

The Bible in Translation: Ancient and English Versions

Bruce M. Metzger



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The Bible has been translated more often than any other piece of literature and is currently available in over two thousand languages, with several languages having numerous versions. Outlined here is the history of Bible translation, including a careful analysis of more than fifty versions of the Bible.

One of the most respected living biblical scholars, Bruce Metzger begins this engaging survey with the earliest translations of the Old and New Testaments, before proceeding to English versions dating from the eleventh century to the present. Metzger explores the circumstances under which each translation was produced and offers insights into its underlying objectives, characteristics, and strengths. Since the author has served on a number of Bible translation committees, his knowledge of the evolution of Bible translation flows not only from careful research but also from personal experience.

"A highly informative and interesting account of the history of the English Bible. Professor Metzger has pointed out the qualities-good and bad-of all the versions, from that of John Wycliffe to the New Revised Standard Version of 1990. He has not neglected the Jewish translations of the twentieth century or the simplified, easy-to-read versions, and even includes the various paraphrases of the English Bible. All of this is done with clarity, humor, and sound judgment. His book will be a valuable vade mecum for all pastors, students, scholars, and general readers."

-Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., Catholic University of America

Bruce M. Metzger (Ph.D., Princeton University) is George L. Collord Professor of New Testament Language and Literature Emeritus at Princeton Theological Seminary. An expert in ancient biblical manuscripts, he has participated in three major Bible translation projects and was chairman of the NRSV translation committee.

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