

Various Translations of Psalm 23^a

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Contents

1	Introduction	3
1.1	List of Abbreviations	4
I	Translations in the Tyndale-King James Tradition	5
2	The King James Version (1611)	5
3	The Revised Version (1885)	6
4	American Standard Version (1901)	7
5	Revised Standard Version (1952)	8
6	New Revised Standard Version (1989)	9
7	New American Standard (1971)	10
8	New King James Version (1982)	11
II	Catholic Translations	12
9	Rheims-Douay (1610)	12
10	Knox (1950)	13
11	The Jerusalem Bible (1966)	14
12	The New Jerusalem Bible (1985)	15
13	The New American Bible (1970)	16
III	Jewish Translations	17

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14	The JPS's Masoretic Translation (1917)	17
15	The Tanakh (1985)	18
IV	British Translations	19
16	The New English Bible (1970)	19
17	Revised English Bible (1989)	20
V	Conservative Protestant Translations	21
18	Amplified Bible (1965)	21
19	New International Version (1978)	22
20	English Standard Version (2001)	23
21	The New Living Translation (1996)	24
VI	Modern Language and Easy-to-Read Translations	25
22	Moffatt (1926)	25
23	Smith-Goodspeed (1927)	26
24	Basic English Bible (1949)	27
25	New Berkeley Version (1969)	28
26	Today's English Version (1976)	29
27	Contemporary English Version (1995)	30
28	New Century Version (1991)	31
VII	Paraphrases	32
29	The Living Bible (1971)	32
30	The Message (2002)	33
VIII	Other	34
31	Septuagint Bible by Charles Thomson (1808)	34

1 Introduction

There are about two dozen English-language Bibles currently in circulation in the States and about as many have previously been in circulation, but few of us ever examine more than our favorite translation. In this pamphlet, we present thirty English-language translations of Psalm 23. This familiar chapter was chosen so the reader can focus on the differences among the translations.

A translator of Psalm 23 has many choices:

- the source documents to use, e.g., previous English-language translations or Hebrew or Greek texts,
- the words and punctuation to use,
- whether to present a literal translation or paraphrase,
- whether to include alternative translations in footnotes,
- the text's format, e.g., verse or prose,
- for verse format, line breaking and line indentation,
- the psalm's heading to use,
- the placement of verse numbers if any,
- capitalization of pronouns, and
- use of gender-neutral pronouns.

All these different choices are illustrated in the translations below except for the use of gender-neutral pronouns.

Each translation is presented on an individual page. Formatting is similar to the sources I found. For example, lines are indented and stanzas are indicated. Verse numbers or their absence is maintained. Some items have been modified to provide some consistency. For example, the same font and similar font sizes are used everywhere. Some translations' particular verse number formatting is not maintained. The author asks forgiveness for these minor changes and for any mistakes.

Each translation is preceded by a short introduction including

- its name,
- the year or years it was released,
- the purpose for its creation,
- its source material (“ancestors”),
- the organization responsible for the translation or the authors writing the translation,
- some noteworthy details,
- a bibliographic reference to the Bible from which the author obtained the translation's text, and

- sometimes a copyright statement.

Items not known to the author are so noted; more zealous readers may be able to find this information themselves.

Readers desiring more information about a particular translation should read the preface to the translation usually found at the beginning of a Bible. Readers wanting information about a variety of translations will find that Bruce Metzger's *The Bible in Translation* [Met01] provides an easy-to-read overview of both ancient translations and English translations. Much of the information presented here comes from this book, written by a major player in the Revised Standard Version (RSV), the Reader's Digest Bible, and the New RSV.

There are many different ways to compare and contrast translations. We have chosen to organize them chronologically within the following groups:

- translations in the Tyndale-King James tradition, e.g., the Revised Standard Version,
- Catholic translations,
- Jewish translations,
- British translations,
- conservative translations,
- modern language and easy-to-read translations,
- paraphrases, and
- other translations.

1.1 List of Abbreviations

These abbreviations occur below.

