

What is the difference between the dynamic equivalence and literal translation?

Most people have a preferred bible version. Not only might there be original language textual differences but the intention of the translators in the type of bible they are trying to develop can be different. There are basically 3 translation types of bibles: “Literal” Translation, “Dynamic Equivalence” translation and “Paraphrase”. Each has its strengths and weaknesses. Unlike the questions associated with the critical text and the received text, the dynamic equivalence and literal does not deal with issues associated with the original language documents but with the results from the translators.

The following definitions are derived from entries from wikipedia.org on 10/26/2015. In the following it would be helpful to compare the differences between the NAS (literal), NIV (dynamic), New Living Translation (Paraphrase). The Holman Christian Study Bible is identified by some as a paraphrase and by others as a literal translation. The HCSB more often than not agrees with the paraphrase or dynamic equivalence bibles.

1. What is a “Dynamic Equivalence” translation?

The Dynamic Equivalence translation seeks to translate from the original language language (Greek or Hebrew) to the targeted language (English) in a way that maintains the meanings of phrases or sentences regardless of the order and original language grammar associations. Dynamic Equivalence is generally thought to be a more natural way of reading in the targeted language making it more readable and thus more likely to be actually read. Bibles such as New International Version, Holman Christian Standard Bible, New English Translation are examples of dynamic equivalence bibles.

2. What is a “Paraphrase” translation?

The “Paraphrase” bible is not considered a translation but a “rendering” that retells all or part of the bible with a particular set of theological or political doctrines. It is said to bring the reading of the Bible “into play with disparate sources, religious practices, and (prayers)”. New Living Translation, The Message, The Living Bible, Good News Bible, Contemporary English Version are examples of paraphrase bibles.

3. What is a “Literal” translation?

The Literal translation (or formal equivalence) translation seeks to translate from the original language language (Greek or Hebrew) to the targeted language (English) in a way that maintains original word order (as much as possible) and provides a translation for every word (as much as possible) and maintain original language grammar associations. A more literal translation is often considered a more difficult and less natural way of reading the text but provides a greater accuracy

and access to the original language nuances. Bibles such as King James, New King James, Young's Literal Translation, New American Standard are examples of more formal equivalence translations.

4. What are some of the benefits of a dynamic equivalence?

Romans **7:18-21**

Proverbs **18:24**

Romans **3:25-26**

Colossians **2:9-10**

They dynamic equivalence or paraphrase bible can make passages that are difficult just to read, simpler to read and hopefully easier to understand as well. Even passages that are not difficult to read can be more easily understood or just easier to read.

5. What are some of the challenges of a dynamic equivalence?

Colossians **2:20** – Forces, spiritual forces, or principles?

Ephesians **5:18-21** – Confusing participles for verbs. What to do versus how it is done

Romans **8:35-37** – Why are Christians being put to death?

Matthew **5:1-2** – Compare Matthew **4:4**

The dynamic equivalence bible can overly restrict the boundaries of the meaning of the verse. He can confuse the sense of the text by ignoring important grammatical issues (verb vs participle) or the actual purpose behind events or even drop necessary text for linking with other verses.

6. As a result of these differences what should we do?

Acts **17:11**

Mark **14:56**

1 Timothy **1:4-5**

Titus **3:9**

Since the Bible is about Jesus, consider what the different biblical texts say about Jesus. Look into the agreement and disagreement between the texts (it is reported that the two primary Critical Text documents disagree with each other more than they disagree with the Received Text). For the most part, don't get caught up in the arguments about the various text forms since all they do is generate arguments and questions. Commit yourself to the Bible and believe and trust what is written. For the most part, the differences are not significant enough to cause a denial of Christ and His work.