = functional — understandable
- Paraphrase — very understandable, likely include some interpretation too

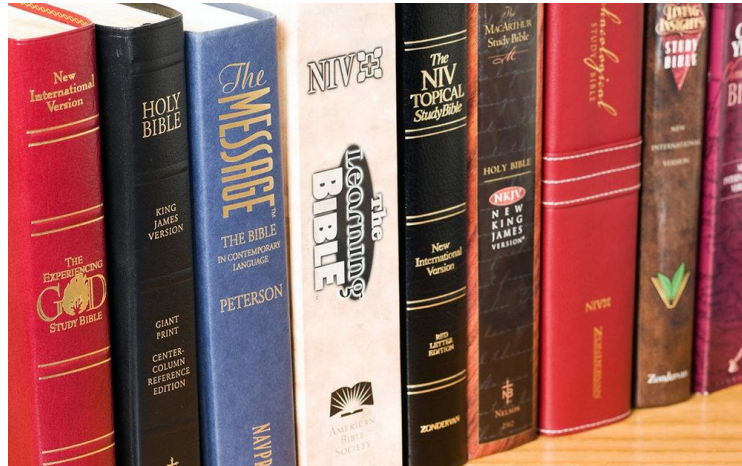
Resulting Reading Level

- Thought for thought - easy flowing like a book you read for pleasure
- Word for word - more like something you would read for a course

Wrapped around all of that is context

- People originally writing, curating what goes in or out, copying, adding notes
- Readers. Are we reading when we're 20 or 70? What's going on in the world?

What's at *your* house?



A lot, if not most, people have more than one Bible

You get them as gifts - Baptism, third grade, confirmation, wedding

You buy them for study, or maybe when a new translation comes out

They all have a story

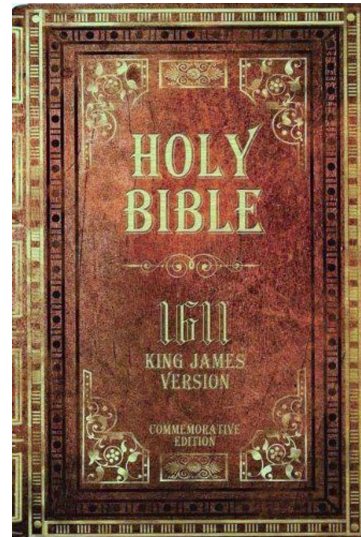
We'll take a look at a few of them - try and tell you some things you didn't know

What's at *your* house?

King James Version

Psalm 23:1-2

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters.



Not the first, but the most lasting, early English translation (1388 Wycliff was first)
Commissioned by King James I of England, published 1611
In 1611 literacy rates were low
SO SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN TO SOUND GOOD WHEN READ ALOUD

Some original language sources and another Bible, Bishop's Bible (1568, Anglican)
Translated by a team of 47 scholars - all Church of England - protestant
Word-for-word – 12-grade reading level
Calvin and the Pilgrims used the Geneva Bible (1560) - included anti monarchy notes
No notes in the KJV (remember commissioned by the king)

Continuously used for hundreds of years
Still the most used version in the U.S. - partly because it's free - no copyright
Where we get wording for well known hymns and liturgies
Very traditional and familiar - can seem comforting & authoritative

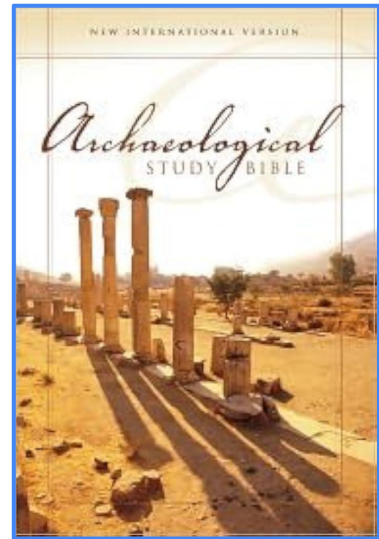
1982 - New King James Version - Thomas Nelson a conservative evangelical publisher

What's at *your* house?

New International Version

Psalm 23:1-2

The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters.



