



The Origin and History of the Bible
Session 17: Topic 6.0
An Overview of the German Bible

Study by
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Detailed Study

6.0 How has the Bible been translated into German?²

This particular study -- and extension of the series due to my ministry now in Germany -- reaches out to create awareness of the pattern of German translation of the Bible. At a beginning popular level, most folks would be inclined to think, German Bible, that means the Luther Bibel, doesn't it? But surprisingly such is simply not the case. According to a recent article from the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, over thirty different translations are currently in print in the German language, not counting translations in different German dialects.³ This doesn't include the many translations that appeared for a while but now have gone out of print and

¹Note: the German word 'Bibel' will be used in the formal titles of the translations, rather than the English word 'Bible,' which is used elsewhere in this article.

²For the bulk of my background research, I have had to depend on the very helpful articles in the Wikipedia online encyclopedia, beginning with "German Bible translations." Print studies do exist but were not accessible to me at the time of the writing (July 2009) of this article. A helpful listing is "Bücher um oder über die Bibel." A more complete bibliography is located at Bibelhandschriften und Bibelübersetzungen. Also is the article "Bibelübersetzung," Wikipedia.

³Hannelore Jahr, "Die Bibel übersetzen -- aber wie?," *Bibel Report* by die Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft,

thus are available only through used book stores on a very spotty basis. In reality, the history of the translation of the Bible into the German language is rich and filled with diverse efforts to communicate the Word of God to German speaking people around the world. And this history reaches all the way back to the fourth century AD!

Undeniably the modern history of German Bible translation is built around positive and negative reactions to the Luther Bibel. Thus the story of the German Bible presented below uses the Luther Bibel as the 'stack pole' around which to narrate the history.

6.1 Pre-Luther Bibel Translations⁴

Quite interestingly numerous translations of the Bible, or, at least parts of it, were translated into some early form of German long before the Protestant Reformation beginning in the early 1500s. These begin with the work of Wulfila in the middle 300s and extend to the Halberstaedter Bibel in 1522.

6.1.1 Ancient World

To be sure, these ancient forms of 'German' predated modern German and represent some of the wide variety of ancient Germanic dialects from Gothic, an early East Germanic language, to Frankish., which was the dominant language of west central Europe in the ancient world.

The early 'Christianization' of many of the Germanic tribes living in central Europe laid the foundation for these translations, largely as an evangelism and teaching tool for the Gospel by Christian missionaries. The ancient situation is described as follows in the Wikipedia article on 'German Bible Translations':

There are still approximately 1,000 manuscripts or manuscript fragments of Medieval German Bible translations extant.[1] The earliest known and partly still available Germanic version of the Bible was the fourth century Gothic translation of Wulfila (ca. 311-380). This version, translated primarily from the Greek, established much of the Germanic Christian vocabulary that is still in use today. Later Charlemagne promoted Frankish biblical translations in the 9th century.

Thus quite a bit of documentation still exists regarding the work of translating the Bible into some of the early Germanic languages.

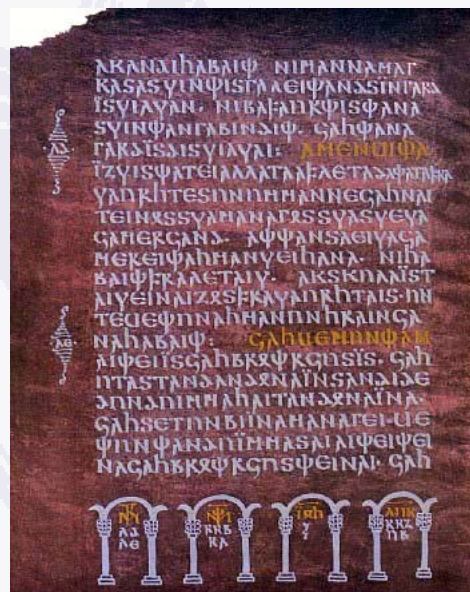
6.1.1.1 Wulfila (ca. 311-380 AD)

The work of the Catholic bishop Wulfila, also known by his Gothic name Ulfilas, is one of the better known efforts in the ancient world and dates back to the fourth century AD.

Ulfilas, or Gothic Wulfila (also Ulphilas. Orphila)^[1] (ca. 310 – 383;^[2]), bishop, missionary, and Bible translator, was a Goth or half-Goth who had spent time inside the Roman Empire at the peak of the Arian controversy. Ulfilas was ordained a bishop by Eusebius of Nicomedia and returned to his people to work as a missionary. In 348, to escape religious persecution by a Gothic chief, probably Athanaric^[3] he obtained permission from Constantius II to migrate with his flock of converts to Moesia and settle near Nicopolis ad Istrum, in what is now northern Bulgaria. There, Ulfilas translated the Bible from Greek into the Gothic language. For this he devised the Gothic alphabet.^[4] Fragments of his translation have survived, including the Codex Argenteus, in the University Library of Uppsala in Sweden. A parchment page of this Bible was found 1971 in the Speyer Cathedral.^[5]

His parents were of non-Gothic Anatolian origin but had been enslaved by Goths on horseback. Ulfilas converted many among the Goths, preaching an Arian Christianity, which, when they reached the western Mediterranean, set them apart from their overwhelmingly Catholic neighbors and subjects.

His translation work proved to be very influential, although we know very little of the details.⁵



1 (2009), 9. For a listing of twenty three of these see Bibelübersetzung.

⁴For helpful summary see "The Bible in German: From Ulfilas to Luther," About.com: German Language.

⁵"Ein Blatt aus einer um das Jahr 500 angefertigten. Bibelhandschrift hat der Speyerer Domvikar Franz

The earliest known and partly still available Germanic version of the Bible was the fourth century Gothic translation of Wulfila (ca. 311-380). This version, translated primarily from the Greek, established much of the Germanic Christian vocabulary that is still in use today.

6.1.1.2 Frankish Translations (9th century)

These translations came about from the influence of Charlemagne: “Later Charlemagne (Karl der Große) would foster Frankish (Germanic) biblical translations in the 9th century.”⁶ There was not highly intensive study of the Bible during the period; scripture quotes served to fill out the lectionaries for use in the Mass and other liturgies. The quality of the translations, also, is very questionable. Charlemagne was more interested in these translations as a political tool for unifying the Frankish world of western Europe.⁷

6.1.2 Middle Ages

The Middle Ages to the Protestant Reformation produced a surprising number of German translations:⁸

There were Bible translations present in manuscript form at a considerable scale already in the thirteenth and the fourteenth century (e.g. the New Testament in the Augsburg Bible of 1350 and the Old Testament in the Wenzel Bible of 1389). There is ample evidence for the general use of the entire vernacular German Bible in the fifteenth century.^[2] In 1466, before Martin Luther was even born, the Mentel Bible, a High-German vernacular Bible was printed at Strassburg. This edition was based on a no-longer-existing fourteenth-century manuscript translation of the Vulgate from the area of Nuremberg. Until 1518, it was reprinted at least 13 times. In 1478-1479, two Low German Bible editions were published in Cologne, one in the Niederrheinisch or West-Westfalian dialect and another in the dialect of Lower Saxony or the East-Westfalian dialect. In 1494, another Low-German Bible was published in Lübeck, and in 1522, the last pre-Lutheran Bible, the Low-German Halberstaedter Bible was published. In total, there were at least eighteen complete German Bible editions, ninety editions in the vernacular of the Gospels and the readings of the Sundays and Holy Days, and some fourteen German Psalters by the time Luther first published his own New Testament translation.^[3]

To be certain, these were translations from various manuscript traditions of the Latin Vulgate, and not from any Greek or Hebrew original language text.

Dr. Friedrich Schulze in “Vom ältesten Bibeldruck bis zur Lutherbibel” lists the following translations leading up to Luther’s release of the New Testament portion in September of 1522, and then those that followed before the first complete Luther Bibel in 1534:

Demzufolge wurden vor Luther z.B. folgende Deutsche Bibeln gedruckt:

vor 1466: Straßburger Bibel von Johann Mentelin

vor 1470: Straßburger Bibel von Heinrich Eggestein

Um 1475: Augsburg Bible von Günther Zainer

Um 1478: Kölner Bibel von Heinrich Quentel

1483: Nürnberger Bibel von Johann Koberger

1494: Lübecker Bibel von Steffen Arndes

Nach dem Septembertestament von Luther 1522 erschienen u.a.:

1523: Das Buch des Neuen Testaments deutsch, Augsburg Hans Schönsperger

1524: Das Neue Testament mit Fleiß verdeutscht, Nürnberg, Friedrich Peypus

1527: Das Neue Testament übersetzt von Hieronymus Emser, Dresden

Haffner entdeckt. Offenbar gehört dieses auf purpur gefärbtem Pergament in gotischer Sprache geschriebene Fragment zum Godex Argenteus, der unvollständigen Prachtbibel., die in der Universitätsbibliothek von Uppsala aufbewahrt ist. Das Blatt war um einen Holzstock gewickelt und befand sich in einem Sack zusammen mit Gebeinen, die dem Bischof Erasmus von Antiochia gehört haben sollen. Dieser Sack war im Herbst vorigen Jahres in einer Kiste gefunden worden, die bei Renovierungsarbeiten in der St.-Afra-Kapelle am Dom zu Speyer zutage gefördert wurde. Der Text auf dem Pergament: die Verse 12 bis 18 aus dem 16. Kapitel des Markus-Evangeliums in der Übersetzung des im Jahre 382 gestorbenen Westgoten Ulfila?.” (source: Zeit Online, 30.04.1971)

⁶See “The Bible in German: From Ulfilas to Luther,” About.com: German Language. Also note “The Frankish Church.”

