Where We've Come From

Week 4: How We Got the New Testament, Part 2

What happened to the New Testament as the Church grew?

- People starting making translations. (e.g., Syriac, Armenian, Georgian, Coptic)
- People started making copies of the Greek NT.
- What were some challenges confronting copyists?
  - Doing everything by hand by candlelight with sticks and ink.
  - Copyists had varying degrees of literacy.
  - Greek script was difficult to copy.

Greek "uncial" script

So what happened as copyist kept making more copies of New Testament books?

- Errors get introduced of various kinds.
    1. Spelling and nonsense errors.
    2. Errors that replace words or phrases with synonyms or similar phrases.
    3. Errors that are meaningful but not viable.
        - **Example: additional phrase in 1ˢᵗ John 5:7 in the KJV**
    4. Errors that are both meaningful and viable (<1%).
        - Examples: Turn to John 7:53-8:11; Mark 16:9-20

What do they mean by "earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses"?

- **Major**
  - Papyri
  - Uncials
  - Miniscules

- **Minor**
  - Other Ancient Translations (e.g., Syriac, Coptic)
  - Ancient Church Fathers
  - Greek Lectionaries (liturgical documents)

The Woman Caught in Adultery

[[53¹¹ Καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ,ᵇ
8 Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸ Ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν.
2 Ὄρθρου δὲ πάλιν παρεγένετο εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ πᾶς ὁ
λαὸς ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς.ᵃ
3 ἄγουσιν δὲ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι γυναῖκα ἐπὶ
μοιχείᾳ κατειλημμένην καὶ στήσαντες αὐτὴν ἐν μέσῳ
4 λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Διδάσκαλε, αὕτη ἡ γυνὴ κατείληπται
ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ μοιχευομένη· 5 ἐν δὲ τῷ νόμῳ ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς
ἐνετείλατο τὰς τοιαύτας λιθάζειν. σὺ οὖν τί λέγεις;ᵇ
6 τοῦτο¹ δὲ ἔλεγον πειράζοντες αὐτόν, ἵνα ἔχωσιν κατ-
ηγορεῖν αὐτοῦ¹.ᶜ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κάτω κύψας τῷ δακτύλῳ
κατέγραφεν εἰς τὴν γῆν. 7 ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες
αὐτόν², ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς³, Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος

¹¹ 7.53–8.11 {A} omit 7.53–8.11 𝔭⁶⁶ 𝔭⁷⁵ ℵ Aᵛⁱᵈ B Cᵛⁱᵈ L N T W Δ Θ Ψ 0141 33 157
565 1241 1333* 1424ˢ Lect itᵇ, ˡ, ᵍ syrᶜ, ˢ, ᵖ, ʰ (but added in some late mss. of syrᵖ, ʰ)
copˢᵃ, ᵖᵇᵒ, ᵇᵒᵖᵗ, ᵃᶜʰ² aᶜʰᵐˢˢ geo slav Diatessaron Origen Chrysostom Cyril; Tertullian
Cyprian mssᵃᶜᶜ. ᵗᵒ ᴬᵘᵍᵘˢᵗⁱⁿᵉ ∥ include 7.53–8.11 D 28 180 205 579 597 700 892 1006 1010
1071 1243 1292 1342 (1424ᵐᵍ) 1505 Byz [(F gap 7.28–8.10) G H M] itᵃᵘʳ, ᶜ, ᵈ, ᵉ, ff², ʲ, ᵣˡ vg
syrᵖᵃˡ copᵇᵒᵐˢˢ slavᵐˢˢⁱⁿᵍ Apostolic Constitutionsᵛⁱᵈ mssᵃᶜᶜ. ᵗᵒ ᴰⁱᵈʸᵐᵘˢ; Ambrosiaster Ambrose
Pacian Rufinus Greek and Latin mssᵃᶜᶜ. ᵗᵒ ᴶᵉʳᵒᵐᵉ Jerome Faustus-Milevis Augustine ∥
include 7.53–8.11 with asterisks or obeli (E include so only 8.2–11) S 1424ᵐᵍ ∥ include
only 8.3–11 (Λ with asterisks) l 184 l 211 l 387 l 514 l 751 l 773 l 890 l 1780 (these
lectionaries are in footnotes 1-7 of chapter 8 = Lectᵖᵗ) ∥ include 7.53–8.11 after Lk
21.38 f¹³, after Jn 7.36 225, after Jn 21.25 (with critical note) l; include 8.3-11 after Lk
24.53 1333ᶜ

