

Transliteration and Translations

(1) Transliteration

Hebrew & Aramaic Transliteration

See the table of academic and non-academic alphabets: [Hebrew & Aramaic Transliteration](#) (PDF).

On this website, I use modern **Israeli (Sefardic) Hebrew** transliteration because I believe Hebrew is and should be treated as a living language, not as Semitic bones studied only by scholars. Israel is a living reality and her mother-tongue formed the original words of ancient Scripture that still cross millennia to speak to people. I use these basic distinctions of Sefardic transliteration:

1. The **vav** is transliterated as "v" not "w"; even in the Tetragrammaton, the divine name: YHVH.
2. The **het** is an "h" at the beginning of words, but a "ch" in the middle or end of words (hesed, milchamah, mashiach, ruach).
3. The **kaf** is a "k" at the beginning of words, but a "kh" in the middle or end of words (kippurim, malkhut, melekh).
4. The **peh** without a dagesh is "f," not "ph."
5. The **tzadeh** is "tz" and not "ts."
6. The **qof** is usually "q" though sometimes "k" in familiar words (as in kodesh).
7. The **tav** (not "tau") is "t" and not "th," regardless of the absence of a dagesh. And tav is never "s" as in Ashkenazi Hebrew (Shabbat vs. Shabbos).

[\[Top\]](#)

For other specific helpful documents:

- See the table of three transliterated passages from the Hebrew Bible: [Numbers 6:22–27](#), [Isaiah 55:8–11](#), [Psalms 103:8–14](#) (PDF).
- See [Aaron's Blessing \(Numbers 6:24-26\)](#) (HTML) in Hebrew, English, and English transliteration.
- Compare the [Dead Sea \(Qumran\) Scroll Scripts](#) (HTML) for alphabetic samples of ancient scribal art.
- Compare the text of [Isaiah 40:3](#) (PDF) in Qumran, Medieval, and Modern Hebrew scripts.
- Consider the spellings and uses of the divine name, [HaShem \(YHVH\)](#), and its substitutions (Adonai, Adonim), and the ancient scribal renderings of [The Name at Qumran](#) (PDF). See the page on the [Hebrew roots of the name "Jesus."](#)

- Consider the [Messianic Kiddush](#) in Hebrew, English transliteration and translation.

Online Hebrew Bibles

Downloadable copies of the entire Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) are available in four versions from [Mechon Mamre](#), an Orthodox Jewish website in Jerusalem.

[[Top](#)]

This website uses simplified, non-academic transliterations of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

Those who can't read the original alphabets need to know how to simply pronounce the words. The academic symbols are too complicated and put barriers before general readers because they must learn a whole new script to interpret the transliterations.

I suggest that those who want **transliterated** editions of the Hebrew Bible or Greek New Testament learn some Hebrew and Greek. Always using crutches prevents confident, independent walking. The investment of a little money and time will last a lifetime.

Here are reliable books. The old classics are marked *:

- J. Weingreen. [A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew](#) *
- A. Vanlier Hunter. [Biblical Hebrew Workbook](#)
- Menahem Mansoor. [Biblical Hebrew Step-by-Step](#)
- Gary Practico & Miles Van Pelt. [Basics of Biblical Hebrew](#)

- J. Gresham Machen. [New Testament Greek for Beginners](#) *
- H.E. Dana & J.R. Mantey. [Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament](#)
- William Mounce. [Basics of Biblical Greek Grammar](#)
- Stanley Porter. [Fundamentals of New Testament Greek](#)

[[Top](#)]

Greek Transliteration

On this website, unlike standard grammars, I observe these rules:

1. **Epsilon** and **Eta** are both "e," because there is no easy way to differentiate them for all browsers (except in PDF documents).
2. **Omicron** and **Omega** are both "o."
3. **Upsilon** is rendered by "u" not as "y" (because it's pronounced that way).

See the table of academic [Koiné Greek Transliteration](#) (PDF).

Download the text of the [Septuagint or Greek Old Testament \(LXX\)](#) . This edition includes the books of the Apocrypha. It has no accents or text critical notes, and book titles are in English, chapter and verse numbers in Arabic. This electronic version was compiled by [Jeff Zizz](#), based on LXX files at the [University of Pennsylvania](#). It's 1,137 pages and 2.7 MB.

