



The Voice Bible: Step Into the Story of Scripture

Anonymous (Editor)

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***The Voice*[™] is a faithful dynamic equivalent translation that reads like a story with all the truth and wisdom of God's Word.** Through compelling narratives, poetry, and teaching, *The Voice* invites readers to enter into the whole story of God, enabling them to hear God speaking and to experience His presence in their lives. Through a collaboration of nearly 120 biblical scholars, pastors, writers, musicians, poets, and artists, *The Voice* recaptures the passion, grit, humor, and beauty that is often lost in the translation process. The result is a retelling of the story of the Bible in a form as fluid as modern literary works yet painstakingly true to the original manuscripts.

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The Voice Bible: Step Into the Story of Scripture Details

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From Reader Review The Voice Bible: Step Into the Story of Scripture for online ebook

Ethan says

The one thing we do not lack is variety in Bible translations available in English today. There is a veritable alphabet soup of versions available: KJV, ASV, ESV, NASB, RSV, NKJV, NRSV, NLT, NIV, CEV, TEV, HCSB, CEB, among many others. Now, in such an environment, another version has been produced: The Voice Bible. Why yet another version? What can The Voice provide that is missing in other Bibles?

The Voice Bible has some distinctive elements worth considering. Its translation committee involved Biblical scholars but also artists of other genres so that the translation does not sound so much like, well, a translation. The Voice is a dynamic equivalence translation, or a "thought-for-thought" rather than a "word-for-word" translation approach, and goes beyond with constant amplification of the text (thankfully always italicized) and many notes interspersed throughout the texts explaining the context and its meaning. The Voice also reads more like a screenplay than a text, exemplified (along with the note concept) here in John 4:8-9:

Jesus: Would you draw water, and give Me a drink?

Woman: I cannot believe that You, a Jew, would associate with me, a Samaritan woman; much less ask me to give You a drink.

Jews, you see, have no dealings with Samaritans.

Also, a man never approaches a woman like this in public. Jesus is breaking accepted social barriers with this confrontation.

The Voice Bible, therefore, strives for maximum comprehension of the message of the text as its ultimate goal, and goes to great lengths in order to accomplish it.

In the past I have been very critical of dynamic equivalence translations ("thought for thought," e.g. CEV, NIV, NLT, The Message, The Voice) on account of the amount of textual distortion that takes place in the process. Some such distortion is confessionally/doctrinally motivated: baptism is frequently de-emphasized while faith "only" comes to the fore, since that is the strong doctrinal stand of many translators. Yet what is perhaps most problematic is the unintentional distortion that takes place precisely because comprehension of the basic message is the emphasis: in order to bring the basic meaning to the fore, the text is presented in such a way that conclusions drawn from it are at variance with the actual wording of the text. The example I use of this most frequently comes from 1 Timothy 3:2 in the description of the qualifications of elders:

The bishop therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, orderly, given to hospitality, apt to teach (ASV).

The American Standard Version (ASV) is a formal equivalence ("word for word") translation, and from it we can see that the bishop, or overseer, is to be, among other things, the husband of one wife (literally, "one woman man").

That's why officials must have a good reputation and be faithful in marriage. They must be self-controlled, sensible, well-behaved, friendly to strangers, and able to teach (CEV).

The Contemporary English Version (CEV) is a dynamic equivalence translation. It accurately conveys the main point of Paul's message; for a man to be a husband of one wife, he needs to be faithful in marriage. But what happens if a man is a polygamist? He could be "faithful in marriage" and yet not be the "husband of one

wife." And this is the challenge of dynamic equivalence translations: even when the text is not distorted by confessional or doctrinal bias, the emphasis upon the primary meaning could lead to difficulties in terms of secondary matters such as inferences and applications.