¹ 6 {A} (see also footnote 11 of chapter 7) τοῦτο … κατηγορεῖν αὐτοῦ with minor
variants E G H S Λ f¹ f¹³ 28 180 205 579 597 700 892 1006 1010 1243 1292 1342
1424ᵐᵍ 1505 Lect ᵖᵗ itᵃᵘʳ, ᶜ, ᵉ, ff², ʲ, ᵣˡ vg syrᵖᵃˡ copᵇᵒᵐˢ eth slavᵐˢˢⁿᵍ Augustine ∥ omit D M
1071 itᵈ (but D 1071 itᵈ add this sentence after 8.4 αὐτῷ, M after 8.11 [sic])

² 7 {A} (see footnote 11 of chapter 7) αὐτόν E G H M S Λ f¹ f¹³ 28 180 205 579
597 700 892 1006 1010 1243 1292 1342 1424ᵐᵍ 1505 Lect itᵃᵘʳ, ᶜ, ᵉ, ff², ʲ, ᵣˡ vg syrᵖᵃˡ eth
slavᵐˢˢᵐᵍ ∥ omit D 1071 itᵈ

³ 7 {A} (see footnote 11 of chapter 7) αὐτοῖς D S Λ f¹ f¹³ 28 205 597 700 892 1006

∥53 P: AD Seg ∥ S: TR FC
ᵇ8.2 P: Seg VP Lu NJB ∥5 P: FC VP ᶜ6 P: NIV

1 Lk 21.37   2 καθίσας … αὐτοὺς Mt 26.55   5 ἐν … λιθάζειν Lv 20.10; Dt 22.22   6 τοῦτο …
αὐτοῦ Mt 22.15   7 Ὁ … λίθον Dt 17.7

So how do we determine which manuscripts have the best readings?

1. **Priority to the earliest and most reliable manuscripts**
   - Papyri (most made between 200s and 500s)
   - Early uncial codexes like Sinaiticus (300s) and Vaticanus (300s)
2. **Shorter reading is to be preferred.**
   - Copyists would have been more tempted to elaborate or add.
3. **More difficult (grammatically or theologically) reading is to be preferred.**
   - Copyists would have been more tempted to smooth out grammatically or theologically difficult passages.

What about translation?