⁷See “The Frankish World, 750-900.”

⁸“German Bible Translations: Pre-Lutheran German Bibles,” *Wikipedia.com*.

6.1.2.1 Augsburg Bible (1350, NT)

The 1475 revision translation from the Vulgate was done by Günther Zainer. But the New Testament was first released in 1350. It impacted subsequent translations, such as the Ottheinrich Bibel in 1430⁹



6.1.2.2 Wenzel Bibel (1389, OT)

The son of Charles IV, Holy Roman Emperor (1346-1378), Wenzel, promoted this translation with the financial support of Martin Rotlev, a wealthy businessman from Luxemburg. The Old Testament first appeared in 1389, and was completed in 1441 under the support of Friedrich III, one of the Habsburger rulers.¹⁰



6.1.3 Pre-Reformation

This period of the fourteen to the early sixteen centuries largely sees the use of the newly invented printing press coming to play a crucial role in the production of German translations. Most importantly, the majority of these 'publications' are remembered more for the engravings and decorative art that was inserted into the book than they are for the translation itself. Great skill and creativity went into the producing of these graphics in most instances. Virtually all of the translations are translations of the Latin Vulgate into dialectical German that dominated different regions of central Europe.

6.1.3.1 Mentel Bibel (1466)

This Bible has the distinction of being the first German Bible to be printed on the printing press. It

⁹Die großformatige Prachthandschrift des Neuen Testaments (Cgm 8010) wurde um oder kurz nach 1430 im Auftrag Herzog Ludwigs VII. von Bayern-Ingolstadt geschaffen. Ihr Text geht auf eine erstmals im Jahr 1350 in der „Augsburger Bibel“ niedergeschriebene Übersetzung zurück, repräsentiert aber einen eigenen, nicht weiter verbreiteten Zweig der Überlieferung. Der Codex wurde damals in einer sorgfältigen Textura vollständig geschrieben, die Aussparungen für die Bilder wurden mit Maleranweisungen in lateinischer Sprache versehen. Doch wurde der Buchschmuck nur auf etwa einem Fünftel der 307 Pergamentblätter vollendet. Die Buchmalerei konnte drei verschiedenen Regensburger Meistern oder Werkstätten zugewiesen werden, die nach ihrem Anteil an den Miniaturen als Hieronymusmaler, Matthäusmaler und Markusmaler bezeichnet werden. Die übrigen Miniaturen und Initialen ergänzte in den Jahren 1530 bis 1532 der Lauinger Künstler Mathis Gerung im Auftrag von Ottheinrich von Pfalz-Neuburg, der die Handschrift über die Landshuter Linie der Wittelsbacher geerbt hatte. (Source: *Die Eröffnung des siebten Siegels und die ersten vier Posaunenstöße aus der Offenbarung*)

¹⁰„Zwar achtete die römische Kirche im 14. Jh. angesichts vor- und frühreformatorischer Bewegungen wie der Lollarden John Wyclifs in England darauf, dass die Bibel nicht unkontrolliert in der Volkssprache verbreitet werden konnte und auch Kaiser Karl IV. bekräftigte für sein Herrschaftsgebiet 1369 das Übersetzungsverbot für die Vulgata. Karls Sohn und Nachfolger Wenzel jedoch setzte sich hierüber hinweg und gab die Prachthandschrift in deutscher Sprache im Jahr 1385 in Auftrag, wobei Martin Rotlev, ein reicher Kaufmann mit engen Beziehungen zum Hof der Luxemburger, die Finanzierung übernahm. Wer allerdings die Übersetzung selbst vornahm, ist bis heute unbekannt. Mit der Absetzung Wenzels im Jahre 1400 wurde die Arbeit an der Bibel bis auf weiteres unterbrochen. Erst 1441, unter dem Habsburger Friedrich III. wurde die Arbeit fortgesetzt, ohne dass man dabei zum Ende gekommen wäre. Insgesamt wurden 607 Kalbshäute für die Bibel verwendet.“ („Wenzelbibel,” Wikipedia).

is sometimes known as the Straßburger Bibel because of having been printed in Straßburg France. It was translated from the Latin by Johann Mentelin.

Before Martin Luther was even born, a German-language Bible was published in 1466, using Gutenberg's invention. Known as the Mentel Bible, this Bibel was a literal translation of the Latin Vulgate. Printed in Strassburg, the Mentel Bible appeared in some 18 editions until it was replaced by Luther's new translation in 1522.¹¹

The Wikipedia article, "German Bible Translations," adds:

There is ample evidence for the general use of the entire vernacular German Bible in the fifteenth century.[2] In 1466, before Martin Luther was even born, the Mentel Bible, a High-German vernacular Bible was printed at Strassburg. This edition was based on a no-longer-existing fourteenth-century manuscript translation of the Vulgate from the area of Nurenberg. Until 1518, it was reprinted at least 13 times

6.1.3.2 Halberstaedter Bible (1522)¹²

This translation has the distinction of being the last German translation before Luther released the New Testament portion of his translation also in 1522.¹³

In 1478-1479, two Low German Bible editions were published in Cologne, one in the Niederrheinisch or West-Westfalian dialect and another in the dialect of Lower Saxony or the East-Westfalian dialect. In 1494, another Low-German Bible was published in Lübeck, and *in 1522, the last pre-Lutheran Bible, the Low-German Halberstaedter Bible was published.* In total, there were at least eighteen complete German Bible editions, ninety editions in the vernacular of the Gospels and the readings of the Sundays and Holy Days, and some fourteen German Psalters by the time Luther first published his own New Testament translation.¹³

Most of the Bibles of this era are more noteworthy for the drawings and woodcarvings that are a part of the published book, than they are for their accuracy to the biblical text. Almost all of them are nothing but translations of the Latin Vulgate, and make use of one of the many text traditions of the Vulgate that were in circulation over Europe during this era.

6.2 Die Luther Bibel

Unquestionably when one, especially outside the German speaking world, thinks of a Bible in the German language, the Luther Bibel automatically comes to mind.¹⁴ Martin Luther wisely realized that the Bible translated into a language that the people could read for themselves would be a powerful tool in his efforts to reform the church and bring it back to where God wanted it.

“The task of translating the Bible which he thus assumed was to absorb him until the end of his life.”¹⁵ While he was sequestered in the Wartburg Castle (1521–1522) Luther began to translate the New Testament into Ger-



¹¹The Bible in German: From Ulfilas to Luther.

¹²Die *Halberstädter Bibel* von 1522 ist der letzte vorreformatorische, niederdeutsche Bibeldruck. Damit steht sie in der Reihe mündsprachlicher Bibelübersetzungen, die auf das Bedürfnis zurückzuführen sind, im niederdeutschen Sprachraum allgemein verständliche religiöse Werke vorzuhalten. Mit ihren 119 Holzschnitten erfüllt die Halberstädter Bibel das Ideal einer Bilderbibel, in der Text und Bild gleichberechtigt nebeneinander stehen. Der größte Teil dieser Bilder wurde mit den Holzstöcken der *Kölner Bibel* (um 1478) gedruckt, die zum Vorbild der gesamten Frühgeschichte der deutschen Bibelillustrationen bis zur Reformation wurde. Neben diesen gotisch geprägten Holzschnitten gibt es aber auch sechs, von dem bekannten Illustrator Conrad Drake entworfene Darstellungen, die bereits den Renaissance-Stil zeigen. (Source: Halberstädter Bibel im Literaturmuseum by Dirk Bogdanski)

¹³“German Bible Translations: Pre-Lutheran German Bibles,” *Wikipedia*.

¹⁴“The most important and influential of translations of the Bible into German is the Luther Bible. The influence that Martin Luther's translation had on the development of the German language is often compared to the influence the King James Version had on English. The Luther Bible is currently used in a revised version from 1984. Despite the revisions, the language is still somewhat archaic and difficult for non-native speakers who want to learn the German language using a German translation of the bible.” (German Bible Translations: Luther's Bible,” *Wikipedia*)

man in order to make it more accessible to all the people of the “Holy Roman Empire of the German nation.” He used Erasmus’ second edition (1519) of the Greek New Testament — Erasmus’ Greek text would come to be known as the Textus Receptus. To help him in translating Luther would make forays into the nearby towns and markets to listen to people speak. He wanted to ensure their comprehension by a translation closest to their contemporary language usage. It was published in September 1522, six months after he had returned to Wittenberg.”¹⁵

6.2.1 1534 Edition

After the appearance of the New Testament in 1522, the Old Testament was completed by 1534 and the entire Bible made its appearance then.¹⁶

The translation of the entire Bible into German was published in a six-part edition in 1534, a collaborative effort of Luther, Johannes Bugenhagen, Justus Jonas, Caspar Creuziger, Philipp Melanchthon, Matthäus Aurogallus, and Georg Rörer. Luther worked on refining the translation up to his death in 1546: he had worked on the edition that was printed that year.