In terms of both confessional and doctrinal biases and secondary distortions, The Voice, especially in the New Testament, poses some difficulties:

Baptism is always a difficult subject for Bible translators since they are attempting to satisfy a diverse audience: those who sprinkle versus those who pour versus those who immerse; those who consider it necessary versus those who consider it optional; and so on. In an attempt to steer clear of such controversies The Voice ends up being a complete disappointment. The way "baptism" is translated demonstrates the patchwork nature of the version: in some books, it is rendered "baptism," in others, "ritually immersed," in others, speaking of the ceremonial aspect, and so on; all of them are footnoted indicating that baptism is under discussion, and often defining it as immersion, or as a cleansing. Many may make much of calling it a "ritual" or a "ceremony," but in New Testament usage, it is: just as the Lord's Supper is not a substantive meal but a ritual one, so baptism is not designed to be a physical cleansing but a spiritual one, and the act is a ceremony or ritual (1 Peter 3:21); that does not mean that baptism has no efficacy, just as the Lord's Supper as a ritual meal still has great spiritual significance even if it does not satiate hunger (1 Corinthians 10:16-17, 11:22-30). Yet The Voice Bible's attempt at expanding the translation of baptism leads to ludicrous results at times, especially in Matthew 20:22:

Jesus (to all three): You don't understand what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink? Can you be ritually washed in baptism just as I have been baptized?

The expansion of "to be baptized" to "to be ritually washed in baptism" literalizes the metaphor. Jesus is not talking about His immersion in water by John; He's speaking of the immersion in suffering, misery, and pain He is about to experience. Better to translate as immersion or transliterate as baptism and let the notes explain what you want to explain.

More egregious examples are found in the textual expansions, especially 1 Corinthians 7:15 and Titus 1:5:

If the unbelieving spouse decides the marriage is over, then let him or her go; the believing partner is freed *from the marital vows* because God has called you to peace.

Here's what you should look for in an elder: he should be above suspicion; *if he is married*, he should be the husband of one wife, raise children who believe, and be a person who can't be accused of rough and raucous living.

There are many who believe 1 Corinthians 7:15 allows the abandoned Christian spouse to be able to marry another; there are many who think elders/bishops need not be married (I had one conversation with someone who was part of a liberal Protestant denomination who never thought of the idea that Paul meant in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:5 that the elder/overseer actually had to be married!). Nevertheless, neither text demands those particular interpretations, and they are actually quite suspect. In 1 Corinthians 7:15, Paul says that in such circumstances Christians are not enslaved; nowhere in the Bible is the marriage bond considered as enslavement, but the yoke of slavery is precisely the metaphor used to describe the connection between believer and unbeliever in 2 Corinthians 6:16. If an unbeliever deserts a believing Christian, they are no longer enslaved to that connection, and should feel no compulsion to reconcile (as would be imagined based on 1 Corinthians 7:11). Yet that is far from justifying marriage to another; Paul says no such thing here and such would militate against Matthew 5:32, 19:9. The expansion, therefore, is entirely unnecessary. The expansion of Titus 1:5 is even less justified: there is never a hint in 1 Timothy or Titus or in any other text that elders/overseers were not married. Neither Jesus nor Paul ever considered themselves elders or overseers; Peter did, but Peter was also married (cf. 1 Peter 5:1-4). Such an insertion is entirely unjustifiable

and vindicates all those who find no value in dynamic equivalence translations since they thus distort what the original text is saying.

Nevertheless, there are many reasons why I want to like The Voice Bible, and they involve a lot of the reasons why I've softened a bit on dynamic equivalence translations. The goal of Bible translation cannot be just literalism; unless you have advanced training in Hebrew and Greek, the literal text is frequently barely comprehensible gibberish, especially in the most difficult and challenging texts. Hebrew and Greek have their own idioms and their own way of expressing things. As in most any form of communication, there is a tension in Bible translation between word and meaning: how to most appropriately convey what is meant while remaining faithful to what is said in the text? "Literal" translations like Darby's or Young's or the LITV sacrifice a lot of comprehensibility in order to remain quite faithful to the text (although even "literal" translations frequently flesh out idioms and many times are forced to flesh out the meaning in English of a very economical Hebrew or Greek text); formal equivalence translations are willing to sacrifice a bit more faithfulness in order to provide a more comprehensible text, and dynamic equivalence translations run the gamut from a slightly modified formal equivalence translation all the way to The Message and its ilk, willing to entirely abandon the text as written in order to enhance comprehension. Many of those who critique dynamic equivalence translations continually insist on the need for faithfulness to the text, and that is a strong argument and ought to be respected. Yet such an insistence, especially when texts like the KJV and ASV are the ones held in high esteem, entirely miss out on the other side of the issue, and that is comprehension. Yes, it is important that we hear the Word of God in English as close to what would be heard in Greek or Hebrew as we can, with a minimal amount of doctrinal/confessional interference, but it is all for naught if those who hear cannot understand what is being said! The Old Testament texts were all originally proclaimed or read out to Israelites, and understanding was at a premium (cf. Nehemiah 8:1-8). For centuries the Greek of the New Testament baffled scholars since it sounded quite different from the Attic Greek of the tragedians and philosophers; many suggested that the New Testament was written in "Holy Spirit Greek." That has all changed in the past two hundred years as discoveries of papyri in Egypt show that the Greek of the New Testament is the same as the commonly spoken Greek of its age: God communicated in Koine Greek so that the message of the Gospel could be understood (cf. Ephesians 3:1-12)!