- Starting in the late 300s, the Western Church used the Latin Vulgate, translated by Jerome from Greek and Hebrew, up to the early 1600s.
- Old English versions of portions of the Bible exist starting in the 7th century.
- In the mid-1300s, John Wycliffe (according to tradition) is the first to translate the whole Bible based on the Vulgate.
- In the early-1500s, Martin Luther produces a German language Bible from the Hebrew and Greek texts.
- Shortly after, William Tyndale is the first to produce an English translation (partial) based on the Hebrew and Greek texts.
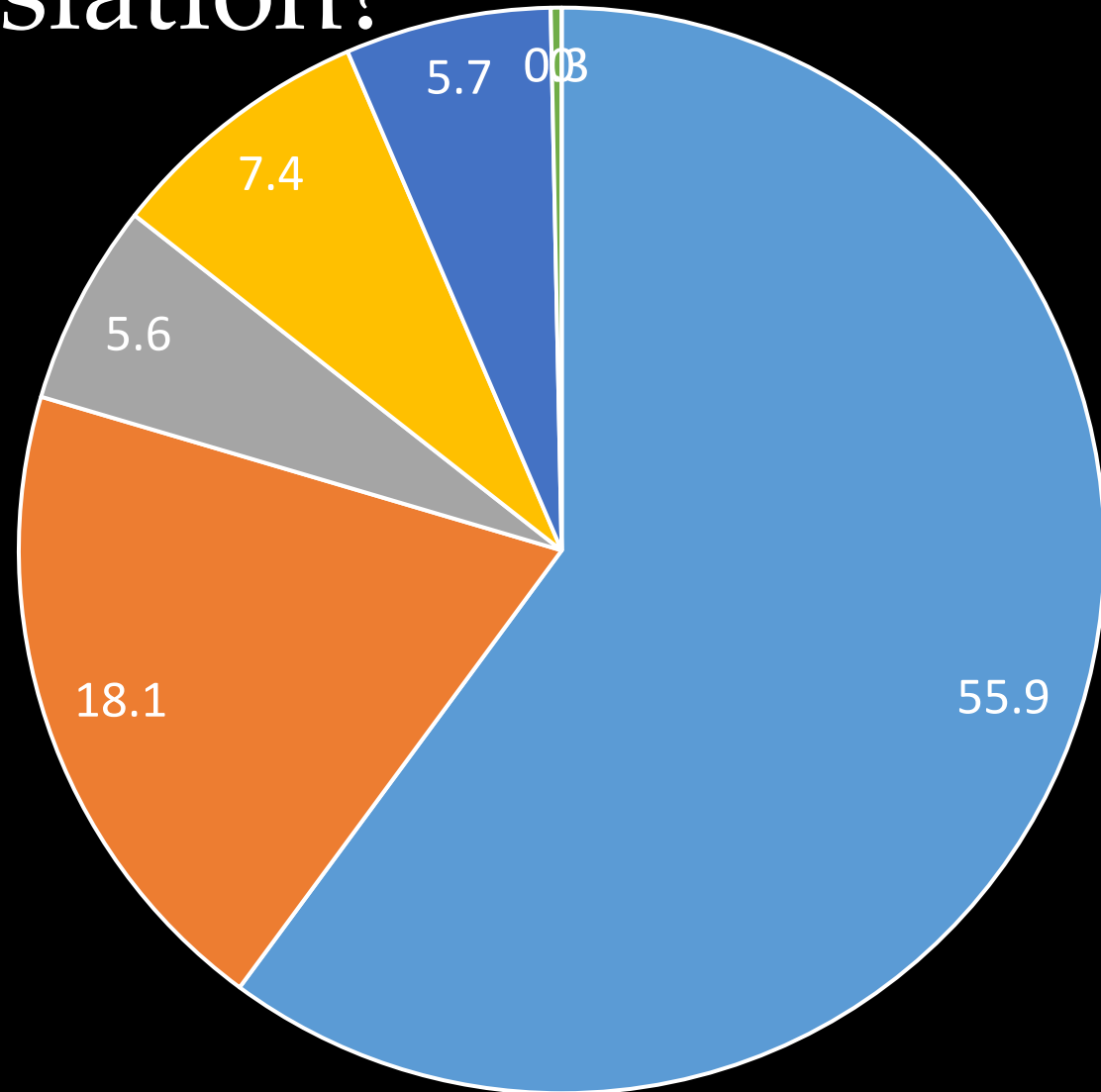
What about translation?

- In the early 1600s, King James I commissioned a new English translation mostly for political reasons. The translation was heavily influenced by Tyndale's translation (called *The Great Bible*).

- KJV becomes the basis for the *Revised Version* (1880s), the *American Standard Bible* (1901), the *Revised Standard Version* (1952), and the *English Standard Version (2001)*.

- What Bible translations do people use now?

What about translation?

What translation of the Bible do you most often read? (2012 General Social Survey)

5.7   0.3

7.4

5.6

18.1

55.9

KJV   NIV   NAB   NRSV   Living Bible   ESV   Other

What about translation?

What translation gets read allowed during church services?
(2012 National Congregations Study)