Luther added the word “alone” to Romans 3:28 controversially so that it read: “thus, we hold, then, that man is justified without the works of the law to do, alone through faith”^[3] The word “alone” does not appear in the original Greek text,^[4] but Luther defended his translation by maintaining that the adverb “alone” was required both by idiomatic German and the apostle Paul’s intended meaning.^{5]}

Luther worked mostly with the Vulgate while making use of Erasmus’ Greek Text of the New Testament and some Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament. Of all the German translations in existence to this point in time, the work of Luther represents the first really serious effort to communicate the biblical text accurately and clearly in the everyday language of the German speaking people.

One observation is especially important. Luther’s difficulty with some books in the Bible led him to adopt a modified view of the Biblical canon from the third century church father Origen.

Initially Luther had a low view of the books of Esther, Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation. He called the Epistle of James “an epistle of straw,” finding little in it that pointed to Christ and His saving work. He also had harsh words for the book of Revelation, saying that he could “in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it.”^[6] He had reason to question the apostolicity of Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation because the early church categorized these books as antilegomena, meaning that they were not accepted without reservation as canonical. Luther did not, however, remove them from his editions of the Scriptures. His views on some of these books changed in later years.

Luther chose to place the Apocrypha between the Old and New Testaments. These books and addenda to canonical books are found in the Greek Septuagint but not in the Hebrew Masoretic text. Luther left the translating of them largely to Philipp Melanchthon and Justus Jonas.^[7] They were not listed in the table of contents of his 1523 Old Testament, and they were given the well-known title: “Apocrypha: These Books Are Not Held Equal to the Scriptures, but Are Useful and Good to Read” in the 1534 Bible.^[8]

Not until the 1912 edition of the Luther Bibel would the sequential listing of the New Testament match the standardized pattern reaching back to Athanasius of Alexandria in 367 AD.

Its impact is detailed in the “Luther Bible” article in Wikipedia:



Luther’s significance was largely due to his influence on the emergence of the German language and nationalism. This importance stemmed predominantly from his translation of the Bible into the vernacular, which was potentially as revolutionary as canon law and the burning of the papal bull.^[12] Luther’s goal was to equip every Christian in Germany with the ability to hear the Word. Thus, by 1534 he completed his translation of the old and new testaments from Latin into the vernacular, one of the most significant acts of the Reformation.^[13] Although Luther was not the first to attempt this translation, his was superior to all its predecessors. Previous translations contained poor

¹⁵“Luther Bible,” Wikipedia.

¹⁶“Luther Bible,” Wikipedia.

German and were that of Vulgate, (translations of translations) rather than a direct translation to German text.^[12] Luther sought to get as close to the original text as possible but at the same time, his translation was guided by how people spoke in the home, on the street and in the marketplace.^[14] Luther combined his faithfulness to the language spoken by the common people to produce a work which the common man could relate to.^[15] This aspect of Luther's creation led German writers such as Goethe and Nietzsche to thoroughly praise Luther's Bible.^[16] The fact that the new Bible was printed in the vernacular allowed it to spread rapidly as it could be read by all. Hans Lufft, a renowned Bible printer in Wittenberg printed over one hundred thousand copies between 1534 and 1574 which went on to be read by millions.^[17] Luther's Bible was virtually present in every German Protestant's home, and there can be no doubts regarding the vast biblical knowledge attained by the German common masses.^[18] As a testament to the vast influence of Luther's Bible, he even had large print Bibles made for those who had failing eyesight.^[16] German humanist Johann Cochlaeus depicted this notion perfectly as he complained that

Luther's New Testament was so much multiplied and spread by printers that even tailors and shoemakers, yea, even women and ignorant persons who had accepted this new Lutheran gospel, and could read a little German, studied it with the greatest avidity as the fountain of all truth. Some committed it to memory, and carried it about in their bosom. In a few months such people deemed themselves so learned that they were not ashamed to dispute about faith and the gospel not only with Catholic laymen, but even with priests and monks and doctors of divinity.^[19]

Cochlaeus's assertion pays true homage to the widespread nature of Luther's Bible.

The fact that Luther's Bible was so widespread allowed it to have tremendous implications for the German language. Prior to Luther's Bible, the German language had been divided into many dialects due to the varying versions of tribes and number of states. As a result, different German statesman could barely understand each other. This led Luther to conclude that "I have so far read no book or letter in which the German language is properly handled. Nobody seems to care sufficiently for it; and every preacher thinks he has a right to change it at pleasure and to invent new terms."^[20] The German language was in such a state that scholars preferred to write in Latin. Luther brought harmony to this confusion through his Bible. He popularized the Saxon dialect and adapted it to theology and religion subsequently making it the common language used in books. In order to make it intelligible to all parts of Germany, he enriched the vocabulary with that of German poets and chroniclers.^[20] For this accomplishment, a contemporary of Luther's, Erasmus Alberus, labeled him the German Cicero as he not only reformed religion, but the German language. Luther's Bible has been hailed as the first German classic, comparative to the King James version of the Bible which became the first English classic. Thus, notable German Protestant writers and poets such as Klopstock, Herder and Lessing essentially owe their stylistic qualities to Luther's Bible.^[21] Ultimately, Luther adapted the words to fit the capacity of the German public and thus, due to the influence and incredible pervasiveness of Luther's Bible, he created and spread the modern German language.^[22]

As Luther's Bible had an incredible influence on the creation of the modern German language, it also had a role in the creation of German nationalism. Because Luther's Bible penetrated every Protestant home in Germany, his sayings and deeply poetic translation undoubtedly became part of German national heritage.^[23] Luther's enormous program of Biblical exposure extended into every sphere of daily life and work, illuminating moral considerations to Germans. This exposure gradually became infused into the blood of the whole nation and occupied a permanent space in German history.^[24] Luther's translation of the Bible became the epitome of the German national spirit. He embodied the high ideals of a new, free, unified and devout German people who were liberated from the false faith of the Pope and Italians. The popularity and influence of Luther's translation gave him the confidence to act as a spokesperson of the nation and thus the leader of the anti-Roman movement in Germany.^[25] In light of this, Luther's Bible allowed him to become a prophet of the new German nationalism^[26] and helped to determine the spirit of a new epoch in German history.^[27]

In a sense, Luther's Bible also empowered and liberated all Protestants who had access to it. Immediately, Luther's translation was a public affirmation of reform and subsequently deprived the elite and priestly class of their exclusive control over words, as well as the word of God.^[12] Through his translation, Luther strove to make it easier for the "simple people" to understand what he was teaching. In the major controversies amongst evangelicals at the time, most evangelicals did not understand the reasons for disagreement, let alone the commoners. Thus, Luther saw it as necessary to help those who were confused see that the disagreement between himself and the Catholic Church was real and had significance. His translation was made in order to allow the common man and woman to become aware of the issues at hand and develop an informed opinion.^[28] The common individual was thus given the right to have a mind, spirit and opinion, who existed not as economic

functionaries but as subjects to complex and conflicting aspirations and motives. In this sense, Luther's Bible acted as a force towards the liberation of the German people. Luther's social teachings and ideologies throughout the Bible undoubtedly had a role in the slow emancipation of European society from its long phase of clerical domination.^[29] Luther gave men a new vision of the exaltation of the human self, one which, despite limitations, can only be experienced as a gift from God and which can neither be brought about nor truly understood.^[30] Luther's Bible thus had broken the unchallenged domination of the Catholic Church, effectively splintering its unity. He had claimed the word of God in the scriptures as the sole authority, and through his translation, every individual was able to abide by its authority, thus nullifying the need for the pope. As Bishop Fisher rightly put it, Luther's Bible had "stirred a mighty storm and tempest in the church" empowering the no longer clerically dominated public.^[31]

Although not as significant as German linguistics, Luther's Bible also had a large impression on educational reform throughout Germany. Luther's goal of a readable and accurate translation of the Bible became a stimulus towards universal education. This stemmed from the notion that everyone should be able to read in order to understand the word of God.^[12] Luther felt that man had fallen from grace and was ruled by his own selfishness, but ultimately had not lost his moral consciousness. All men were sinners, and, in Luther's eyes, needed to be educated. Thus his Bible was a means of establishing a form of law, order and moral teachings which everyone could abide by as that they could all read and understand his Bible. This education subsequently allowed Luther to find a State Church and educate his followers into a law-abiding community.^[32] Overall, the Protestant states of Germany were educational states which encouraged the spirit of teaching which was ultimately fueled by Luther's Bible, the supreme teacher in the hands of all Protestants.

