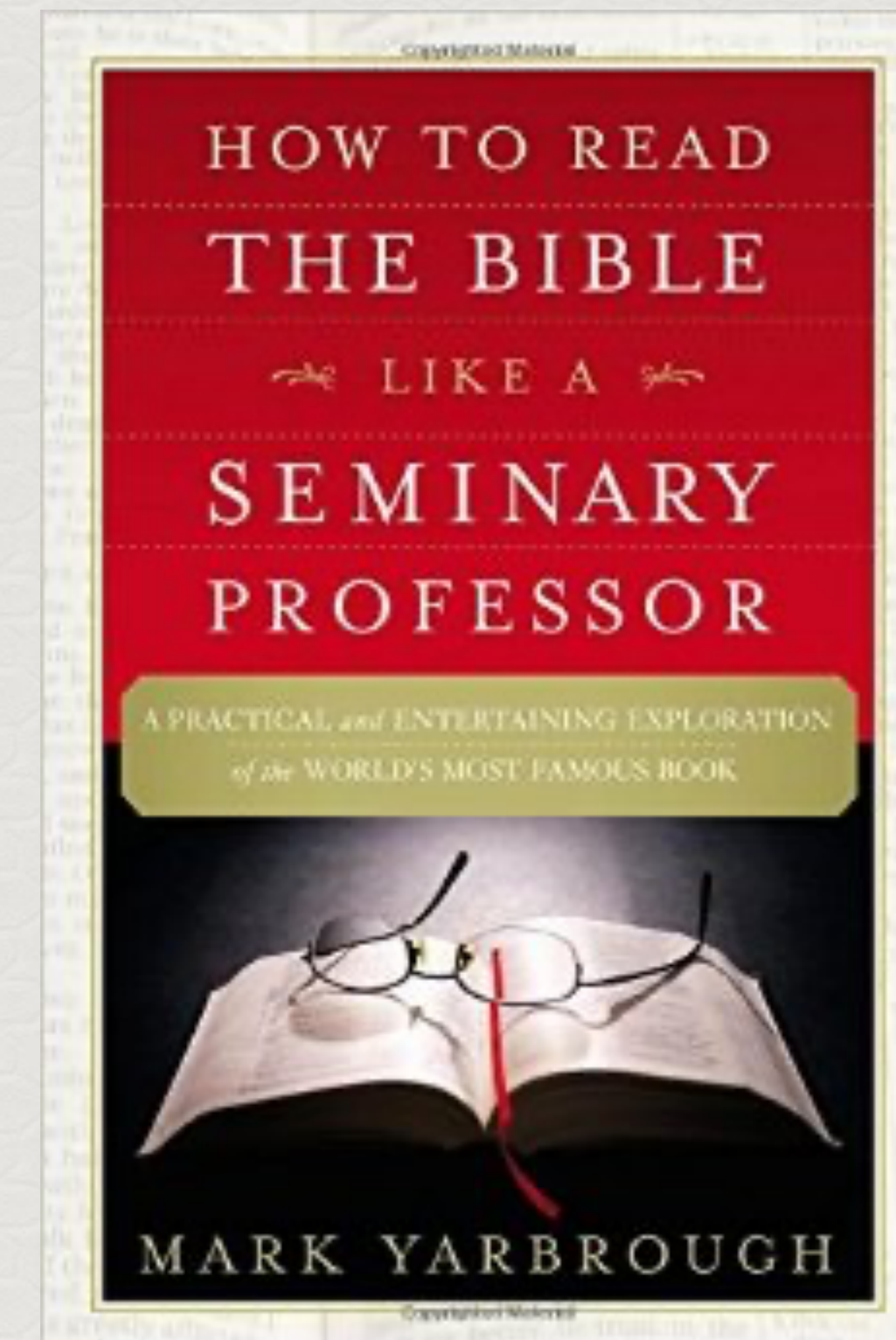


# Biblical Interpretation



# Biblical Interpretation

- Step One: Know It
  - Old Testament (5-12-5-5-12)
  - New Testament (4-1-21-1)
- Step Two: Work It
- Step Three: Live It





# Biblical Interpretation

- Observation - words and phrases in the Bible.
- Reading - Bible has more than 1,100 chapters.
- Interpretation - understand the parameters of each type of literature in the Bible.
- History and culture - ancient Near East is different.
- Literature - various types of literature.