KJ: King James

KJV: King James Version

NT: New Testament

OT: Old Testament

Part I

Translations in the Tyndale-King James Tradition

2 The King James Version (1611)

Name: King James Version (KJV)

Year: 1611

Purpose: Revise the Bishops' Bible, not "make a new translation, nor yet to make a bad one a good one... but to make a good one better, or out of many good ones one principal good one."

Ancestors: Bishops' Bible plus Tyndale, Matthew, Coverdale, Great, and Geneva Bibles

Organizer: King James I of England

Noteworthy:

- The translation claims to be a revision.
- This was the first translation where some workers were paid.
- Although it is sometimes called the Authorised Version, it was never authorized by ecclesiastical or legislative sanction—unlike prior and later translations.
- Wording and punctuation have changed repeatedly since 1611.
- Its vocabulary relies on Tyndale. Its harmony relies on Coverdale. Its scholarship and accuracy relies on the Geneva Bible.
- The Codex Alexandrinus, an ancient Greek source, arrived in England twenty years later.

Translation Source: [Kin03]

PSALM 23

David's confidence in God's grace.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me to lie down in ^agreen pastures: he leadeth me beside the ^bstill waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD ^cfor ever.

^a Heb. *pastures of tender grass.* ^b Heb. *waters of quietness.* ^c Heb. *to length of days.*

3 The Revised Version (1885)

Name: Revised Version (RV)

Year: NT: 1881; entire Bible: 1885; Bible + Apocrypha: 1895

Purpose: Incorporate ancient sources and slightly revise the language and punctuation as needed.

Ancestors: Tyndale-KJ tradition; KJV plus original Greek text ¿plus Hebrew texts?

Organizer: Church of England

Noteworthy:

- The translation sold over two million copies, demonstrating a demand for new translations.
- The translation is sometimes called the fourth Authorised Version.
- Copyrighted.
- The American Committee served a subordinate role, later publishing the American Standard Version.

Translation Source: [Rev56]

23

A Psalm of David.

1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside the ^astill waters.

3 He restoreth my soul:

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of ^bthe shadow of death,

I will fear no evil; for thou art with me:

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 ^cSurely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life:

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD ^dfor ever.

^a Heb. *waters of rest.* ^b Or, *deep darkness* (and so elsewhere) ^c Or, *Only* ^d Heb. *for length of days.*

4 American Standard Version (1901)

Name: American Standard Version (ASV)

Year: 1901

Purpose: Incorporate American preferences into the (British) Revised Version.

Ancestors: Tyndale-KJ tradition; Revised Version

Organizer: the American Committee involved in the British-motivated Revised Version

Noteworthy:

- The American Committee participated in the making of the Revised Version, but its decisions were subject to the organizing British Committee's decisions. In the 1885 printing of the Revised Version, the American Committee's preferences not accepted by the British Committee were printed as an appendix.
- Some printings not sponsored by the American Committee were released before 1901 so the American Committee copyrighted the translation to avoid changes.
- Introduced euphemisms and "Jehovah" for LORD.

Translation Source: [Com01]

Jehovah the Psalmist's Shepherd.

A Psalm of David.

23 Jehovah is my shepherd; I shall not want.
² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside ^astill waters.
³ He restoreth my soul:
He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of ^bthe shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.
⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou hast anointed my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
⁶ ^cSurely goodness and lovingkindness shall follow me all the days of my
life;
And I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah ^dfor ever.

^a Heb. *waters of rest* ^b Or, *deep darkness* (and so elsewhere) ^c Or, *only* ^d Heb. *for length of days*.

5 Revised Standard Version (1952)

Name: Revised Standard Version (RSV)

Year: NT: 1946, 1971; entire Bible (including OT): 1952; Bible + Apocrypha: 1973, 1975

Purpose: Incorporate ancient sources and scholarship, update words and punctuation, and (later) to provide an ecumenical text.