Finally, Luther's Bible also had international significance in the spread of Protestantism. Luther's translation influenced the English translations by William Tyndale and Myles Coverdale who in turn inspired many other translations of the Bible such as the Bishops' Bible of 1568, the Douay-Rheims Bible of 1582–1609, and the King James Version of 1611.^[16] Luther's work also inspired translations as far reaching as Scandinavia and the Netherlands. In a metaphor, it was Luther who broke the walls of translation and once such walls had fallen, the way was open to all, including some who were quite opposed to Luther's belief.^[33] Luther's Bible spread its influence for the remolding of Western culture in all the great ferment of the sixteenth century. The worldwide implications of the translation far surpassed the expectations of even Luther himself.^[34]

6.2.2 1546 Revision

The revision produced at the end of Luther's life represents his ongoing efforts to improve the language and flow of the wording of the biblical text. Type errors were corrected. This represents a continuing effort to update and improve the translation.¹⁷

6.2.3 1912 Revision

Numerous updates were produced over the following years. The particular significance of the 1912 edition is that for the first time the translation of the New Testament was based



¹⁷Jahrhundertelang wurde die Bibel von den Druckern und Bibelgesellschaften nach eigenem Gutdünken modernisiert, so dass es Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts notwendig wurde, in Zukunft einen einheitlichen, revidierten Text zu verbreiten.

“Es ging dabei auch um die Rechtschreibung: Da die Bibel nach Luthers Übersetzung als Schulbuch diente, sollte der Schüler in ihr nichts lesen, was der Lehrer ihm beim Diktat als Fehler anstreichen würde. In den Jahren 1861 und 1863 wurden daher Grundsätze für die Feststellung eines einheitlichen Bibeltextes vereinbart und zehn Theologen mit der Revision des Neuen Testaments beauftragt. 1867 wurde probeweise ein Neues Testament herausgegeben; das Neue Testament war 1870 endgültig fertiggestellt. Jedoch gab es erst 1883 eine „Probibibel“ der Gesamtausgabe. 1892 wurde die erste „kirchenamtliche“ Revision (Durchsicht) für abgeschlossen erklärt, im Jahre 1912 die zweite.” (Source: “Lutherbibel: Von der Deutschen Bibel zur „Lutherbibel 84“ von 1984,” Wikipedia)



on the latest critical printed Greek text rather than the outdated Textus Receptus as had been true at the beginning. Additionally, the older listing of Esther, Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation in an 'appendix' at the back of the Bible with a 'deuterocanonical' status was discarded in favor of the standard sequential listing of these biblical books in the usual Protestant order. Some update of the German language, both in vocabulary and grammar, was done in order to bring the wording of the Luther Bibel up to date with the German language at the beginning of the twentieth century.

6.2.4 1984 Revision



The last major revision¹⁸ of the Luther Bibel, completed and released in 1984, was begun in 1975. Major updates in wording, use of the latest critical Greek and Hebrew texts, changing of the spelling of geographical and proper names, along with the adoption of a more Dynamical Equivalent translation approach are some of the revisions incorporated into this version of the Luther Bibel.¹⁹ The previous versions of the Luther Bibel represent a Formal Equivalent translation method, that was typical of Bible translations universally from the 1400s through the middle of the 1900s. Thus this latest revision represents a major shift in the tradition of this translation in the effort to make the translation easier to understand by modern German readers, as well as to take advantage of the latest advancements in the field of Bible translation methodology and text critical studies of the original language texts of the Bible.

¹⁸“1956 wurde die Revision des Neues Testaments abgeschlossen, 1964 die des Alten Testaments. 1970 wurden die Apokryphen abgeschlossen und fünf Jahre später einige Änderungen im Alten Testament zum Gebrauch angenommen, wobei zwei Gliedkirchen und Österreich die Einführung ablehnten.

“In der Revision von 1975 ging es vor allem um eine Annäherung der Lutherübersetzung an den modernen Sprachgebrauch; z. B. wurde die sprichwörtliche Wendung „sein Licht nicht unter den Scheffel stellen“ (Matthäus 5,15) getilgt, da der Scheffel als Getreidemaß heute nicht mehr bekannt sei. Stattdessen hieß es nun „Eimer“, was der 1975er Übersetzung den Namen „Eimertestament“ eintrug. Der Text von 1975 scheiterte aber nicht zuletzt daran, dass er z. B. in der Weihnachtsgeschichte zu tief in den Wortlaut eingriff, den viele Leser auswendig konnten und schätzten.” (Source: “Lutherbibel: Von der Deutschen Bibel zur „Lutherbibel 84“ von 1984,” Wikipedia)

¹⁹“Schon 1977 beschloss der Rat der Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland die Rücknahme radikaler Textveränderungen der letzten Revisionsstufe des Neuen Testaments (betroffen waren ca. 120 Textstellen). Die traditionellere Textgestalt wurde 1984 zum Gebrauch angenommen, war überaus erfolgreich und beendete die langjährige Krise um die Lutherrevision.

“Die Inkonsequenz der 1984er Revision war zugleich ihre Stärke: An unbekanntenen Stellen hat sie sich rigoros vom Luther-Wortlaut verabschiedet, überladene Satzkonstruktionen (z. B. in Lukas 1,1ff) aufgelöst, den Wohlklang der Weihnachtsgeschichte und anderer Lieblingstexte aber nicht angerührt. Die Mitarbeiter der 1984er Revision entdeckten besonders den Satzbau Luthers als konstitutives Element seiner Übersetzung. Luthers oft einprägsame, rhetorisch geschliffene Sätze sollten nicht unnötig in zwei oder drei kürzere Sätze zerschlagen werden: es hatte sich gezeigt, dass das Auflösen längerer Sätze nicht zwangsläufig eine größere Verständlichkeit zur Folge hatte.

“Unter anderem wurde anlässlich der 1984er Revision die Schreibung biblischer Namen neu geregelt. Die gescheiterte 1975er Revision hatte die ökumenische Schreibung biblischer Eigennamen (Loccumer Richtlinien) konsequent übernommen; die 1984er Lutherbibel meinte soviel Änderung dem Kirchenvolk nicht zumuten zu können und bot bei vielen Namen wieder die altgewohnte Lutherschreibung: Nazareth statt Nazaret, Kapernaum statt Kafarnaum, Hesekiel statt Ezechiel, Hiob statt Ijob.

“Dadurch entstand ein einzigartiges Durcheinander, denn einerseits wurden Namen in alter, unökumenischer Schreibung präsentiert, in denen man nicht unbedingt schutzwürdiges evangelisches Kulturgut vermuten würde (Absalom, Asser, Ephraim, Jeftah usw.), andererseits hat „Luther 84“ aber viele durchaus bekannte Namen in der Form der Loccumer Richtlinien, z. B. Rut (statt Ruth), Jonatan (Jonathan), Ester (Esther). Es gibt keinerlei Konsequenz in der Wiedergabe des hebräischen „bet“, das in der Bedeutung „Haus“ Bestandteil zahlreicher Ortsnamen ist: Bethlehem und Bethel werden in traditioneller Schreibweise geboten, Betanien und Betfage in ökumenischer Form.

“Zwar gilt die Revision von 1984 heute als der kirchenamtlich „zum Gebrauch empfohlene“ Bibeltext im Raum der EKD; es wurden aber 1999 wieder kleinere Veränderungen an diesem Text vorgenommen. Die wichtigste ist die durchgängige Ersetzung von „Weib“ durch „Frau“ nach dem Vorbild der evangelischen Agenden.” (Source: “Lutherbibel: Von der Deutschen Bibel zur „Lutherbibel 84“ von 1984,” Wikipedia)Page 9

A comparison of the translation tendencies in John 3:16 can help one see the evolution of this translation over the centuries of its existence:

1534	1546	1912	1984
Also hatt Gott die welt geliebt, das er seynen eynigen son gab, auff das alle die an yhn glewben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige leben haben,	Also hat Gott die Welt geliebet, das er seinen eingebornen Son gab, Auff das alle die an jn gleuben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben.	Also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, daß er seinen eingeborenen Sohn gab, auf daß alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben.	Denn also hat Gott die Welt geliebt, dass er seinen eingeborenen Sohn gab, damit alle, die an ihn glauben, nicht verloren werden, sondern das ewige Leben haben.

6.3 Reaction Translations to the Luther Bibel

Given the controversial nature of Luther's work in the 1500s, one should not be surprised that very quickly efforts arose to produce an alternative translation to that of Luther in order to counteract the explosive impact that the Luther Bibel had from its beginning. To be sure, most of these were Roman Catholic based, but very quickly the Reformed Church movement of Zwingli and Calvin in Switzerland produced their own translation that became the standard in the German speaking Reformierte Kirchen of Europe. By the beginning of the 1900s these distinctions begin to diminish with the emergence of the ecumenical movement. By the end of the twentieth century most German translations are committee products composed of translators from widely divergent Christian denominations, including Protestant, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions. The movement toward a non-sectarian German translation in the second half of the twentieth century parallels similar trends in Bible translation world wide. Only in the beginning decade of the twenty-first century has this trend been somewhat countered by a growing number of 'sectarian' translations, i.e., translations reflecting a specific denominational or theological stance. This is an international pattern that is also reflected in Germany.