# Assumptions of Interpretation



# Inspiration - Translation

- We begin with assumption of the inspiration, transmission and translation of the Bible.
  - 2 Timothy 3:16 - Bible is God-breathed
  - 2 Peter 1:21 - men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit
  - Acts 4:25 - you spoke by the Holy Spirit



# No Contradictions

- God's revelation will not have contradictions.
- If we find apparent contradictions, we should find reasonable answers for them:
  - Different accounts not contradictory (Judas)
  - Divergent accounts (Peter's denial)
  - Misunderstanding biblical languages (Moses)



# No Contradictions

- In the Latin Vulgate, Jerome mistranslated the Hebrew term that we now know means “ray of light” as “horn.”
- Michelangelo therefore chiseled horns on his sculpture of Moses.
- This was a translation problem.





# Common Sense

- Helpful principle: “When the literal sense makes good sense, seek no other sense lest it result in nonsense.”
- The Bible obviously uses various figures of speech.
- Jesus told parables and used metaphors (He is the vine, the door, and the light of the world).



# Common Sense

- Second principle: “When the literal sense does not make good sense, we should seek some other sense lest it lead to nonsense.”
- We should reject a literal sense when it contradicts the moral law, physical law, or supernatural law.



# Common Sense

- When Jesus says in Matthew 5:30 to cut off your hand, it violates moral law.
- When Jesus talks about those who swallow a camel in Matthew 23:24, that violates a physical law.
- When we read in Jonah 3:10 that God repented or changed His mind, we know that violates a supernatural law (Numbers 23:19).



# Rules of Biblical Interpretation



# Rule of Definition

- What does the word mean?
- Define your terms and then keep to the terms you have defined.
- Using a Hebrew/English or Greek/English lexicon will help you understand nuances.



# Rule of Usage

- The OT was written for the Jews, so the words and idioms must have been intelligible to them. We should interpret them that way.
- The NT was written in a Greco-Roman culture, and we should interpret the words and phrases according to the standard usage of that period in time.



# Rule of Context

- The meaning must be gathered from the context.
- “Jesus is Lord, and context is king.”
- “A verse taken out of context is a pretext for a proof-text.”
- 1 Peter 3:18 - not about universal salvation
- 1 Corinthians 8:5 - does not teach we are gods



# Rule of Background

- We should have some awareness of the life and society of the times in which the Scriptures were written.
- The spiritual principles are timeless, yet they are conveyed within a culture and society that we need to understand in order to fully understand the spiritual principles.



# Rule of Logic

- Interpretation involves logical reasoning.
- The Bible is to be interpreted as we would any other volume of literature.
- We should use logic (and common sense) to weed out improper interpretations.
- Unbiblical interpretations are usually a violation of logic and evidence.



# Rule of Precedent

- We should not violate the known usage of a word and invent another if there is no precedent for doing so.
- An interpreter is like a judge who is to use precedent to judge a case.
- Acts 17 - Bereans examined the Scriptures to determine if what Paul taught was true.



# Rule of Unity

- The parts of Scripture must be interpreted with reference to the whole.
- An interpretation must be consistent with the rest of Scripture.
- Scripture interprets Scripture - the Bible's self-interpretation provides clues.