Ancestors: Tyndale-KJ tradition; American Standard Version, ancient sources including Masoretic text (OT) and Greek NT

Organizer: International Council of Religious Education, later the National Council of Churches

Noteworthy:

- First Bible for over half a millennium accepted by Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Eastern Orthodox sects.
- Thomas Nelson and Sons received exclusive publishing rights for ten years in exchange for advance payments of royalties.
- Extensively marketed to churches.
- Copies were burned as Communist inspired.
- A British variant was published in 1973.
- Copyrighted.

Translation Source: [Rev52]

A Psalm of David

23 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want;
2 he makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters;^a
3 he restores my soul.^b
He leads me in paths of righteousness^c
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^d
I fear no evil;
for thou art with me;
thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me.
5 Thou preparest a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
thou anointest my head with oil,
my cup overflows.
6 Surely^e goodness and mercy^f shall follow me
all the days of my life;
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
for ever.^g

^a Heb *the waters of rest* ^b Or *life* ^c Or *right paths* ^d Or *the valley of deep darkness* ^e Or *Only*
^f Or *kindness* ^g Or *as long as I live*

6 New Revised Standard Version (1989)

Name: New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

Year: 1990; British: 1995

Purpose: Incorporate findings from Dead Sea Scrolls and early Greek papyrus fragments, update language, and eliminate masculine pronouns.

Ancestors: Tyndale-KJ tradition; ancient texts plus translations in Tyndale-KJ tradition

Organizer: National Council of Churches

Noteworthy:

- Most ecumenical English translation; accepted by Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox, and Slavonic sects.

Translation Source: [Coo01]

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PSALM 23

A Psalm of David.

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;^a
3 he restores my soul.^b
He leads me in right paths^c
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^d
I fear no evil;
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff—
they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely^e goodness and mercy^f shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.^g

^a Heb *waters of rest* ^b Or *life* ^c Or *paths of righteousness* ^d Or *the valley of the shadow of death*
^e Or *Only* ^f Or *kindness* ^g Heb *for length of days*

7 New American Standard (1971)

Name: New American Standard Bible (NASB)

Year: 1971; updated: 1995

Purpose: Promote Christian education, evangelism, and Bible translation.

Ancestors: ASV

Organizer: Lockman Foundation of La Habra, California

Noteworthy:

- Replaced “Jehovah” with LORD.
- Used anonymous translators.
- Claimed to use Nestle Greek NT, but the claim is doubtful.

Translation Source: [New77]

Psalm 23

The LORD, the Psalmist’s Shepherd.

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD is my shepherd,

I shall not want.

2 He makes me to lie down in green pastures;

He leads me beside quite waters.

3 He restores my soul;

He guides me in the paths of righteousness

For His name’s sake.

4 Even though I walk through the ^avalley of the shadow of death,

I fear no ^bevil; for Thou art with me;

Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

5 Thou dost prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;

Thou hast anointed my head with oil;

My cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life,

And I will ^cdwell in the house of the LORD forever.

^a Or, *valley of deep darkness* ^b Or, *harm* ^c Another reading is *return to*

8 New King James Version (1982)

Name: New King James Version (NKJV)

Year: NT: 1979; entire Bible 1982

Purpose: Update language and punctuation of KJV.

Ancestors: Tyndale-KJ tradition; KJV (1769) plus *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (OT) and Scrivener Greek Text (NT)

Organizer: Thomas Nelson Publishers

Noteworthy:

- Unlike the KJV, the translation capitalizes pronouns referring to God.
- Rejected ancient sources used by almost all other translations as less reliable than the sources used.

Translation Source: [New83]

PSALM 23

Psalm of the Divine Shepherd

A Psalm of David.

THE LORD *is* my shepherd;
I shall not ^awant.
2 He makes me to lie down in ^bgreen pastures;
He leads me beside the still waters.
3 He restores my soul;
He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.
4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD
^cForever.

^a lack ^b Lit. *pastures of tender grass* ^c Lit. *For length of days*

Part II

Catholic Translations

9 Rheims-Douay (1610)

Name: Rheims-Douay Bible

Year: NT: 1582; entire Bible: 1610

Purpose: Provide an English-language Bible for British Catholics, replacing the translations in the Tyndale-KJ tradition and the Genevan Bible.