The discussion below is organized around Jewish, Roman Catholic and non-Lutheran Protestant denominations who have sponsored the production of a translation in German. The amount of 'anti-Lutheran' sentiment motivating these translations varies. Typically it was fairly strong in the early years but diminishes as time progresses, once their own translation gains a footing inside the respective Christian group.

6.3.1 *Hebrew Bible in German*²⁰

Unlike in English where numerous Jewish translators of the Hebrew scriptures have produced English translations for use in synagogues and private Bible reading, German speaking Jews have not produced notable German translations of the Hebrew Bible. Mostly in the modern era, European Jewish translations of the Hebrew text were in Yiddish, rather than in German.

Unlike other Germanic languages, Yiddish is written with the Hebrew alphabet as opposed to a Latin alphabet.

The language originated in the Ashkenazi culture that developed from about the 10th century in the Rhineland and then spread to central and eastern Europe and eventually to other continents. In the earliest surviving references to it, the language is called *לשון אשכנז* (loshn-ashkenaz = "language of Ashkenaz") and *טײַטש* (taytsh, a variant of tiutsch, the contemporary name for the language otherwise spoken in the region of origin, now called Middle High German; compare the modern New High German Deutsch). In common usage, the language is called *מוֹטער־לשון* (mame-loshn, literally "mother tongue"), distinguishing it from biblical Hebrew and Aramaic, which are collectively termed *לשון קודש* (loshn-koydesh, "holy tongue"). The term "Yiddish" did not become the most frequently used designation in the literature of the language until the 18th century.

For a significant portion of its history, Yiddish was the primary spoken language of the Ashkenazi Jews and once spanned a broad dialect continuum from Western Yiddish to three major groups within Eastern Yiddish. Eastern and Western Yiddish are most markedly distinguished by the extensive inclusion of words of Slavic origin in the Eastern dialects. While Western Yiddish has few remaining speakers, Eastern dialects remain in wide use.

Yiddish is written and spoken in Orthodox Jewish communities around the world. It is a home language in most Hasidic communities, where it is the first language learned in childhood, used in schools, and in many social settings.²¹

²⁰See "Bibelübersetzungen" with the right column listing Jewish translations of the Hebrew Bible into German. Helpful summary information is provided for each listed translation.

²¹"Yiddish language," Wikipedia.

Jewish translation of the Hebrew scriptures into vernacular languages largely emerged in the post-Holocaust era. Given the Nazi experience of Jews in Germany little effort toward German translations of the Hebrew Bible has been put forth.

6.3.1.1 Moses Mendelssohn (1778)

Early on there was the work of Moses Mendelssohn who translated portions of the Old Testament into German. This translation was popular in some Jewish and Christian circles but had limited impact.

Moses Mendelssohn²² (a.k.a. Moses ben Menahem-Mendel and Moses Dessau) (1729-1786) translated part of the Torah into German, which was published in Amsterdam in 1778. The translation was honored by some Jews and Protestants, while some Jews banned it. The whole Pentateuch and Psalms was published in 1783, and was appreciated even in Christian circles. His version of the Song of Solomon was posthumously published in 1788.²³

6.3.2 Roman Catholic Translations in German

In the sixteenth century Roman Catholic efforts to stem the influence of Martin Luther's reforms prompted efforts²⁴ to translate the Latin Vulgate into German. The most significant such effort was the Eck Bibel, released in 1537 shortly after Luther's full translation was released in 1534.

6.3.2.1 The Eck Bibel (1537)

This translation by Johann Eck was intended to counter the influence of Luther's translation, particularly in the still dominate Catholic regions of southern and western Germany. Unlike Luther's translation which used a east central German dialect called Sächsisch, the Eck Bibel was translated into Bavarian Hoch Deutch, einem sehr bairischen Oberdeutsch, in order to distinguish the translation from Luther's.²⁵ The translation by Eck continued to be popular in Catholic circles in Austria and Bavaria through the seventeenth century.

It was exclusively a translation of the Latin Vulgate into German and made no use of the original language texts. His translation method also set his work in contrast to that of Luther, as the following example illustrates:

Eine Besonderheit der Eck-Bibel stellt auch die Verwendung des Wortes GOTT in Großbuchstaben dar, wo Luther zwischen HERR im göttlichen Sinn und Herr für eine Person, etwa dem Herrn eines Sklaven, unterscheidet. In Exodus 6,3 findet sich bei Eck außerdem die erstmalige Verwendung des Gottesnamens JHWH in einer deutschsprachigen Bibel, wo im Gegensatz dazu Luther ebenfalls mit HERR übersetzte (Ex 6,3 LUT).²⁶



6.3.2.2 Jerusalemer Bibel (1968)

Vatican Council II in the 1960s revived Catholic interest in serious study of the scriptures by the ity, and led to a major effort to produce a vernacular translation of the Catholic Bible in the major languages of

²²Moses Mendelssohn (September 6, 1729 – January 4, 1786) was a German Jewish philosopher to whose ideas the renaissance of European Jews, Haskalah (the Jewish Enlightenment) is indebted. For some he was the third Moses (the other two being the Biblical lawgiver and Moses Maimonides) heralding a new era in the history of the Jewish people. For others, his ideas led towards assimilation, loss of identity for Jews and the dilution of traditional Judaism. He was also the grandfather of the composers Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn.” (Source: “Moses Mendelssohn,” Wikipedia).

²³“German Bible Translations: Later translations,” Wikipedia.

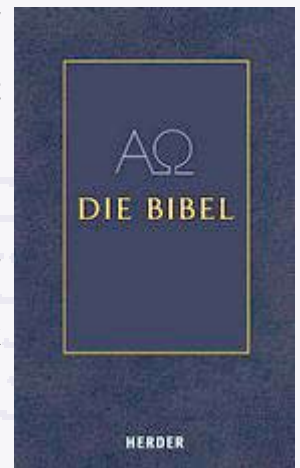
²⁴“Nach der Allioli-Bibel (1830 und 1899) entstanden bis 1960 etwa 25 katholische Übersetzungen ins Deutsche, z.B. die Volksbibel 1912 und die Klosterneuburger Bibel 1934. Manche hatten besondere Nähe zu den Urtexten, andere zielten auf neue Liturgie oder eine interessante Sprache.” (Source: “Einheitsübersetzung: Zur Geschichte der Bibelübersetzung,” Wikipedia.)

²⁵“Im Jahr 1537 erschien von Johann Eck eine der ersten Übersetzung der kompletten Bibel nach Martin Luthers Vollbibel von 1534 und zwar nicht in einem ostmitteldeutsches Sächsisch, sondern in einem sehr bairischen Oberdeutsch, ähnlich der Maximilianischen Kanzleisprache.” (Source: “Eck-Bibel,” Wikipedia)

²⁶“Eck-Bibel,” Wikipedia

the world. This emphasis built on an encyclical letter, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, issued by Pope Pius XII in 1943, which officially encouraged the translation of the Bible among Roman Catholics. This project developed first among Dominican monks working at the *École Biblique* in Jerusalem. The first translation of the Jerusalem Bible, in French (*La Bible de Jérusalem*), was released in 1961. In 1968 the German translation of the Jerusalem Bible was released.

The translation represents a Mixed Method approach with stronger leanings toward a Formal Equivalent method. The text was intended for liturgical use now that the Mass could be conducted in the vernacular language, rather than in Latin. The high quality of the German expression and extensive use of the critical Greek and Hebrew texts greatly advanced the work of Catholic Bible translation in German. Because of being published by the Catholic publisher Herder Verlag, the translation is sometimes called the Herder Bible.



6.3.2.3 Einheitsübersetzung (1980)



Even more significant was the Vatican Council II movement toward ecumenical efforts with Protestant Christians around the world. From 1962 through 1980 both Catholic and Protestant scholars worked on a major revision of the Jerusalem Bible. In 1980 the German version of the New Testament and Psalms was released under the title, *Die Einheitsübersetzung*. Sometimes this translation goes under the title of *Neue Jerusalemer Bibel*, since it is essentially a revision of the German Jerusalemer Bibel. The idealistic expectation was that this translation, intentionally done in Formal Translation style, would be incorporated into the official liturgies of both sides of the Landeskirche -- Katholisch and Evangelisch -- in German as a major step toward reunification of the two branches of Christianity in Germany. But with the movement of the Lutheranische Kirche branch



of the EKD in the early 80s toward a major revision of the Luther Bibel, the unreal expectations of the translation work became increasingly clear.

6.3.3 Protestant Translations in German²⁷

On the non-Lutheran Protestant side of German Bible translation one translation, die Zürcher Bibel, towers over the others in importance. It has stood for centuries as the main translation of the Reformierte Kirche in the German speaking countries.

The discussion below takes a different turn in grouping the translations. Most all the listed translations come from Protestant Christianity, some with more ecumenical orientation than others. More helpful is to group the translations by the basic approach to translation, either Form Equivalent (FE) or Dynamic Equivalent (DE) approaches.²⁸

6.3.3.1 Formal Translations

Form Oriented translations focus on retaining as much of the 'form,' i.e., word sequence, grammar

²⁷For a lengthy listing of German translations, mostly of Matt. 18:23-24 in German see "Textvergleich deutschsprachiger Bibelausgaben," Wikipedia.