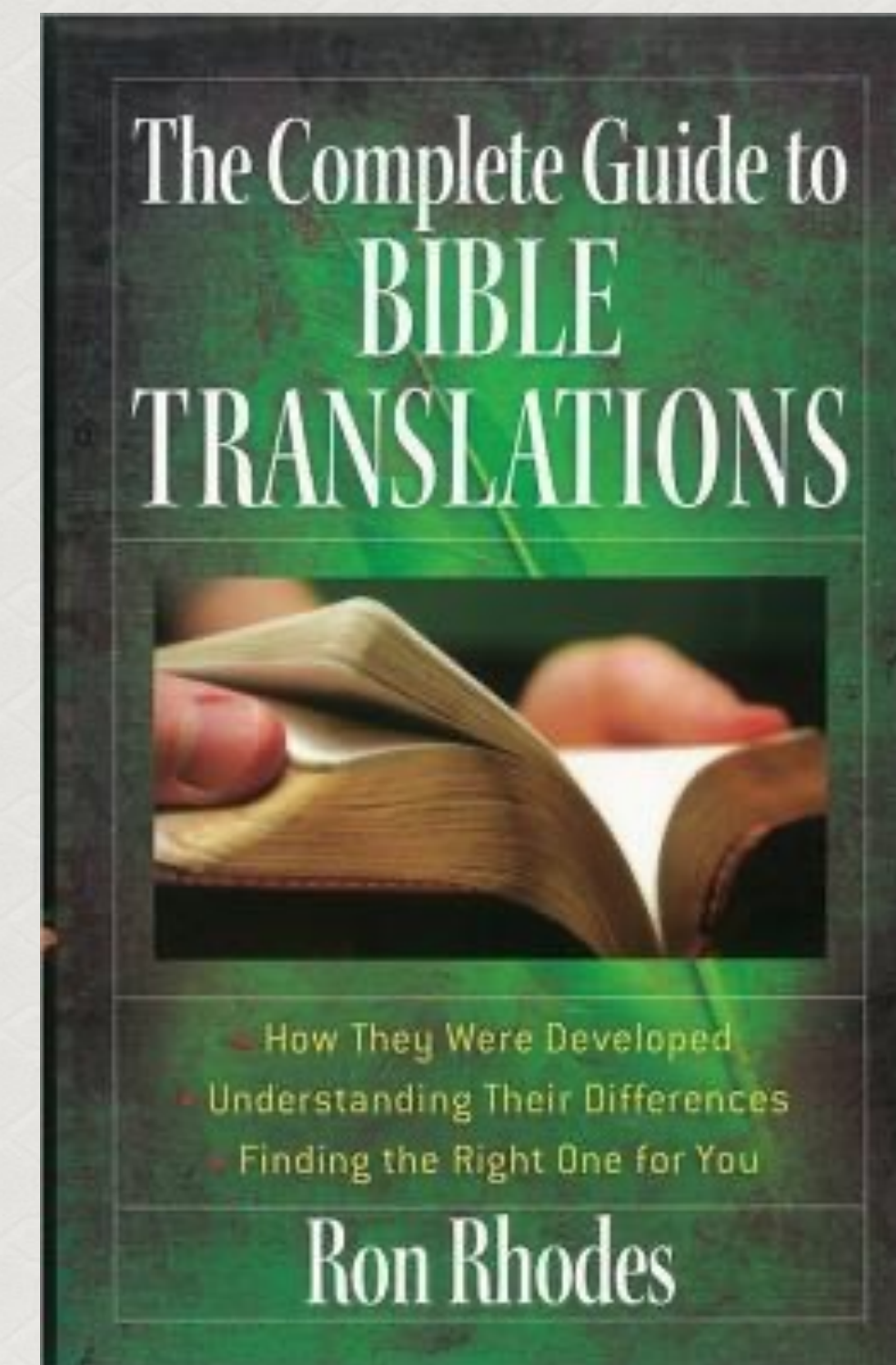


# Bible Translations



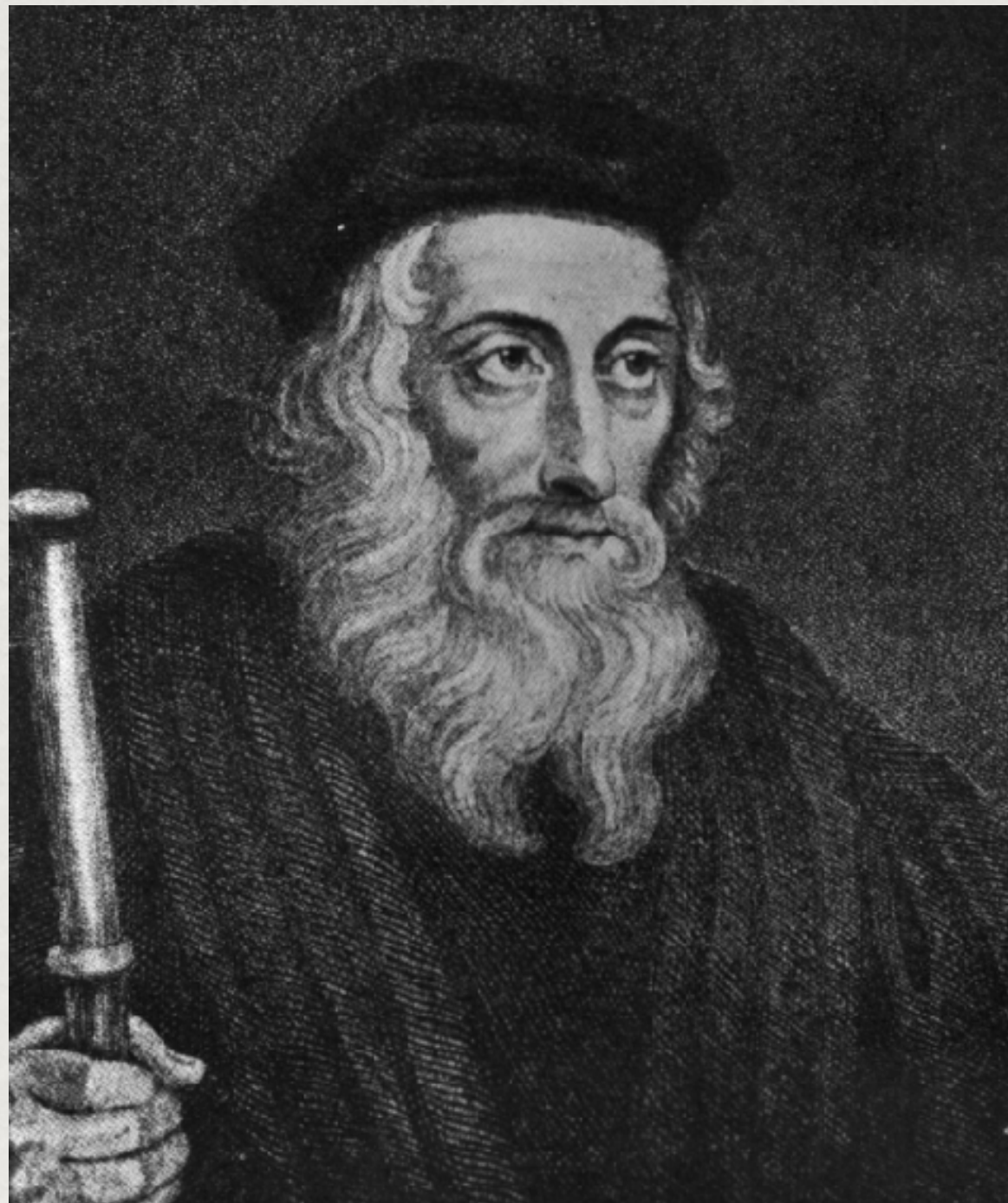
# Bible Translations

- A Guide to Bible Translations
- A Survey of Bible Translation





# John Wycliffe



- Born mid-1320s, lecturer at Oxford University.
- Wanted the average English-speaking layman to have access to the Word of God.
- Translated from Latin, does not have definite article.



# William Tyndale



- Lived 1492-1536, taught at Cambridge University.
- Translated from the original Greek texts.
- Critics falsely claimed he changed the Bible as he translated it.



# Martin Luther



- Lived 1483-1546.
- Translated Bible not into High German but the vernacular German used by the common folk.
- “Express the meaning freely in the best German he knows.”



# King James Bible



- Eventually replaced the Geneva Bible but translation was influenced by it.
- Authorized by King James I.
- There were 54 translators in six groups who all followed the 15 rules for translation.



# Difficulty of Translation

- Translation is more than a word for word substitution (noun for noun, verb for verb).
- It also involved interpretation of the Bible's meaning into another language.
- Often there is no one-to-one parallel in words.
- Historical barrier (original and translator).