Ancestors: Vulgate

Organizer: English (Oxonian) Catholics at the Catholic seminary in Douay and Rheims, France

Noteworthy:

- The Old Testament was translated by 1582 but funds to print it were not available until 1609–1610. It is the “Douay” portion of the translation’s name.
- The translation uses a literalistic translation from the Latin.

Translation Source: [Rhe09]

PSALM 22.

Dominus regit me.

God’s spiritual benefits to faithful souls.

1 A psalm for David.

THE ^aLord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. 2 He hath set me in a place of pasture.

He hath brought me up, on the water of refreshment: 3 he hath converted my soul.

He hath led me on paths of justice, for his own name’s sake.

4 For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils, for thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.

5 Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me.

Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebriateth *me*, how goodly is it!

6 And thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

And that I may dwell in the house of the Lord unto length of days.

PSALM 22. Ver. 1. *Ruleth me*. In Hebrew, *Is my shepherd*, viz., to feed, guide, and govern me.

10 Knox (1950)

Name: unknown

Year: 1950

Purpose: unknown

Ancestors: Vulgate plus Hebrew and Greek Originals

Organizer: unknown (British Catholic?); “authorized by the hierarchy of England and Wales and the hierarchy of Scotland”

Noteworthy:

- Note the Vulgate chapter numbering. The Vulgate’s Psalm 9 is equivalent to others’ Psalms 9 and 10.

Translation Source: [Kno50]

22

(23)

(A psalm. Of David.)

2 THE LORD is my shepherd; how can I lack anything? He gives me a resting-place where
3 there is green pasture, leads me out to the cool water’s brink, refreshed and content. As in
4 honour pledged, by sure paths he leads me; dark be the valley about my path, hurt I fear
5 none while he is with me; thy rod, thy crook are my comfort. Envious my foes watch,
6 while thou dost spread a banquet for me; richly thou dost anoint my head with oil, well
filled my cup. All my life thy loving favour pursues me; through the long years the Lord’s
house shall be my dwelling-place.

11 The Jerusalem Bible (1966)

Name: The Jerusalem Bible

Year: 1966

Purpose: Incorporate notes from the French Jerusalem Bible as well as to use modern language.

Ancestors: ancient sources plus some influence of the French *La Sainte Bible traduite en français sous la direction de l'École biblique de Jérusalem*

Organizer: British Catholic Biblical Association

Noteworthy:

- First Catholic translation not based on St. Jerome's Vulgate.
- First translation to incorporate learnings from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Translation Source: [Jer68]

PSALM 23

v 22

The Good Shepherd

Psalm Of David

1 Yahweh is my shepherd,
I lack nothing.

2 In meadows of green grass he lets me lie.
To the waters of repose he leads me;

3 there he revives my soul.

He guides me by paths of virtue
for the sake of his name.

4 Though I pass through a gloomy valley,
I fear no harm;

beside me your rod and your staff
are there, to hearten me.

5 You prepare a table before me
under the eyes of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil,
my cup brims over.

6 Ah, how goodness and kindness pursue me,
every day of my life;
my home, the house of Yahweh,
as long as I live!

12 The New Jerusalem Bible (1985)

Name: The New Jerusalem Bible

Year: 1985

Purpose: Improve the Jerusalem Bible. Incorporate the new 1973 edition of the French-language *Bible de Jérusalem*. Improve the wording. Reduce the influence of masculine singular pronouns.

Ancestors: ancient Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts

Organizer: unknown (British)

Translation Source: [New85b]

PSALM 23

v 22

The good Shepherd^a

Psalm Of David

1 Yahweh is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 In grassy meadows he lets me lie.

By tranquil streams he leads me

3 to restore my spirit.

He guides me in paths of saving justice

as befits his name.

4 Even were I to walk in a ravine as dark as death

I should fear no danger, for you are at my side.^b

Your staff and your crook are there to soothe me.

5 You prepare a table for me

under the eyes of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;^c

my cup brims over.