The Voice Bible is a version meant to be understood. They handled the Old Testament excellently; there were a few notes regarding which I felt they went in the wrong interpretive direction, but on the whole, the presentation of the text with the interlinear notes do a great job of helping a 21st century American make sense of what is going on in 2nd and 1st millennium BCE Israel. For instance, I've read the book of Job in Hebrew and in many translations, but it was when reading through The Voice's translation when I finally mentally captured the flow of the arguments in the conversation. I grant that Job is hard to translate, and tricky precisely because there are many ways to understand what the speakers are saying, but there is value in having a translation that tries to simplify the discussion without overly compromising it. I did not mind the presentation of most of the New Testament, either, save for the matters discussed above and the times when the authors decided to add "only" to faith despite James 2:14-26. Revelation is presented and explained in a first century Roman context; most of the notes and explanations do help 21st century Americans, at least to some degree, make sense of the Gospel as proclaimed in the first century in both the Jewish and Greek worlds.

Therefore, there is value in The Voice Bible. I believe it would be a mistake to use it as one's primary study Bible, since its phrasing cannot be relied upon when making inferences or conclusions. Yet as one of many translations it can help in its insistence on coming to an understanding of what is being communicated. I could not recommend it to the youngest in the faith because they have not yet gained the discernment between what God has said and the interpolations of man, but for those with an intermediate or advanced understanding of Scripture, The Voice Bible can provide benefits in terms of coming to a clearer understanding of the primary meaning of the text and as a counterweight against the tendency to absorb Biblespeak without really thinking about what the words involved really mean.

**--book received as part of early review program

Robin Hatcher says

A good translation for devotional reading.

Amanda Farmer says

I was introduced to this version of the Bible through a Bible study. It is a good contemporary version. Very readable and refreshing. It's a version to use for reading through the Bible and maybe as a second version to study parallel to one of the major versions.

Lee says

I thoroughly enjoyed The Voice translation of the Bible. It's one of the most accessible translations around and really helps clarify some difficult passages and also frame very familiar ones in new light. I'm not a biblical scholar, so I can't speak to the integrity of the translation in keeping with the original Scriptural texts, but I don't recall any major theological missteps in what I read. My only negative takeaway (and it's not really a negative, just a passing observation), is that the italicized portions of the text threw me off. I kept reading the italicized lines with an emphasis in my head, because that's how italicization is always used. But the translators here use italics to denote clarifying statements, such as information that fills in some contextual gaps or details/assumptions that the original audience would have had. It makes for an easier reading experience rather than looking down at the footnote after every other sentence.

Genna Evelyn says

I always enjoy reviewing a fresh translation of the Bible and "The Voice" is no exception. I thought this was an excellent translation for reading and for simple enjoyment and basic comprehension of the Word of God.