0

7.5

2.3

4.4

36.3

9.5

17.4

7.1
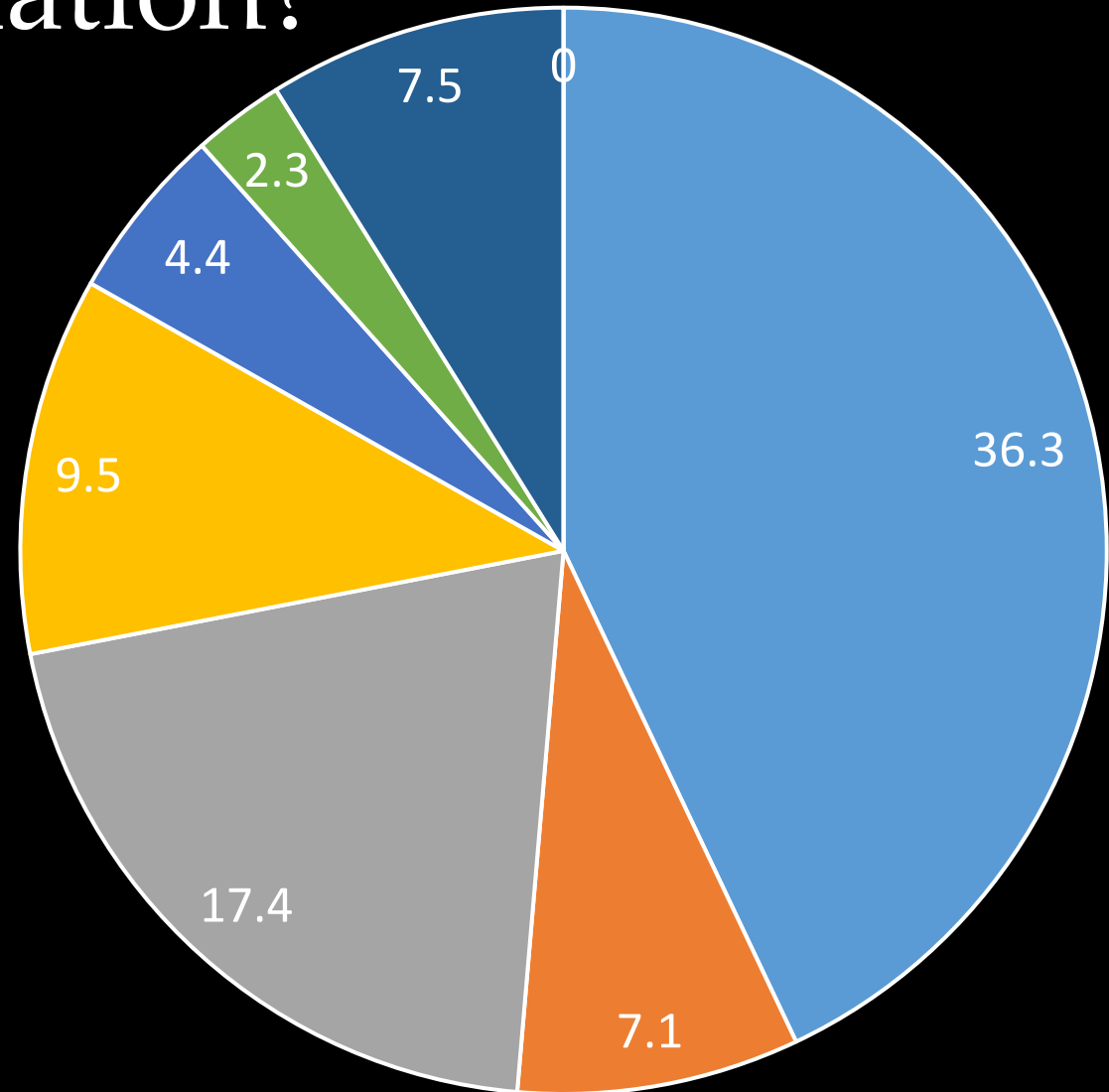
☐ KJV ☐ NKJV ☐ NIV ☐ NRSV ☐ NAB ☐ ESV ☐ Multiple Translations ☐ Other

What about translation?

What translation gets put into pews or underneath chairs? (2012 National Congregations Study)

- KJV 41.4
- NKJV 7.1
- NIV 26.1
- NRSV 8.9
- HCSB 1.4
- ESV 1.6
- Multiple Translations 4.8
- Other 0

What about translation?

Which Bible Translation Do You Use Primarily?
(American Bible Society data, 2011-2017)

What about translation?