SPECIFICALLY WRITTEN TO BE MORE READABLE

1978, revision 1984

Combo word / thought translation, leans slightly to thought

8th grade reading level

Translated by a team of 15 scholars - different denominations, but all evangelical

Zondervan, a Christian publishing powerhouse, owns primary licensing and publishing rights

Many versions - womens, mens, military, teens, adventure, chronological, 365 day reading, study, etc

2005 - Today's NIV - more gender inclusive - using human beings / people v mankind / man

2011 - conservative backlash, took most of gender inclusiveness back out

Now most widely read contemporary English language Bible - all those versions published

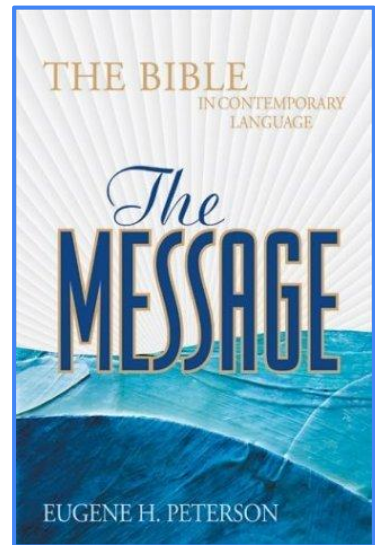
If you go to Walmart, Target, or Barnes & Noble today to buy a Bible, they are almost all KJV or NIV

What's at *your* house?

The Message

Psalm 23:1-2

God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.



Paraphrase

6th grade level

2001 (full) Presbyterian minister Eugene Peterson from original languages

Team of 21 advisors on ancient languages - all men

Attempts to convey meaning in current times, flows well, sometimes not much like original

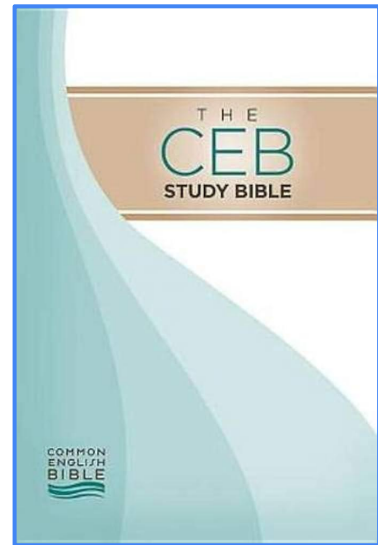
Also might remember the Living Bible - 1971, 8th grade, one man created based on 1901 ASV

What's at *your* house?

Common English Bible

Psalm 23:1-2

The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing.
He lets me rest in grassy meadows;
he leads me to restful waters.



The CEB is a newer translation 2011

7th grade reading level

Hybrid thought/word, leaning toward thought - similar to NIV

About 120 translators and reviewers, about 1/3 women

Multiple denominations but all mainstream / progressive

- Disciples of Christ, PCUSA, Episcopal, United Church of Christ, UMC

We use with CPC children - The Deep Blue Bible

We also give a CEB study Bible to our confirmands

Very rarely on the shelf at bookstores - need to order online

You can borrow the copy of the Study Bible from our CPC library

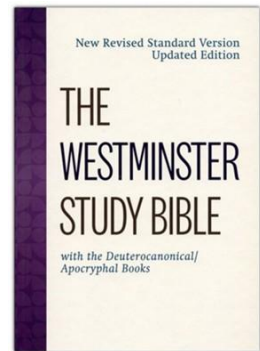
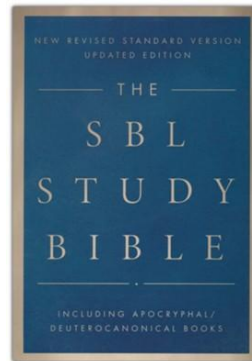
- Lots of notes and articles informed by current scholarship leaning progressive

What's at *your* house?

RSV / NRSV / NRSVue

Psalm 23:1-2

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters.



RSV is a revision of an earlier American Standard Version from 1901 (that's why it is 'revised')

GOAL - MORE READABLE **-AND-** MORE LITERALLY ACCURATE

1952 - RSV - 32 scholars National Council of Churches - ecumenical

Word for word / 11th grade

First translation with some Dead Sea Scroll (1946-1956) sources - Isaiah

1971 - 2nd Edition of RSV - includes some newly discovered Greek sources

1989 - NRSV, a complete revision of RSV

30 scholars from the National Council of Churches (ecumenical)

This is what we have in our pews

2001 - English Standard Version - by Crossway (conservative changes to 30-35 passages)

2021 - NRSVue - an update but not whole revision

Read about what was updated

<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/interview/even-better-bible>

Team of 56 translators and reviewers - about 1/3 women

Effort to be more gender, race, ethnicity, and denominationally inclusive

This is what our pastors usually read from in worship

Some new study Bible versions in our library

- Society of Biblical Literature - used in college classes
- Westminster Study Bible - Presbyterian

Also not on the shelf in local bookstores - have to order

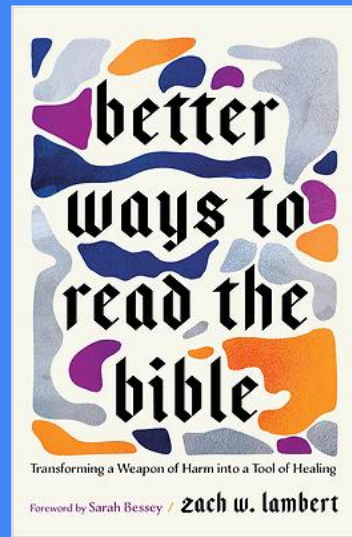
B&N has one Catholic NRSV Bible

What do *you* like in a Bible?