Hebrew & Greek Fonts

Hebrew and Greek fonts for Mac and Windows are available for download from:

1. [SBL \(Society of Biblical Literature\)](#) [free]
2. [SIL \(Summer Institute of Linguistics\)](#) [free]

3. [Redlers](#) [large link list to multiple language font downloads; many are free]
4. [Linguist's Software](#) [an enormous collection of Hebrew, Greek and numerous other fonts, including photo reproductions of ancient Bibles; very expensive]

[[Top](#)]

(2) Original Languages

Hebrew Bible Texts

Torah, Neviim, Ketuvim (Jerusalem: Koren Publishing, 1983). Beautiful Hebrew font. This is also available with a facing English translation and is published as **The Jerusalem Bible** (not to be confused with the version of the same name by Roman Catholic scholars). Verify if it is by "Koren." It is the Masoretic or traditional text, with major marginal variants found in the Masorah (e.g., changes done by the Soferim). The [Jewish Publication Society](#) also has a Hebrew-English edition using the Koren text and its own 1985 Tanakh on facing pages.

Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia (the Leningrad Codex or "L"; the oldest dated ms. of the complete Hebrew Bible; edited by Aron Dotan; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001). This is not a photographic reproduction, but a reprinting of the text with modern Hebrew fonts. It's an excellent desk tool, and it's much cheaper than BHS (next entry). [Hendrickson](#) published it with the King James Version on facing pages, which is not very helpful to those learning Hebrew, as the KJV is 400 years old.

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (an eclectic edition for text critical issues; edited by Elliger, Rudolph, & Weil; 5th edition; Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1997). It's the standard reference in academic biblical studies. It contains variants from non-Masoretic Hebrew manuscripts, as well as variants in the Qumran biblical scrolls, the Septuagint, Samaritan, Syriac and Latin texts.

Available in hardback and paper book. Check with Amazon for best prices.

Greek Septuagint Texts

Septuagint [Greek Old Testament]. Formal title: **Septuaginta** (edited by Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart; 2nd ed.; Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1979). Only Greek; has textual variations in apparatus. Available from the Bible Society >Scholarly>Scholarly Texts. But also check with Amazon.

Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English. Translated & edited by Lancelot C. Brenton (orig. 1851). This is not an interlinear; the English is printed in parallel columns. Reprinted by Hendrickson Publishers. Amazon issued a Kindle eBook version in 2006.

A New English Translation of the Septuagint [NETS]. Edited by Albert Pietersma and Benjam G. Wright (Oxford University Press, 2007; 1027 pages). This is NOT a completely new rendering of the Greek original. It is "new(er)" than Brenton's 19th century version. Reviewers on Amazon point out that the base English text is the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), which often has innovative, politically-correct, non-literal translations.

A Comparative Psalter. Edited by John Kohlenberger. (Oxford Univ. Press, 2007; 288 pages). Contains the book of Psalms in four versions on facing pages: Masoretic Hebrew (Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia w/ footnote apparatus), Revised Standard Version (RSV, English), Pietersma & Wright NETS version (previous entry), and the GBS Rahlfs's Greek Septuagint text.

[Top]

Interlinear Hebrew-English Editions

Currently (2016) there are three complete interlinears available in English. The Hebrew words have literal English word translations underneath and an English translation in the margin (NIV or KJV).

Jay P. Green, **The Interlinear Bible: Hebrew-Greek-English** (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, rept. 2005). 976 pages. Based on the beautiful but aging 19th century Letteris edition of the Masoretic text. The words are keyed to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance. The print is much smaller than Kohlenberger and Blair, and the translation is not as accurate. Volume also contains a Linear Greek New Testament.

John R. Kohlenberger III, **Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament** (Zondervan Publishing, 1993). One volume, 2,340 pages. Based on the Hebrew text of *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), including variant readings and textual conjectures in the footnotes. The New International Version is in the margin.

Thom Blair, **Hebrew-English Interlinear ESV Old Testament** (Crossway, 2013). 2032 pages. Uses *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) and English Standard Version (margin). The Hebrew font is very clear, and the format is readable.