6 Kindness and faithful love pursue me

every day of my life.

I make my home^d in the house of Yahweh

for all time to come.

23 a. The care of God for the upright, illustrated by two images: the shepherd, vv. 1–4, and the host of the messianic banquet, vv. 5–6. **b.** ‘for you are’ a later addition to the text, probably to harmonise with 1 S 22:23, and to stress the allusion to David. The original text was probably: ‘at my side are your crook and your staff...’ **c.** Gesture of hospitality in the East, 92:10; 133:2; Qo 9:8; Am 6:6; Lk 7:46. **d.** ‘my home’ versions: ‘I shall return to’ Hebr. (a simple correction of vowels).

13 The New American Bible (1970)

Name: The New American Bible (NAB)

Year: 1970; revised NT: 1986

Purpose: Provide an American translation for Roman Catholics from the original languages

Ancestors: ancient texts including the Masoretic Hebrew, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Hebrew underlying the Latin Psalter of the Church

Organizer: Bishops' Committee of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

Noteworthy:

- Isaiah 7.14 contains a word which is either translated “virgin” or “young woman”. The NAB chose the former, annotating, “The church has always followed St. Matthew in seeing the transcendent fulfillment of this verse in Christ and his Virgin Mother. The prophet need not have known the full force latent in his own words; and some Catholic writers has sought a preliminary and partial fulfillment in the conception and birth of the future King Hezekiah, whose mother, at the time Isaiah spoke, would have been a young, unmarried woman (Hebrew, *almah*). The Holy Spirit was preparing, however, for another Nativity which alone could fulfill the divinely given terms of Immanuel’s mission, and in which the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God was to fulfill also the words of this prophecy in the integral sense intended by the divine Wisdom” [Met01, p. 131].

Translation Source: [New90]

PSALM 23

The Lord, Shepherd and Host

¹ A psalm of David.

I

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 In verdant pastures he gives me repose;

Beside restful waters he leads me;

3 he refreshes my soul.

He guides me in right paths

for his name’s sake.

4 Even though I walk in the dark valley

I fear no evil; for you are at my side

With your rod and your staff

that give me courage.

II

5 You spread the table before me

in the sight of my foes;

You anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

6 Only goodness and kindness follow me

all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

for years to come.

Part III

Jewish Translations

14 The JPS's Masoretic Translation (1917)

Name: *The Holy Scriptures According to the Masoretic Text*

Year: 1917

Purpose: Provide an English-language, non-Christian translation.

Ancestors: unknown Jewish sources plus Christian translations in the Tyndale-KJ family

Organizer: Jewish Publication Society

Translation Source: [Mas17]

23 A Psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;

He leadeth me beside the still waters.

3 He restoreth my soul;

He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,

For Thou art with me;

Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.

5 Thou preparast a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;

Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

15 The Tanakh (1985)

Name: The Tanakh

Year: Torah: 1962; Prophets: 1978; Writings: 1982; entire OT: 1985; Hebrew + English: 1999

Purpose: Update language and incorporate ancient documents.

Ancestors: Masoretic Text (1917)

Organizer: Jewish Publication Society

Noteworthy:

- *Tanakh* or *TNK* abbreviates *Torah* (Law), *Nebi'im* (Prophets), and *Kethubim* (Writings).

Translation Source: [Jew99]

23 A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd;

I lack nothing.

² He makes me lie down in green pastures;

He leads me to ^a-water in places of repose;^{-a}

³He renews my life;

He guides me in right paths

as befits His name.

⁴ Though I walk through ^b-a valley of deepest darkness^{-b}

I fear no harm, for You are with me;

Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.

⁵ You spread a table for me in full view of my enemies;

You anoint my head with oil;

my drink is abundant.

⁶ Only goodness and steadfast love shall pursue me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

for many long years.

a-a *Others* “still waters.” b-b *Others* “the valley of the shadow of death.”