²⁸For a somewhat technical presentation of Bible translation methods, see Lorin L. Cranford, "Translating the Text," cranfordville.com.

Foundational is the awareness of languages and the nature of linguistic translation, as reported in the article, "Bibelübersetzungen," Wikipedia:

"Aufgrund der unterschiedlichen Struktur verschiedener Sprachen im Allgemeinen ist eine Eins-zu-eins-Übersetzung nicht möglich. Wie Friedrich Schleiermacher herausstellte, gibt es im Wesentlichen zwei Strategien, mit diesem Problem umzugehen: Entweder passt man den Inhalt an den Leser an und nimmt dadurch Kompromisse in der Genauigkeit in Kauf, oder man verlangt vom Leser, sich an den Inhalt anzupassen und nimmt damit Kompromisse in der Verständlichkeit in Kauf. Man nennt diese Strategien auch „zieltextorientiert“ und „ausgangstextorientiert“ oder „wirkungstreu“ und „strukturtreu“, wobei zu betonen ist, dass „-treu“ hier hauptsächlich die Absicht der Übersetzer meint.^[3]"

structure etc., of the original language text as possible. Most of the time the resulting translation will express the ideas in a Formal Language style, i.e., Kanzleisprache, of the Receptor Language. In the world of Bible translation this pattern prevailed until the mid-twentieth century when the alternative DE method came into vogue and led to “Contemporary Language” translations, i.e., kommunikative Bibelübersetzungen, being produced.

6.3.3.1.1 Barther Bibel (1588)

This translation represents a Dialectical German translation toward the end of the sixteen century. It was translated into middle low German, *mittelniederdeutscher Sprache*, for use in the Hanse region of northern Germany, where *Mittelniederdeutsch* was the universally used form of German during this period. The engravings are particularly noteworthy



6.3.3.1.2 Zürcher Bibel (1531)



The Zürcher Bibel had its origin in Zurich Switzerland during the Reformation activities of Ulrich Zwingli. Begun in 1524 the complete Bible was published in 1531, and quickly became the primary translation of the Reformed Church in Switzerland and where ever this movement spread in the German speaking regions. When first released in 1531 it was often known as the *Froschauer-Bibel* through the publisher Christoph Froschauer who first published the translation.



From 1545 through 1650 the translation was rendered in Schweizerdeutsch in formal, Kanzleisprache, style. The revision in 1665 shifted the German into dem Sprachsystem der kursächsischen Kanzlei. The major revision of this in 1868 and then again in 1892 provided the

basic language style for all subsequent revisions through 1984. Beyond the updates of the Swiss German language style, the text was adapted to the developing critical Greek and Hebrew original language texts.

The proposed revision in 1984 was to produce “eine wissenschaftlich zuverlässige und sprachlich sorgfältige Übersetzung für die Gegenwart, verwendbar in Gottesdienst und Unterricht.“ That is, a liturgically functioning, but scholarly useful translation for today’s world. The latest critical Biblical texts were used as the foundation for the translation.²⁹ The completed neue Zürcher Bibel was released in 2007, after considerable debate and controversy within the Reformierte Landeskirche in Switzerland. In spite of the controversy, and possibly in part due to it, over 11,000 copies were sold in the first ten days of its release.

6.3.3.1.3 Elberfelder Bibel (1871)

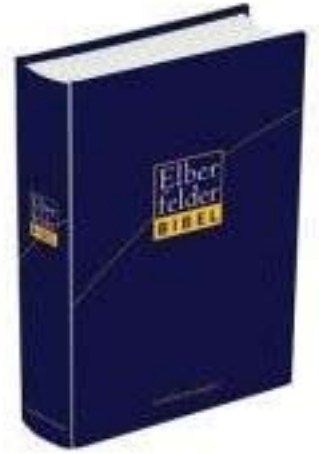
This very FE oriented translation first appeared in the New Testament in 1855 and then the complete Bible in 1871.³⁰ The translation was the product of Julius Anton von Poseck, Carl Brockhaus and John Nelson Darby. The name is derived from where most of the original translation work was done, Elberfeld, today a suburb of Wuppertal Germany. The New Testament portion was based on the outdated Textus Re-

²⁹“Als maßgebliche Textausgaben dienten für das Alte Testament die Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (5. Auflage 1997) sowie die erste Teilausgabe der Biblia Hebraica Quinta (2004, 2006). Der Übersetzung des Neuen Testaments liegt der griechische Text von Nestle-Aland zugrunde, wie ihn die 27. Auflage des Novum Testamentum Graece bietet.” (source: “Zürcher Bibel (2007)” Online-Bibeln).

³⁰“Die Elberfelder Bibel ist eine bedeutende deutsche Bibelübersetzung, die erstmals 1855 (Neues Testament) bzw. 1871 (Altes Testament) erschien. Sie konnte zwar nie die gleiche Verbreitung wie die Lutherbibel finden, hat aber im Laufe der Zeit wegen ihrer begriffsnahen Übersetzungsweise und Texttreue viele Freunde gewonnen. Die Wörtlichkeit der Übersetzung hat in ihr Vorrang vor sprachlicher Schönheit. Damit wurde sie zum Vorbild für viele weitere Übersetzungen.

Der Name bürgerte sich ein, da ein großer Teil der Übersetzungsarbeit in Elberfeld (heute Stadtteil von Wuppertal) stattfand. Initiatoren der Übersetzung waren Julius Anton von Poseck, Carl Brockhaus und John Nelson Darby. Damit stand sie anfangs in enger Verbindung mit der Brüderbewegung und dem Dispensation- alismus.” (Source: “Elberfelder Bible,” Wikipedia).

ceptus Greek text, with the translators being very critical of the emerging field of Text Criticism in the late 1800s. Ironically, the current versions since the 1932 update are based on the Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece critical text, and the Old Testament on the Hebrew Masoretischen Text. The latest revision is called the *Revidierte Elberfelder Übersetzung* and the complete Bible appeared in 1985 after the New Testament in 1975. The Bible is most popular within the Brüderbewegung, i.e., Brethren Church, in Germany. One of the traits that made the translation popular was the publishing of study tools based on the translation very early on. The publishing of concordances, commentaries, study Bible versions etc. created a place for this translation beyond the very limited theological circles in which it was first produced. The translation through all of its revisions has remained very FE in its translation method, and thus is more difficult to read for most Germans today.



6.3.3.2 Contemporary German Translations

In the mid-twentieth century Bible translation world wide began to make major changes. Through the support of large well funded Bible societies linguistic studies on the concept of human language and how to best translate ideas from one language to another were developed. The impact of the United Nations on this was considerable. Additionally, professional Bible translators began emerging with doctorates in not only biblical studies but linguistic studies. With this growing awareness of new concepts of human communication linguistically came new concerns about improving the translation of the Bible. Also impacting this was the exploding work of foreign missions that created growing need for the Bible to be translated into remote primitive languages. Most Bible translation missionaries were not trained in going from the Greek or Hebrew texts into a primitive local dialect of some remote tribal group. The created greater need for a simplified translation in the translator's 'mother tongue' such as English or German to serve as the basis for these very simplified translations into primitive languages. Out of these dynamics came what has come to be labeled "Contemporary English" translations or "kommunikative Bibelübersetzungen" in German.

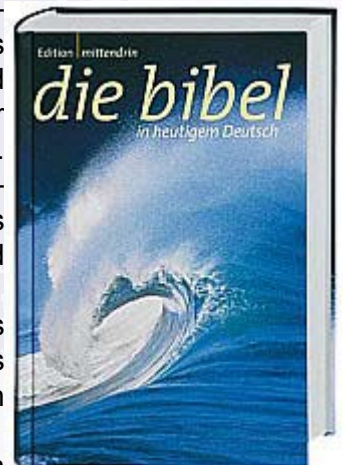
These translations are Dynamic Equivalent based translations that place major emphasis upon readability and understandability by the reader of the translation. The most natural equivalent expression in the Receptor Language of the reader is the translation goal.³¹ The following translations represent a selection of this type of translation available today in German.

6.3.3.2.1 Die Gute Nachricht Bibel (1982)

This DE translation, i.e., kommunikative Bibelübersetzung, was first begun in 1968 with the release of the New Testament portion; the entire Bibel was release in 1982. It was modeled after the American English translation, Good News for Modern Man. The German translation was an ecumenical project of "der Deutschen Bibelgesellschaft (evangelisch), des Katholischen Bibelwerks e. V. Stuttgart und der evangelischen und katholischen Bibelgesellschaften in Österreich." In 1997 a complete revision of the translation was released, then in 2000 this was updated to conform to the new German grammar and spelling rules, adopted uniformly by the German speaking countries of Europe.

This translation is useful for personal reading of the scripture but has no liturgical usage because of the nature of the linguistic expression. As with its American counterpart, it can be helpful for children, young people and others with limited background understanding of the biblical text.

One can sense something of the flow of this translation by a comparison of John 8:12-14 with the 1984 Luther Bibel:³²



³¹For the details see Lorin L. Cranford, "Translating the Text," cranfordville.com.