Note also:

Book of Psalms with Interlinear English [Schottenstein Editon]. Edited by M. Davis, H. Danziger, A.C. Feurer; part of the Artscroll series by Mesorah Publications (2002). Paperback, pocket-sized edition.

[Top]

Modern Hebrew translations of the New Testament [from Greek originals] Isaac Salkinson (1820–1883), **HaBrit HaHadashah** (1883, edited by C. D. Ginsburg) (out of print). A Jew from Belorussia, he "converted to Christianity" at the age of 29. "Despite his conversion Salkinson regarded himself as a Jew.... He believed [Hebrew] should replace Latin as the sacred language of Christianity" ([Encyclopædia Judaica](#) 14:687).

Franz **Delitzsch** (1813–1890), **HaBrit HaHadashah** (ten editions from 1877–1890; previously available bound with Hebrew Bible/OT text from United Bible Societies). German Protestant theologian, Bible and Judaica scholar.

HaBrit HaHadashah (1976, revised 1991; **The Bible Society in Israel**, PO Box 44, Jerusalem 91000). Israelis have told me this version uses more basic vocabulary and literary style than does Delitzsch, and is similar to English versions such as the Good News Bible or The Living Bible. [Previously available bound with BHS Hebrew Bible from The Bible Society [bibles.com], but they no longer list it. Check with Amazon.]

[Top]

Modern Hebrew Bibles in the Works

Scholars have been working on the **Hebrew University Bible** (HUB) for decades. It incorporates scriptural readings from previously untapped text sources (Cairo

Geniza, rabbinic literature). The books of Isaiah and Jeremiah were published in 1995 and 1997 by [Magnes Press](#) at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, though their website strangely does not list them.

Under the auspices of the German Bible Society, a consortium of scholars has been working on the **Biblica Hebraica Quinta** (BHQ), which will succeed the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS). For a description of the project see: [Academic-Bible.com](#). As of **December 2015**, only the books of Genesis, Deuteronomy, the Twelve (Minor) Prophets, Megilloth [Song, Qohelet, Lamentations, Esther], Proverbs, Ezra-Nehemiah, and a series Introduction are available. (At [Scholarly-Bibles.com](#) these single volumes are expensive per unit. Amazon has them cheaper.)

A **translation** of the Hebrew Bible into **Modern Hebrew** is also in the works in Israel. Hebrew into Hebrew? Yes. Israelis read the ancient Hebrew as well as most English speakers can read Shakespeare. (Just so, very few English speakers today can fluently read an *original* edition of the 1611 King James Version because of its spellings and vocabulary. KJV editions published over the last century have modernized it throughout.)

[\[Top\]](#)

Greek New Testament

The Greek New Testament (5th revised edition; edited by B. Aland, K. Aland, B. Metzger, et al.; Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 2014). Used primarily by translators. Contains many new features over previous editions. [Available from Amazon.].

Novum Testamentum Graece (28th edition; edited by E. Nestle, K. Aland, et al.; Munster: Institute for New Testament Textual Research). Includes papyri 117-127. The standard academic reference. [Available from Amazon.].

[\[Top\]](#)

Interlinear Greek-English Editions

The most reliable interlinear Greek-English New Testament was done by the late Alfred Marshall, a British scholar. His original 1959 edition has been republished and printed as **The Zondervan NASB/NIV Greek and English Interlinear New Testament** (2007).

For those who use the KJV: **The Zondervan Greek and English Interlinear New Testament KJV/NIV** (2007).

The English Standard Version is becoming more popular, in response to the politically correct NIV, TNIV, and NRSV translations. **The ESV English-Greek Reverse Interlinear New Testament** (Crossway, 2006). This edition has the Greek words printed underneath its English words (the reverse of a standard interlinear format).

[\[Top\]](#)

(3) Jewish Bible Translations

For passages in the Hebrew Bible, I check with the **NJV** (New Jewish Version). The actual title is [Jewish Publication Society's Tanakh: A New Translation of](#)

the Holy Scriptures (1985), which is a revision of the JPS **The Holy Scriptures** of 1917. **NJV** is quite readable (similar to the Protestant NIV), but it masks much of the Hebrew and Aramaic substrata by being too idiomatic. And at times it deliberately diverts (Jewish) readers away from making possible Christian interpretations. It renders the Tetragrammaton as LORD.