Part IV

British Translations

16 The New English Bible (1970)

Name: The New English Bible (NEB)

Year: NT: 1961; entire Bible: 1970

Purpose: unknown

Ancestors: ancient texts

Organizers: General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, major British Protestant denominations, Oxford and Cambridge University Presses

Noteworthy:

- As with the KJV, members of Oxford and Cambridge were much involved.
- Note the strange line indentation.

Translation Source: [New70]

23

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall want nothing.
- 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
and leads me beside the waters of peace;
- 3 he renews life within me,
and for his name's sake guides me in the right path.
- 4 Even though I walk through a valley dark as death
I fear no evil, for thou art with me,
thy staff and thy crook are my comfort.
- 5 Thou spreadest a table for me in the sight of my enemies;
thou hast richly bathed my head with oil,
and my cup runs over.
- 6 Goodness and love unfailing, these will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
my whole life long.

17 Revised English Bible (1989)

Name: Revised English Bible (REB)

Year: 1989

Purpose: Update the text and update pronouns to avoid “thou”, “thy”, and masculine pronouns.

Ancestors: NEB?

Organizers: same as for the NEB plus Roman Catholics and some others

Translation Source: [Rev89]

23 *A psalm: for David*
1 THE LORD is my shepherd; I lack for nothing.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me to water where I may rest;
3 he revives my spirit;
for his name's sake he guides me in the right paths.
4 Even were I to walk through a valley of deepest darkness
I should fear no harm, for you are with me;
your shepherd's staff and crook afford me comfort.
5 You spread a table for me in the presence of my enemies;
you have richly anointed my head with oil,
and my cup brims over.
6 Goodness and love unfailing will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD
throughout the years to come.

Part V

Conservative Protestant Translations

18 Amplified Bible (1965)

Name: Amplified Bible

Year: NT: 1958; OT: 1962, 1964; entire Bible: 1965

Purpose: Provide a word-for-word translation using modern English plus additional clarifying words where the original cannot be exactly translated into English.

Ancestors: Hebrew and Greek texts

Organizers: Lockman Foundation of La Habra, California

Noteworthy:

- Notation separates word-for-word translations from additional clarifying words. For example, *italicized words* are additional conjunctions not in the original text. [Bracketed words] clarify or comment but are not present in the original text.

Translation Source: [Amp87]

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PSALM 23

A Psalm of David

THE LORD is my Shepherd [to feed, guide, and shield me], I shall not lack.

2 He makes me lie down in [fresh, tender] green pastures; He leads me beside the still *and* restful waters. [Rev. 7:17.]

3 He refreshes *and* restores my life (my self); He leads me in the paths of righteousness [uprightness and right standing with Him—not for my earning it, but] for His name’s sake.

4 Yes, though I walk through the [deep, sunless] valley of the shadow of death, I fear *or* dread no evil, for You are with me; Your rod [to protect] and Your staff [to guide], they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with ^aoil; my [brimming] cup runs over.

6 Surely *or* only goodness, mercy *and* unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life, and through the length of my days the house of the Lord [and His presence] shall be my dwelling place.

^a It is difficult for those living in a temperate climate to appreciate, but it was customary in hot climates to anoint the body to protect it from excessive perspiration. When mixed with perfume, the oil imparted a delightfully refreshing and invigorating sensation. Athletes anointed their bodies as a matter of course before running a race. As the body, therefore, anointed with oil was refreshed, invigorated, and better fitted for action, so the Lord would anoint His “sheep” with the Holy Spirit, Whom oil symbolizes, to fit them to engage more freely in His service and run in the way He directs—in heavenly fellowship with Him.

19 New International Version (1978)

Name: New International Version (NIV)

Year: NT: 1973; entire Bible: 1978

Purpose: Provide a translation alternative to the RSV for conservative Christians.

Ancestors: Masoretic text (OT) and various Greek texts (NT)

Organizers: Synod of the Christian Reformed Church and the National Association of Evangelicals

Noteworthy:

- The translation was sponsored by the New York Bible Society (later the International Bible Society) and Zondervan Bible Publishers.
- Some words and phrases in the original text were omitted or added, e.g., [Jesus] “opened his mouth and” omitted from Mt 5.2 and “now” added to 1 Pt 4.6.