³²John 8:12-14, NRSV: "12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." 13 Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going."

GNT: 8.12 Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσῃ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς. 8.13 εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθής. 8.14 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Καὶ

Luther Bibel 1984	Gute Nachricht Bibel
12 Da redete Jesus abermals zu ihnen und sprach: Ich bin das Licht der Welt. Wer mir nachfolgt, der wird nicht wandeln in der Finsternis, sondern wird das Licht des Lebens haben. 13 Da sprachen die Pharisäer zu ihm: Du gibst Zeugnis von dir selbst; dein Zeugnis ist nicht wahr. 14 Jesus antwortete und sprach zu ihnen: Auch wenn ich von mir selbst zeuge, ist mein Zeugnis wahr; denn ich weiß, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe; ihr aber wisst nicht, woher ich komme oder wohin ich gehe.	12 Jesus sprach weiter zu den Leuten: »Ich bin das Licht für die Welt. Wer mir folgt, tappt nicht mehr im Dunkeln, sondern hat das Licht und mit ihm das Leben.« 13 Die Pharisäer sagten zu ihm: »Jetzt trittst du als Zeuge in eigener Sache auf. Was du sagst, hat keine Beweiskraft!« 14 »Was ich sage, ist wahr«, entgegnete Jesus, »selbst wenn ich mein eigener Zeuge bin. Ich weiß nämlich, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe. Ihr aber wisst nicht, woher ich komme und wohin ich gehe.

6.3.3.2 Neues Leben Bibel (2006)

This recently released DE oriented German translation, i.e., kommunikative Bibelübersetzung, is the counterpart to the American English New Living Translation. It is largely targeting members in the freikirchlichen Gemeinden, i.e., the free churches.

The language of the Neues Leben Bibel is oriented to "an einer möglichst einfachen und überwiegend flüssigen Gegenwartssprache." That is, a simple and flowing style of German. This description is provided by one of the publishers, SCM Hänssler:

Lebendige Sprache und Nähe zum Grundtext sind die beiden Schwerpunkte, die diese Übersetzung vereint.

"Neues Leben. Die Bibelübersetzung" überträgt die Gedanken des Grundtextes in die heute gebräuchliche Sprache. Die Übersetzung ist lebensnah, leicht verständlich und gut lesbar. Gleichzeitig bleibt sie so nah wie möglich am Grundtext, was diese Bibel inhaltlich und sachlich zuverlässig macht.

Auf der sprachlichen Ebene lassen sich einige Besonderheiten entdecken.

Zentrale theologische Begriffe wie "Schuld" oder "Gnade" werden beibehalten. Der zeitliche Kontext der biblischen Bücher kommt auch in der Wortwahl zum Ausdruck: Historische Ausdrücke sind der jeweiligen Zeit entsprechend übersetzt worden. So wird z.B. "Statthalter" verwendet statt "Gouverneur" oder "Heer" statt "Armee". Ein besonderes Leseerlebnis sind die lyrischen Bücher der Bibel wie Psalmen oder Sprüche. Hier wurde großer Wert auf die sprachliche Gestaltung gelegt, um den poetischen Charakter der Texte beizubehalten.

Die Bibelübersetzung entstand in einer engen Zusammenarbeit von Theologen und Germanisten. Unterstützung bekam das Team durch Testleser, die immer wieder Rückmeldungen über Lesbarkeit und Verständlichkeit gaben.

Durch die Besonderheiten der Übersetzung ist die Neues Leben Bibel die ideale Bibel für jeden Tag, die sich auch hervorragend zum Vorlesen eignet und als Grundlage für Predigten und das persönliche Bibelstudium verwendet werden kann.

Nachdem das Neue Testament bereits 2002 erschienen ist, liegt seit 2006 die gesamte Bibel in "Neues Leben. Die Bibelübersetzung" vor.

A comparison of John 8:12-14 between this translation and the 1984 Luther Bibel will illustrate these points:³³

ν ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία μου, ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω.

³³John 8:12-14, NRSV: "12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." 13 Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." 14 Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going."

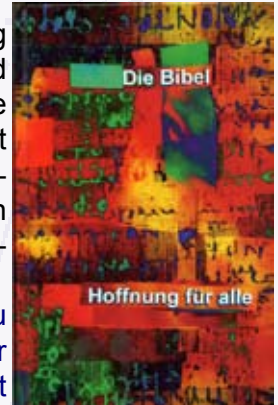
GNT: 8.12 Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ἐγὼ εἶμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς. 8.13 εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθῆς. 8.14 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Καὶ ν ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία μου, ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω· ὑμεῖς



Luther Bibel 1984	Neues Leben Bibel
<p>12 Da redete Jesus abermals zu ihnen und sprach: Ich bin das Licht der Welt. Wer mir nachfolgt, der wird nicht wandeln in der Finsternis, sondern wird das Licht des Lebens haben. 13 Da sprachen die Pharisäer zu ihm: Du gibst Zeugnis von dir selbst; dein Zeugnis ist nicht wahr. 14 Jesus antwortete und sprach zu ihnen: Auch wenn ich von mir selbst zeuge, ist mein Zeugnis wahr; denn ich weiß, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe; ihr aber wisst nicht, woher ich komme oder wohin ich gehe.</p>	<p>12 Jesus sagte zu den Leuten: "Ich bin das Licht der Welt. Wer mir nachfolgt, braucht nicht im Dunkeln umherzuirren, denn er wird das Licht haben, das zum Leben führt." 13 Die Pharisäer erwiderten: "Du bist dein eigener Zeuge. Deine Worte sind nicht glaubwürdig!" 14 Jesus antwortete: "Was ich über mich gesagt habe, ist wahr, auch wenn ich damit für mich selbst spreche. Denn ich weiß, wo ich herkomme und wo ich hingehge, während ihr das nicht von mir wisst.</p>

6.3.3.2.3 Hoffnung für Alle (1996)

This translation is the German counterpart to the American English Living Bible, both of which are sponsored by the International Bible Society. Highly focused on reader understandability, this translation easily adopts interpretative stances for the sake of clarity of reading, and these reflect a conservative evangelical perspective most of the time. This would not be surprising since the translation is published by the Brunnen Verlag in Giessen Germany and Basel Switzerland, a very conservative Christian publisher in Germany. The publisher offers this depiction of the purpose of the translation:



Als der Brunnen Verlag Basel und die International Bible Society sich zu Beginn der 70er-Jahre die Aufgabe stellten, eine neue Bibelübersetzung in der Sprache unserer Zeit zu erarbeiten, war das Ziel dasselbe wie heute: das Wort Gottes in einer verständlichen und dennoch präzisen Weise den Menschen nahe zu bringen.

Heute ist diese Aufgabe dringender denn je: Die christlichen Traditionen treten immer mehr in den Hintergrund, die Vertrautheit mit dem Wort Gottes schwindet. Wenn es heute um die Fragen geht, worauf Menschen sich verlassen und was sie für ihr Leben als wichtig erachten, tritt der Glaube an Gott immer mehr in der Hintergrund. Der Grund liegt sicher auch darin, dass die Art und Weise, über Gott und den Glauben zu reden, oft in einer wenig zeitgemäßen Form geschieht.

Was aber bedeutet es, eine "zeitgemäße" Form zu suchen? Es bedeutet sicher nicht eine unbdenkliche Orientierung am so genannten Zeitgeist. Es bedeutet aber, den Zugang zum Wort Gottes und den Inhalten des christlichen Glaubens nicht unnötig zu erschweren. Wie oft gerät das biblische Wort in den Verdacht, nichts mehr mit unserem Leben zu tun zu haben, weil es in einer ungewohnten, ja bisweilen altertümlichen Sprache gelesen wird!

Gottes Wort enthält eine Botschaft, eine gute Nachricht: Gott wurde Mensch, um die Menschen mit sich zu versöhnen und für alle Zeiten Gemeinschaft mit ihnen zu haben. Diese Botschaft ist schwer genug zu verstehen – auch wenn man sie in einer verständlichen Sprache sagt. Es gibt keinen Grund, den Zugang zu dieser Botschaft unnötig zu erschweren, indem man sie in schwer verständlichen Formulierungen ausdrückt, die unserer Sprache nicht entsprechen.

Gottes Wort will verstanden werden. Diesem Ziel war und ist "Hoffnung für alle" verpflichtet.

One can see something of the nature of this translation through a comparison with the 1984 Luther Bible of Luke 2:1-3:³⁴

δὲ οὐκ οἶδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω.

³⁴Luke 2:1-3, NRSV: 1 In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3 All went to their own towns to be registered.

GNT: 2.1 Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος Αὐγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. 2.2 αὕτη ἀπογραφή πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίου. 2.3 καὶ ἐπορεύοντο πάντες ἀπογράφεσθαι, ἕκαστος εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ πόλιν.