I have not spent time with the recent translations of **Everett Fox** ([The Five Books of Moses](#), 2000) or **Robert Alter** ([The Five Books of Moses: A Translation with Commentary](#), 2004; [The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 & 2 Samuel](#), 2000). Unlike devotees of German higher criticism, Alter believes the Torah is a cohesive literary unity.

Early Jewish versions in English

The Holy Bible by Rabbi **Isaac Leeser** (1806–1868) was the first American Jewish translation of the Hebrew Bible (1845). That same year Leeser founded the Jewish Publication Society in Philadelphia. In 1917 the Society put out its committee-done **The Holy Scriptures**, which mirrored the Elizabethan dialect and renderings of the King James Version Old Testament of 1611. This is not a surprise, since the KJV was then the standard Bible in the English-speaking world. It renders the Tetragrammaton as "LORD."

In 1905 the Hebrew Publication Society of New York issued Joseph **Magil's Linear School Bible**. It's a 2-column parallel Hebrew/English Torah (Chumash) for high school students. (It was my first Hebrew Bible.) He usually renders the Tetragrammaton as "Lord" (lower case) but twice as "The Eternal" (Exod 6:3, 6).

Book of Psalms with Interlinear English [Schottenstein Editon]. Edited by M. Davis, H. Danziger, A.C. Feuer; part of the Artscroll series by Mesorah Publications (2002). Paperback, pocket-sized edition.

[\[Top\]](#)

(4) Christian Bible Translations

Because the articles on this website focus on more literal translation of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek words, it is important to use what is called a "direct" or "transparent" translation of the Bible in English. In some cases, I provide my own translations and mark them so. But I usually follow a standard English translation available to all.

Of those in print I've found the **New American Standard Bible** (NASB) to be the most "direct" or literal. Originally published in stages in 1960–73, it was updated in 1995 and the editors removed its Elizabethan "thine's" and "thou's." It's often criticized for being too literal, mechanical or wooden. This can be true. But it's much easier to tell what lies behind it in the original texts. I don't always agree with its translations or its capitalization of certain words. Nor do I always accept its editors' choices of Greek manuscript readings. And when I quote from it I substitute "Messiah" for "Christ" and "Yeshua" for "Jesus" in most passages. But overall the NASB-1995 Update is superior, and its editors weren't bending to politico-cultural pressures.

The **Christian Standard Bible** (CSB) (2017) is a conservative Protestant version. It renders the Greek [Christos](#) as "Messiah" 61 times (out of the 528 times it occurs in the Greek NT). It also has "Messiah" in Daniel 9:25, 26. In contrast, its

predecessor, the Holman Christian Standard Bible (2009), has "Messiah" 133 times.

Currently, the most popular translation among Protestant evangelicals is the **New International Version** (NIV) (1973, rev. 1984 and in 2011). It uses "dynamic equivalence" or "thought-for-thought" instead of "direct" translation methodology. It's easy to comprehend, but you can't always decipher what the underlying Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek wording is. It uses "Messiah" 74 times. At times the editors impose doctrinal opinions that aren't supported by the original. In my opinion, it isn't as useful for language or indepth theological studies. The 2011 version is even more PC in its translations; apparently to match the TNIV (following).

The NIV's new face is **Today's NIV** (TNIV, 2002). It uses the "Messiah" 90 times, "where the term is clearly used to designate the God-sent deliverer of Jewish expectation (primarily in the Gospels and Acts)" [from Introduction]. Most other Protestant and Catholic translations do not use "Messiah" in place of "Christ."

[\[Top\]](#)

One-Person Versions

There are some helpful one-man (non-committee) versions in English that show special awareness of the Hebrew or Jewish linguistic world. They include:

Joseph Rotherham, **The Emphasized Bible** (editions: 1872-1902). He was one of the first translators to consistently use the ineffable name of God ("Yahweh") in his Old Testament portion. He also pointed out a theological bias in older English versions involving "Holy Spirit" versus "Holy Ghost."

Arthur Way, **The Letters of Paul with the Letter to the Hebrews** (1901). A British scholar of Classical Greek, Way used the name "Messiah" instead of "Christ" because (as he wrote) "it tends to bring the modern reader nearer to the attitude of the ancient."