- Traditional wording or current?
- Conservative or progressive slant?
- Reading level?
- Study notes?
- Print size and paper thickness?
- eBook or app or audio or print?

Better Ways to Read the Bible

6-week study
Room 100 & Zoom hybrid
Starts September 20
Copies for participants



Next week - choice of THREE classes
Whatever Bible you read, it helps to have some guidance
Because - like we said - big, complex, messy

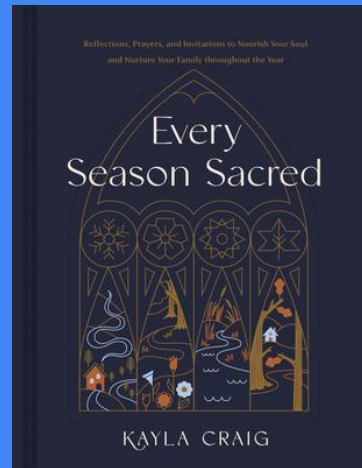
Better Ways to Read the Bible - published last year - by Zach Lambert
Raised in fundamentalist church, worked in large evangelical megachurch while in seminary
Came to think the way the Bible was read was hurting people
Started Restore church in Austin - focus inclusion and healing

Considers good and bad "lenses" - apocalypse (left behind) versus fruitfulness
Great thing to read BEFORE you do much Bible study

6 weeks in room 100 - and will be also be by Zoom at the same time - hybrid
2 chapters a week - start with short summary video from Lambert
(So your still good, even if you didn't get a chance to read)
Books are available here, in the office, and in the class

Every Season Sacred

CPC Library
Starts September 20
Copies for participants
Fellowship & discussion



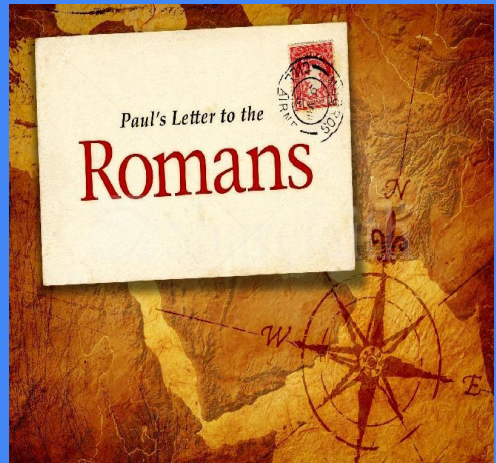
Based on the book - Every Season Sacred by Kayla Craig
Subtitled - Reflections, Prayers, and Invitations to Nourish Your Soul and Nurture Your Family throughout the Year

On going fellowship and discussions centering on nurturing and guiding children
At the same time that you are also navigating your own wonderings about faith
In the overwhelm and demands right now
Will be in the library

The Pastor's Class: Romans

Fellowship Hall Annex
Starts September 20

Bring your Bible, questions, & curiosity



The Pastor's Class will study the book of Romans.

Explore the apostle Paul's vision of grace, faith, sin, salvation, new life in Christ, and the creation of a community in which old divisions are overcome.

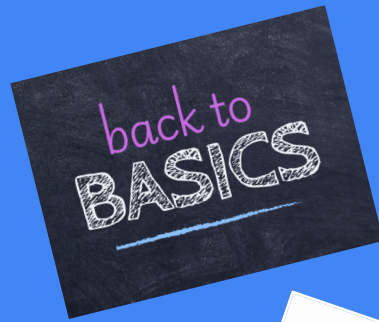
Bring your Bible, your questions, and your curiosity as we discover why this ancient letter continues to speak so powerfully to the life of faith today.

There's More!

Back to Basics webpage
carypresbyterian.org/basics

Playlists in the CPC App

Books from the CPC Library



See carypresbyterian.org/basics for more about

- Classes - including zoom link
- Playlist of podcasts, videos, and articles
- Link to list of books in our library

Also a link at the top of our home page

If you have the Cary Presbyterian Church app

On the homepage tap the playlist icon - podcasts and videos there