Translation Source: [New85a]

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Psalm 23

A psalm of David.

1 The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name’s sake.

4 Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,^a
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

^a Or *through the darkest valley*

20 English Standard Version (2001)

Name: English Standard Version (ESV)

Year: 2001

Purpose: Update the language in the RSV, minimizing the inclusive language introduced in the New RSV. Correct a few errors in the RSV.

Ancestors: 1971 RSV plus *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (second edition, 1983, OT), *Greek New Testament* (fourth corrected edition) by United Bible Society, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (second edition) edited by Nestle and Aland.

Organizers: ¿Crossway Bibles?

Noteworthy:

- The publisher is located in the same town as the publishers of the Living Bible.

Translation Source: [Eng02]

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Psalm 23:1-6

A Psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.^a
3 He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness^b
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,^c
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely^d goodness and mercy^e shall follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell^f in the house of the LORD
forever.^g

^a Hebrew *beside waters of rest* ^b Or *in right paths* ^c Or *the valley of deep darkness* ^d Or *only* ^e Or *steadfast love* ^f Or *shall return to dwell* ^g Hebrew *for length of days*

21 The New Living Translation (1996)

Name: The New Living Translation

Year: 1996, 2004

Purpose: Produce an easily understood translation for Evangelicals incorporating the latest biblical scholarship and a mixture of word-for-word translation and dynamic equivalence.

Ancestors: 1971 RSV plus *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1977, OT), *Greek New Testament* (fourth corrected edition) by United Bible Society, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (second edition) edited by Nestle and Aland.

Organizers: Tyndale House Publishers

Noteworthy:

- This is a translation unlike the Living Bible, which is a paraphrase.

Translation Source: [New04]

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23 *A psalm of David.*

- 1 The LORD is my shepherd;
I have all that I need.
- 2 He lets me rest in green meadows;
he leads me beside peaceful streams.
- 3 He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths,
bringing honor to his name.
- 4 Even when I walk
through the darkest valley,^a
I will not be afraid,
for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff
protect and comfort me.
- 5 You prepare a feast for me
in the presence of my enemies.
You honor me by anointing my head with oil.
My cup overflows with blessings.
- 6 Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the LORD
forever.

23:4 Or *the dark valley of death.*

Part VI

Modern Language and Easy-to-Read Translations

22 Moffatt (1926)

Name: Moffatt

Year: NT: 1913; OT: 1926

Purpose: unknown

Ancestors: von Soden's Greek NT; unknown OT source

Organizer: none?

Noteworthy:

- Moffatt sometimes rearranged the text.
- Von Soden's Greek NT was later regarded as defective, affecting the quality of the NT translation.
- Occasionally, Moffatt took liberties with the text, e.g., introducing Enoch into 1 Peter 3.19.

Translation Source: [Mof26]

23

A song of David.

1 The Eternal shepherds me, I lack for nothing;
2 he makes lie in meadows green,
he leads me to refreshing streams,
3 and revives life in me.

He guides me by true paths,
as he himself is true.

4 My road may run through a glen of gloom,
but I fear no harm, for thou art beside me;
thy club, thy staff—they give me courage.

5 Thou art my host, spreading a feast for me,
while my foes have to look on!
Thou hast poured oil upon my head,
my cup is brimming over;

6 yes, and all through my life
Goodness and Kindness wait on me,
the Eternal's guest,
within his household evermore.

23 Smith-Goodspeed (1927)

Name: An American Translation

Year: NT: 1923; entire Bible: 1927; Bible + Apocrypha: 1939

Purpose: Provide a translation permitting continuous reading, suitable for American readers.

Ancestors: Westcott and Hort's Greek NT, Masoretic Hebrew text (OT)

Authors: NT: Edgar J. Goodspeed and OT editor: J. M. Powis Smith

Noteworthy:

- Goodspeed, Smith, and the publisher were from the University of Chicago.