David H. Stern, **The Jewish New Testament** and **The Complete Jewish Bible: An English Translation of the Tanakh and B'rit Hadasha**. Dr. Stern is an Israeli Messianic translator who employs spellings, terms, and phrases familiar to Jewish readers. For example: Yeshua, Messiah, Adonai, Torah, talmidim, P'rushim, shabbat, Pesach. Though his work is a paraphrase, it reminds readers that the New Testament came from a Jewish world context, not a Western European Christian one. [His various books are available at [Jewish New Testament Publications](#).]

[\[Top\]](#)

(5) Translation Issues

Certain Proper Names

This website uses the Hebrew name **Yeshua** in place of the English **Jesus**.

Some "Hebrew roots" or "Sacred Name" websites promote the name "Yahshua," instead of "Yeshua." But there is no linguistic or historical validity for that spelling. Other groups promote the form "Y'shua." But it is incorrect because it assumes there is a sheva under the yod, though throughout the Hebrew Bible and

in Modern Hebrew NTs the name has a tzerei under the yod, thus "e"; Ezra 3:2; Neh 8:17.

This site also employs the word **Messiah** in place of **Christ**. *Christ* comes into English from the Greek *Christos*, an adjectival noun used in the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) for men and things that were "anointed."

In the Greek New Testament, **(the) Christos** became so linked with Yeshua that it began to serve as a proper name. "Messiah" itself is an Anglicized (English) form of the Greek word *Messias* which is a Hellenized form of the Hebrew word *Mashiach*, and possibly the Aramaic *Meshichah*. Thus:

מָשִׁיחַ	מְשִׁיחָא	Μεσσίας	Χριστός	—
Mashiach (Hebrew)	Meshichah (Aramaic)	Messias ¹ (Greek)	Christos ² (Greek)	Messiah

¹ Used only at John 1:41; 4:25

² Used some 528x in the NT

[\[Top\]](#)

Jewish Apostles Not Wanted (in Church)

In the articles on this site most proper names are given in their familiar form, so as not to make the materials seem esoteric. But besides the name "Yeshua," two other exceptions are the names "James" and "Jude," for which I use "Jacob" and "Judah."

(1) **James**. There is no linguistic basis for English Bibles to use the name "James." The Greek New Testament spells his name **Yakobos** (Hellenized form of Yakob), which imitates the Hebrew name **Ya'akov** ("Jacob"). Neither the Hebrew nor Greek forms of the name have an "m" or "e," so the English "James" is not linguistically related.

Given the long history of anti-Judaism in the medieval English church, it's easy to see why "Jacob" would be offensive to Christians. There was no way a key apostle, brother of Jesus, and author of a Christian epistle, would ever be allowed to bear the name "Jacob" in an English NT. So translators invented a solution. They simply substituted "James" (the name of several English kings) in place of "Yakobos" in their NTs.

This custom dates back at least to John Wycliffe who translated his NT in 1380. (Contrary to some rumors, this practice did not start with the "King **James** Version" of 1611.) And the custom continues.

Christian Bibles published in English to this day (except for some Messianic versions) use the name "James" for the apostle, though at least one (that I know of) prints "Jacob" in the margin (e.g. New American Standard Bible).

(2) **Jude**. The short letter of Jude is a different case. His NT Greek name is spelled "Youdas." In the Middle Ages the English name "Jude" was pronounced "Yudeh." The "j" was spoken as "y" and "e" was voiced. Youda is a shortened Hellenized form of the Hebrew "Yehudah" ("Judah").

In Nazi Germany, the yellow Jewish stars were emblazoned with the name "Jude" — pronounced in English "Yudeh."



The early English translators weren't trying to Gentilize Jude's Jewish name. The pronunciation, not the spelling, simply changed over the centuries and inadvertently obscured a Hebrew/Jewish original.

Here is a literal rendering of the first line of the Letter of Jude:

"**Judah**, a bond-servant of Yeshua Messiah, and brother of **Jacob**, to those who are the called, beloved in God the Father and kept for Yeshua Messiah."

[\[Top\]](#)

[Directory](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Explanation](#) | [Author-Editor](#)

hebrew-streams.org