Google Searches for "ESV" or "NIV" from 2004-2018

ESV: (United States)   NIV: (United States)
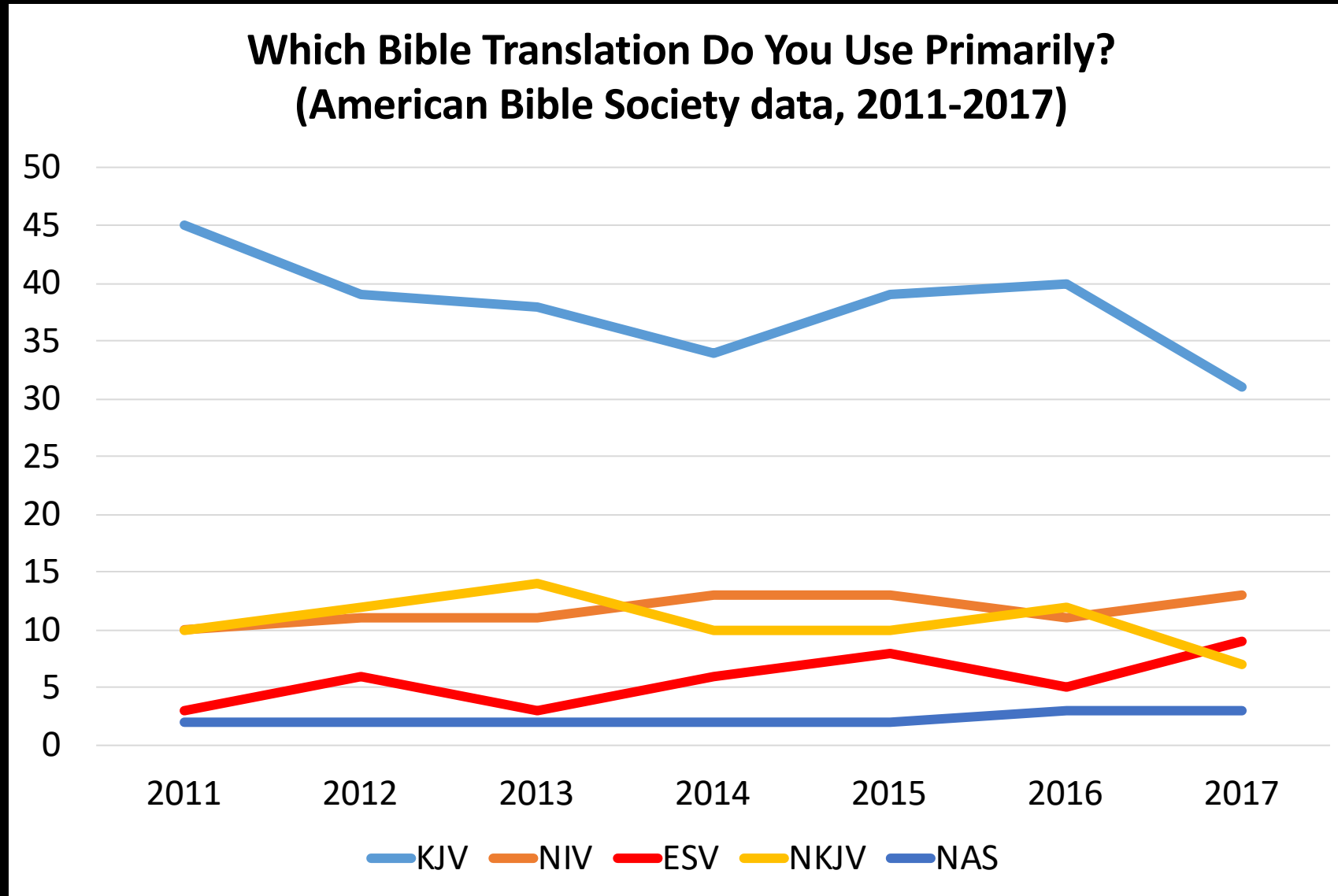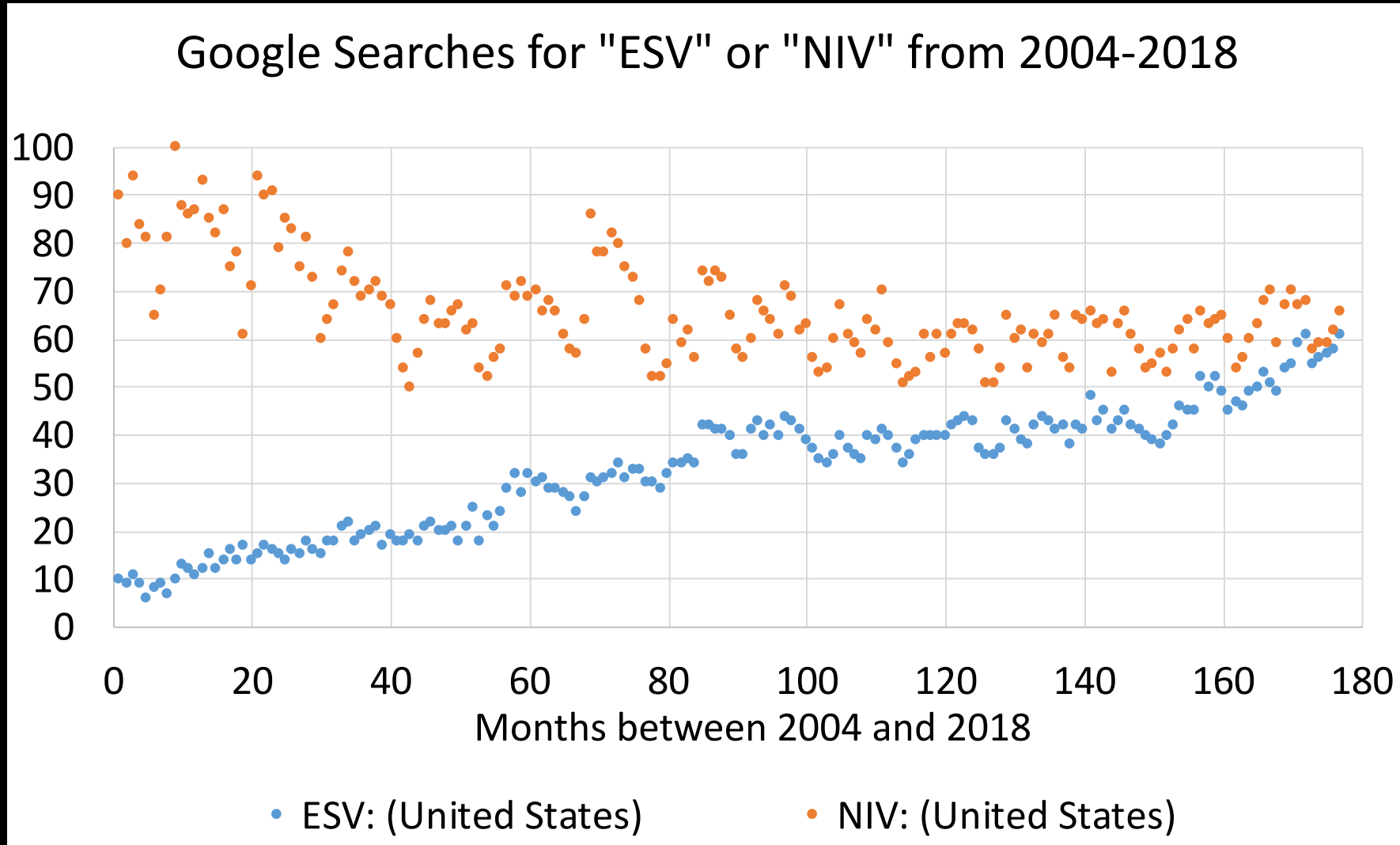