I had the privilege of being able to review The Voice New Testament when it first came out several months ago and you can see my review of that here: <http://evelynbookreviews.blogspot.ca/...>

I was really excited to get to review the Old Testament once it came out and I am happy to say that it did not disappoint. The key to enjoying The Voice is knowing what you're getting and what you're not getting from the get go. The Voice does not even begin try to be a literal translation. Don't think ESV or even NIV, think more along the lines of The Message and the NLT when you think of The Voice. It is the kind of Bible that is helpful for new believers, for seekers, for Christians who are interested in a lighter read when in the midst of 2 Chronicles or Ezekiel, and so on. And it is important to read The Voice with the caveat that it is clear that the editors have preferred their Biblical interpretation to those of other major commentators whenever possible BOTH in their extra comments AND in their decisions on how to translate certain passages. This was not a surprise and does not seem to affect any real major points of doctrine so as long as you're not

looking to STUDY the Voice Bible, you will really enjoy this. If you want to study the Bible (and we all should!) we need to get back to what God has actually said, word for word. You will not find that here. But for devotional time with God enjoying a non-literal translation of His word as part of your time with Him, this translation is a great fit. It is also good for giving away to people who might not otherwise read the Bible. The playscript format makes for an easier read in some cases and the introductions and commentaries help to interpret particularly difficult passages of the old testament especially. I thought it was excellent!

Lew Button says

I certainly cannot criticize the author of this book since I think it is the word of God. However I can make some comments about the format since that is especially what makes this particular version unique. This version is formatted to reflect conversations something like a play would. Poetry is set up like poetry, whereas in many versions everything is just set up with equal spacing to fit within the columns on a page. It is a good version for public reading.

Although most readers are familiar with, and more comfortable with, a Bible printed in two columns per page this Bible is written like most other books that contain poetry and dialogue. It may be new to many readers but there is certainly a precedent to changing the format of a Bible. The original text of the New Testament was written in all caps in block style. I for one am glad that my forbears decided to change the format so we could read this important book.

I received a copy of this book from netgalley.com with the understanding that I would write a review.

Sylvia says

A new translation of the Bible into English does not contain the name “Jesus Christ” or the word “angel.” It also prefers the word “emissary” over “apostle.”

Frank Couch, Thomas Nelson’s lead editor on the project, told The Christian Post that the purpose of The Voice was to make the Gospel message easier to understand for modern audiences.

“The Voice has not claimed to be more accurate than any other translation, rather it is more easily understood than any other translation,” said Couch.

Here is what Thomas Nelson’s Marketing folks have to say about it:

The Voice Bible translation is a faithful dynamic translation of the Scriptures done as a collage of compelling narratives, poetry, song, truth, and wisdom. The Voice calls the reader to step into the whole story of Scripture and experience the joy and wonder of God’s revelation created for and by a church in great transitions. The Voice uniquely represents collaboration among scholars, pastors, writers, musicians, poets, and other artists, giving great attention to the beauty of the narrative. The heart of The Voice is retelling the story of the Bible in a form as fluid as modern literary works yet remaining painstakingly true to the original manuscripts. This translation promotes the public reading of longer sections of Scripture—followed by thoughtful engagement with the biblical narrative in its richness and fullness and dramatic flow.

There is controversy over the non-use of Jesus name, Angel and Apostle to name a few. I was concerned that Jesus would not be proclaimed as the Son of God, as in some new bible translations being sold. This not the case with The Voice so I can recommend this book as a useful resource to study the Word of God. It is easy to understand. The notes that show who is talking makes it easy to follow the stories. Although I prefer other translations from Thomas Nelson Publishing, I don’t believe that The Voice would lead anyone into a false understanding of the one true God.

I received a copy of this book from Thomas Nelson Publishing for my review.

Gail Welborn says

My thoughts on The Voice Bible, a new translation from Thomas Nelson

The Voice®, a new Bible translation from Ecclesia Bible Society and Thomas Nelson Publishers, brings an unusual “flavor and color to the Bible story” enhanced by screenplay formatting, color-highlighted text and speaker identification tags. The result is a “...hybrid of the word-for-word, thought-for-thought...” transcription most translations use. While The Voice has met with mixed reviews I’ll begin with what I liked.

There is much to like in the approach and fresh voice of this new translation influenced by poets, artists, writers and musicians as well as pastors and academic scholars. Speaker identification tags are in brown-gold tones that stand out from black text and asterisked footnotes provide “literal meanings” that add context and additional information.