# Formal Equivalence

- Formal equivalence - advocates as literal rendering of the original text as possible.
- Formal - rendering is form-for-form or word-for-word.
- Means if there is a long sentence in Greek, there will be a long sentence in English.
- If Greek uses an infinitive, so will the English.



# Formal Equivalence

- Examples: New American Standard, English Standard Version, King James Version.
- Pro: accurate representation of the original text, can be trusted not to mix too much commentary with the text, very little interpretation of the text.
- Con: sometimes hard to people to understand.



# Literal Translation

“For God did so love the world, that His Son--the only begotten--He gave, that every one who is believing in him may not perish, but may have life age-during.”

John 3:16



# Dynamic Equivalence

- Dynamic equivalence - encourages a more readable translation that does not provide an exact rendering of the text.
- Described as the “closest natural equivalent to the source-language message.”
- Pro: greater understanding, reading aloud
- Con: makes interpretive decisions for the reader and adds commentary

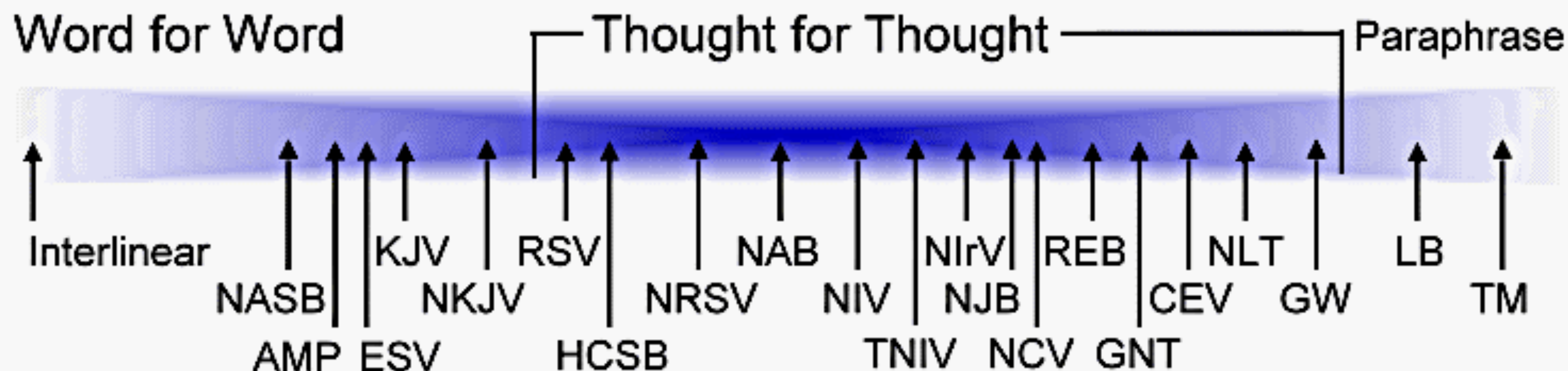


# Other Bible Versions

- Middle of the Road:
  - Word-for-word and thought-for-thought.
  - Examples: New International Version, Holman Christian Standard Version, NET Bible.
- Paraphrases:
  - The Living Bible, The Message



# English Bible Translation Comparison



NASB - New American Standard (11.5)  
AMP - Amplified Bible (11)  
ESV - English Standard Version (8)  
KJV - King James Version (13)  
NKJV - New King James Version (9.5)  
RSV - Revised Standard Version (11)  
HCSB - Holman Christian Standard (8)  
NRSV - New Revised Standard (10.5)  
NAB - New American Bible (7)  
NIV - New International Version (8)  
TNIV - Today's NIV (7.5)

NIRV - New International reader's (3)  
NJB - New Jerusalem Bible (7.5)  
NCV - New Century Version (3.5)  
REB - Revised English Bible (7)  
GNT - Good News Translation (6)  
CEV - Contemporary English (5.5)  
NLT - New Living Translation (6.5)  
GW - God's Word (4.5)  
LB - Living Bible (8.5)  
TM - The Message (4.5)



# Resources