How to think about Bible translations
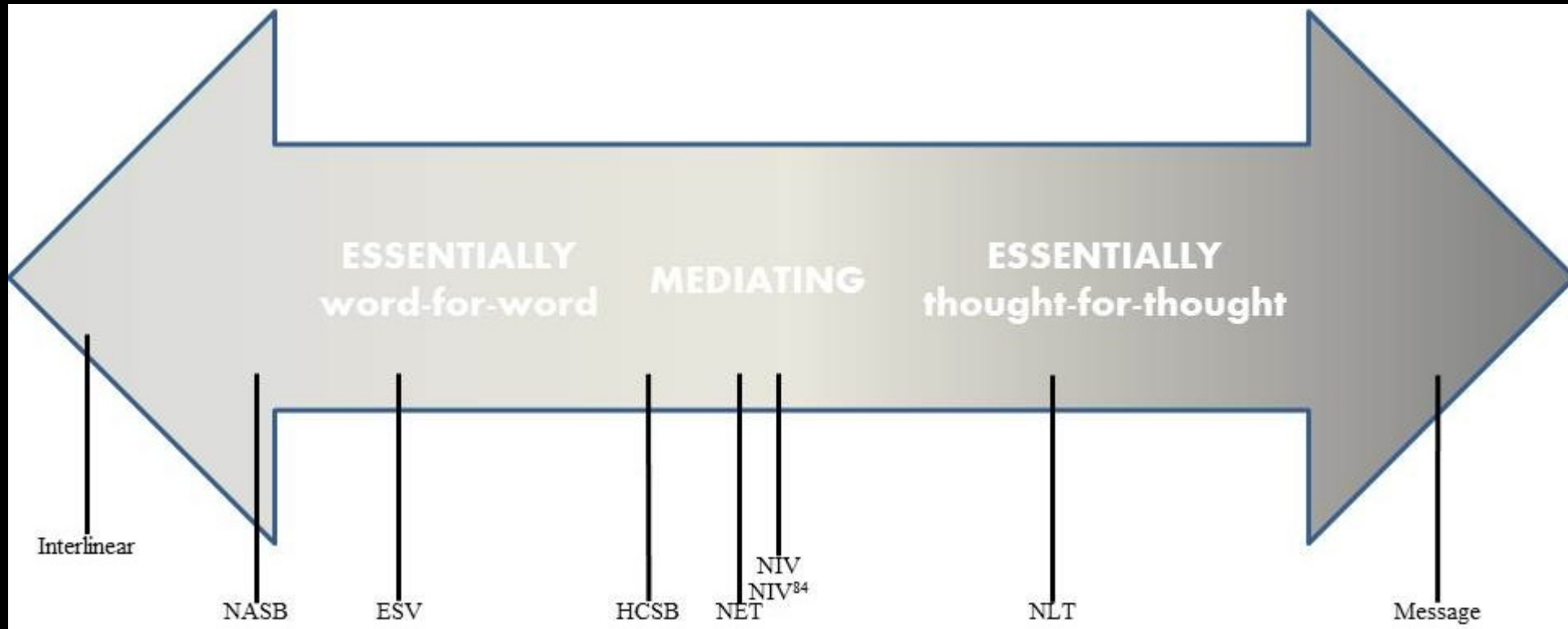
ESSENTIALLY word-for-word | MEDIATING | ESSENTIALLY thought-for-thought