The narrative is formatted similar to a screen play and lies flush to the left which makes it easy to follow, while dialogue is indented with colored tags that name who’s speaking. Use of italic script alerts readers to non-scriptural information added for clarity. The notes sections, set apart by a capitol V, begin with a wide brown-gold line and end with a thin brown-gold line.

The Voice ® offers four reading plans, two of which follow the annual church calendar year with suggested readings for Advent, Pentecost and Lent. Plus the informative “critical dates in the church year,” that cover 2012 to 2050 and the alphabetized “Guide to the Notes” and “Topical Guide to Scripture” segments.

What I didn’t like...Full Review: <http://tinyurl.com/amhzmth>

Peter says

For other book reviews please visit my blog

Last year I had the opportunity to review The Voice New Testament. I really enjoyed it, so I was thrilled to have the chance to review the whole Bible. Needless to say, I love to have the whole Bible in this new version.

Here's a quick review of what I liked about it previously: The Voice is a collaboration of many scholars, artists, and pastors. It is not just the work of one person, and it is not just the work of scholars. I think that it is fantastic that artists have been included in the translation process since so much of the Bible, especially the old testament, is poetry. Again, while reading The Voice, it didn't feel like the typical paraphrase. It still reads like a Biblical translation. It feels like it is using language that would be familiar to someone who has read the Bible and yet easier to understand for those who do not have much experience with the Bible.

As far as the translation is concerned. think The Voice offers one of the best paraphrase/dynamic equivalents thus far. The majority of the translation is done like any other version of the Bible with any additions are in italics so that it is easy to see when these additions have been made. And the additions don't really add a new content to the text, instead they add explanation.

Something that I didn't note last time are the notes in the Bible. At the beginning of each book, there is about a page of introduction. Also, there are added notes interspersed within the text itself. These notes are highly beneficial for understanding how to read each book and the background of the text.

I still think that this is a fantastic addition to anyone's Bible reading. I'm still hoping that it will be available for Logos so that I can have it in that form. If you are eager to read it, you can look up various passages on their website www.hearthevoice.com. I highly encourage you to check out this translation and considering purchasing it at some point.

I received this book free from Thomas Nelson Publishers as part of their BookSneeze.com book review bloggers program. I was not required to write a positive review. The opinions I have expressed are my own.

Linda Henderson says

This is a really great version of the Bible to read, especially for people who are fairly new to Bible reading or study. It has lots of extra information included with the passages, which is helpful to the understanding of the Word. It reads very smoothly.

Kara Poe Alexander says

I really like this version of the Bible. The context it provides and the way it combines thought-for-thought translations with word-for-word translations makes for an interesting read. The only negative thing about this Bible is the way the pages are labeled with the book and chapter that is on the page and not the chapter/verse of the first (or last) verse on the page, thus making navigation and finding specific verses more difficult. I hope they correct this in the next version.

Chaundra Anderson says

I own several different translations of scriptures, and this one is, by far, my favorite, for reading. (Not for serious study). Authors such as Donald Miller and Lauren Winner, were part of this amazing project, to put a style and voice, back into the greatest story ever told. I highly recommend adding this translation to your collection. One other thing, the reading plan included, is a three year through the Bible plan, which I especially love.

Sarah says

For just reading, I really enjoyed this version. I think that it isn't the strongest when it comes to studying the Bible (I use my NIV for that) but it is such a wonderful version. I highly recommend it to anyone who wants to read the Bible in a new way, yet doesn't want to lose the richness and deepness of the scripture.

Gary says

I have not read the whole of this translation but I wanted to recommend it to anyone who is looking for a modern translation of the Bible. If you are unsure of the interpretation in paraphrase versions like The Message or The Living Bible and yet find the New International Version and other modern translations still too stilted or too anchored to the KJV, this one might be for you. The Voice is at times both startling and grounding, enlivening and challenging. You can try it out on the Bible Gateway: <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions...> Take a look at the beginning of Genesis or the gospel of John, or any other favorite passage you may have, and see if it does not spark a new thought in you. P.S. The kindle or paperback versions are only \$10 on Amazon if those options appeal.

Jeff Bobin says

This is a fair paraphrase and at times mixes commentary in with the translation. While this is common in paraphrase editions the way notes and other commentary are a part of the text make it confusing and at times I believe misleading.