Luther Bibel 1984	Hoffnung für Alle
Es begab sich aber zu der Zeit, dass ein Gebot von dem Kaiser Augustus ausging, dass alle Welt geschätzt würde. Und diese Schätzung war die allererste und geschah zur Zeit, da Quirinius Statthalter in Syrien war. Und jedermann ging, dass er sich schätzen ließe, ein jeder in seine Stadt.	In dieser Zeit befahl der Kaiser Augustus, dass alle Bewohner des römischen Reiches namentlich in Listen erfasst werden sollten. Eine solche Volkszählung hatte es noch nie gegeben. Sie wurde durchgeführt, als Quirinius Gouverneur in Syrien war. Jeder musste in die Stadt gehen, aus der er stammte, um sich dort eintragen zu lassen.

6.3.3.2.4 Neue Evangelistische Übersetzung (New Evangelical Version) (2009)

This new translation, abbreviated as NeÜ, began with the publication of the New Testament portion in 2003 and the complete Bible was released in January of 2009. At the beginning the title of the translation was *Neue evangelistische Übertragung*, but currently it is *Neue evangelistische Übersetzung*. Uniquely, this translation is intended as an online Bible also, at least in the early stages of its release.³⁵ Karl-Heinz Vanheiden is supervising the work on this project as chief translator. It is intended as an “evangelikale kommunikative Bibelübersetzung.” That is, a contemporary German translation for and by evangelical Christians. It is also published by the Hänssler Verlag, which describes the translation as follows:



Diese Übersetzung versucht, Sinn und Struktur des neutestamentlichen Textes zu erfassen und für den Leser - auch aus nicht-christlichem Umfeld - wiederzugeben. Sie legt wesentlich größeren Wert auf sprachliche Klarheit als auf wörtliche Wiedergabe. Als Einführung in die Bibel gedacht, ermöglicht sie ein großflächiges Lesen und vermittelt einen Eindruck von der lebendigen Kraft, aber auch von der Schönheit des Wortes Gottes. Ihr Ziel ist letztlich - wie auch das jeder Übersetzung - zum Glauben an Jesus Christus, dem Messias Israels und Sohn Gottes, zu führen..

Once more a comparison of John 8:12-14 between this translation and the 1984 Luther Bibel will be instructive:³⁶

Luther Bibel 1984	Neue evangelistische Übersetzung
12 Da redete Jesus abermals zu ihnen und sprach: Ich bin das Licht der Welt. Wer mir nachfolgt, der wird nicht wandeln in der Finsternis, sondern wird das Licht des Lebens haben. 13 Da sprachen die Pharisäer zu ihm: Du gibst Zeugnis von dir selbst; dein Zeugnis ist nicht wahr. 14 Jesus antwortete und sprach zu ihnen: Auch wenn ich von mir selbst zeuge, ist mein Zeugnis wahr; denn ich weiß, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe; ihr aber wisst nicht, woher ich komme oder wohin ich gehe.	12 Dann sagte Jesus wieder zu allen Leuten: „Ich bin das Licht der Welt! Wer mir folgt, wird nicht mehr in der Finsternis umherirren, sondern wird das Licht haben, das zum Leben führt.“ 13 Da sagten die Pharisäer zu ihm: „Jetzt bist du unglaubwürdig, denn du trittst als Zeuge für dich selbst auf.“ 14 Jesus erwiderte: „Auch wenn ich als Zeuge für mich selbst spreche, ist meine Aussage dennoch wahr. Denn ich weiß, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe. Aber ihr wisst nicht, woher ich komme und wohin ich gehe.“

³⁵“Eine Besonderheit der NeÜ ist es, dass der Text nicht gleich in der gedruckten Endfassung veröffentlicht wird, sondern zunächst auf der Internetseite des Übersetzers eingesehen werden kann, sodass Verbesserungsvorschläge, Kritik und Anregungen von Seiten der Leser bei der weiteren Arbeit Berücksichtigung finden können.” (Source: “Neue evangelistische Übersetzung,” Wikipedia)

³⁶John 8:12-14, NRSV: “12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” 13 Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” 14 Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.”

GNT: 8.12 Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ’ ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς. 8.13 εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθῆς. 8.14 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Καὶ ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία μου, ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω.

6.3.3.2.5 BasisBibel (begun 2004; Audio Bible)

This new translation is designed as a multi-media German translation of the Bible. The publisher, the Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, describes the translation as follows:

Die BasisBibel ist eine völlig neuartige Übersetzung der Bibel. Denn sie wird erstmals speziell für das Lesen und Verstehen am PC übersetzt. Sie ist:

multimedial: Die BasisBibel gibt es mit einer leicht zu bedienende Software, die im Gesamtpaket und in der Multimedia-DVD-Rom enthalten ist. Hier erhältst du einen kleinen Einblick in die BasisBibel-Software.

interaktiv: Die BasisBibel ist die erste Bibelübersetzung, in der schon während der Entstehung Anregungen und Wünsche der zukünftigen Leser berücksichtigt werden. Du selbst kannst an der Übersetzungsarbeit teilhaben! Hier erfährst du alle weiteren Informationen zum Mitmachen.

authentisch: Die BasisBibel wird direkt aus dem griechischen und hebräischen Urtext heraus übersetzt. Sie ist eine echte, völlig neue und eigenständige Bibelübersetzung. Hier findest du weitere Informationen zur Übersetzung und zum Übersetzungsteam

The translation project began in 2004. In 2006 the Gospel of Mark was published; in March of 2008 all four gospels were released. The goal is to complete the entire New Testament by 2011, followed by the Old Testament afterwards. Interestingly, work on the project is being done by young people, teachers, pastors, and youth leaders.³⁷ As an interactive translation primarily used on computers, it has an audio feature for listening, as well as java scripted popup screens for explaining aspects of the biblical texts. According to the publisher, the Basis Bible is ideal for:

- Jugendliche und junge Erwachsene
- Konfirmanden
- Pfarrer
- Religionspädagogen
- Multiplikatoren der kirchlichen Jugendarbeit



A comparison of John 8:12-14 with the 1984 Luther Bibel can be helpful in order to gain a sense of the style and flow of the German Text:³⁸

³⁷“Die Arbeit an der Bibelübersetzung wird begleitet von Jugendlichen und Pädagogen, Pfarrern und Jugendleitern und unterstützt vom Christlichen Jugenddorfwerk Deutschlands (CJD), der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Evangelischen Jugend in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, dem Bibellesebund e.V., dem Jugendverband Entschieden für Christus.” (source: “BasisBibel,” Wikipedia)

³⁸John 8:12-14, NRSV: “12 Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.” 13 Then the Pharisees said to him, “You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid.” 14 Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going.”

GNT: 8.12 Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων, Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσει ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ’ ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς. 8.13 εἶπον οὖν αὐτῷ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι, Σὺ περὶ σεαυτοῦ μαρτυρεῖς· ἡ μαρτυρία σου οὐκ ἔστιν ἀληθῆς. 8.14 ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Καὶ ἐγὼ μαρτυρῶ περὶ ἐμαυτοῦ, ἀληθῆς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία μου, ὅτι οἶδα πόθεν ἦλθον καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγω· ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐκ οἴδατε πόθεν ἔρχομαι ἢ ποῦ ὑπάγω.

Luther Bibel 1984	Basis Bibel
<p>12 Da redete Jesus abermals zu ihnen und sprach: Ich bin das Licht der Welt. Wer mir nachfolgt, der wird nicht wandeln in der Finsternis, sondern wird das Licht des Lebens haben. 13 Da sprachen die Pharisäer zu ihm: Du gibst Zeugnis von dir selbst; dein Zeugnis ist nicht wahr. 14 Jesus antwortete und sprach zu ihnen: Auch wenn ich von mir selbst zeuge, ist mein Zeugnis wahr; denn ich weiß, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe; ihr aber wisst nicht, woher ich komme oder wohin ich gehe.</p>	<p>12 Wieder einmal sprach Jesus zu den Leuten. Er sagte: "Ich bin das Licht dieser Welt. Wer mir folgt, tappt nicht mehr im Dunkeln. Er wird das Licht des Lebens haben." 13 Da sagten die Pharisäer zu ihm: "Du trittst für dich selbst als Zeuge auf. Deine Zeugenaussage ist nicht glaubwürdig." 14 Jesus antwortete ihnen: "Auch wenn ich mein eigener Zeuge bin, ist meine Zeugenaussage glaubwürdig. Denn ich weiß, woher ich gekommen bin und wohin ich gehe. Aber ihr wisst nicht, woher ich komme und wohin ich gehe.</p>

The history of the German Bible is long and rich. Its beginnings reach far back in time to a few centuries of the beginning of Christianity. The impact of the Protestant Reformation, with the sola scripture emphasis on scripture alone as the basis of faith and practice, on Bible translation is immeasurable. Luther's translation of the Bible in German in the early 1500s produced a revolution for Bible translation and stands as one of the watershed moments of Christian history. The modern era of German Bible translation moves in parallel to trends in Bible translation internationally. Some exciting new translations, especially in contemporary German style and language, are becoming available for Christians to use not just for their own personal reading of the Bible, but also for witnessing and teaching the Word of God to groups with limited background and understanding of the scriptures.

To God be the glory! Great things He is doing in our day!