Interlinear | NASB | ESV | HCSB | NET | NIV NIV⁸⁴ | NLT | Message

Does "most literal" or "word for word" always mean most accurate?

> **18** Τοῦ δὲ [f]Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ ἡ [g]γένεσις οὕτως ἦν. [h]μνηστευθείσης τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ Μαρίας τῷ Ἰωσήφ, πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοὺς εὑρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου. **19** Ἰωσὴφ δὲ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς, δίκαιος ὢν καὶ μὴ θέλων αὐτὴν [i]δειγματίσαι, ἐβουλήθη λάθρᾳ ἀπολῦσαι αὐτήν.

The now of Jesus Christ birth thus was. Having been betrothed, the mother his Mary to Joseph, before to come together them, she was found in the belly having from Spirit Holy. Joseph now the husband of her, righteous was and not wishing her to disgrace publicly, intentioned to privately send her away.

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Point: Decisions always have to be made in translation to adjust for word order and idiom.

Decisions also have to be made based on theology

- **Romans 3:22**
  - Does *pisteos Iesou Christou* refer to "faith in Jesus Christ" or to "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ"? Both work grammatically. (NET and ESV choose different things)

- **Paul's teaching about households in Ephesians 5**
  - Does it begin with v. 21 (suggesting that Christian households are characterized by mutual submission? Or does it begin with v. 22 (suggesting Christian households are to be characterized by wives submitting only). Both work grammatically. (ESV, NAS, HCSB chooses something different from NIV, RSV, NLV)

How to think about choosing a Bible translation

- Could choose according to principle.
- Could choose according to specific need/occasion.
  - Need something more literal? NASB
  - Need something more readable? NIV or NLT
- Could choose according to community.
- Sam's recommendation:
  - Choose whichever *mainstream* version you'll actually read and apply to your life.