Translation Source: [SG35]

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

[A Psalm of David]

- 23 The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want;
2 In green pastures he makes me lie down;
Beside refreshing waters he leads me.
3 He gives me new life;
He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk in the darkest valley,
I fear no harm; for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff—they comfort me.
5 Thou layest a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup overflows.
6 Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the LORD to an old age.

24 Basic English Bible (1949)

Name: the Basic English Bible

Year: NT: 1941; entire Bible: 1949

Purpose: Provide a translation using Basic English.

Ancestors: unknown

Organizer: Orthological Institute of Cambridge

Noteworthy:

- Basic English has 850 words including only twenty verbs and has a simplified grammar. It was developed by Charles Kay Ogden of Cambridge University to ease learning English, e.g., to create books for international use.
- Fifty special “Bible” words and one hundred poetic words were added to the basic vocabulary to produce this translation.

Translation Source: [Met01, p. 164]

Note: The author does not have access to an original copy of the Basic English Bible.

Instead we reproduce the text from [Met01, p. 164]. Unlike the other translations presented in this document, the formatting, e.g., prose and no verse numbers, may not reflect the actual text.

The Lord takes care of us as his sheep; I will not be without any good thing. He makes a resting-place for me in the green fields: he is my guide by the quiet waters. He gives new life to my soul: he is my guide in the ways of righteousness because of his name. Yes, though I go through the valley of deep shade, I will have no fear of evil; for you are with me, your rod and your support are my comfort. You make ready a table for me in front of my haters: you put oil on my head; my cup is overflowing. Truly, blessing and mercy will be with me all the days of my life; and I will have a place in the house of the Lord all my days.

25 New Berkeley Version (1969)

Name: New Berkeley Version in Modern English

Year: 1969

Purpose: Provide a word-for-word translation in the tradition of the Authorized (King James) Version while updating the language.

Ancestors: Berkeley Version with reference to “the Greek.”

Organizer: unknown

Translation Source: [New73]

Shepherd, Guide and Host

A Psalm of David

23 THE LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not lack;
² He makes me to lie down in green pastures;
³ He leads me beside restful water; He revives my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.
⁴ Yes, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no harm; for Thou art with me:
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.
⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my adver-
saries;
Thou anointed my head with oil; my cup runs over.
⁶ Surely, goodness and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of
my life
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

26 Today's English Version (1976)

Name: Today's English Version (TEV), Good News Bible, Good News Translation

Year: 1976, 1992

Purpose: Provide a translation for those who acquired English as a second language.

Ancestors: unknown

Organizer: American Bible Society

Noteworthy:

- Was originally published as *Good News for Modern Man*.
- Not a word-for-word translation but uses “dynamic equivalence” or “functional equivalence” to translate ideas.
- Avoids slang sometimes found in paraphrases.

Translation Source: [Tod76]

The LORD Our Shepherd^a

23 The LORD is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
2 He lets me rest in fields of green grass
and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.
3 He gives me new strength.
He guides me in the right paths,
as he has promised.
4 Even if I go through the deepest darkness,
I will not be afraid, LORD,
for you are with me.
Your shepherd's rod and staff protect me.
5 You prepare a banquet for me,
where all my enemies can see me;
you welcome me as an honoured guest
and fill my cup to the brim.
6 I know that your goodness and love will be with me all my life;
and your house will be my home as long as I live.

^a HEBREW TITLE: A psalm by David.

27 Contemporary English Version (1995)

Name: Contemporary English Version (CEV)

Year: 1995

Purpose: Provide a simpler translation than TEV for children in first through third grades.
Optimized for listening, not reading.

Ancestors: original texts

Organizer: American Bible Society

Translation Source: [Con95]

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Psalm 23

[A psalm by David.]

The Good Shepherd

1 You, LORD, are my shepherd.

I will never be in need.

2 You let me rest in fields

of green grass.

You lead me to streams

of peaceful water,

3 and you refresh my life.

You are true to your name,

and you lead me

along the right paths.

4 I may walk through valleys

as dark as death,

but I won't be afraid.

You are with me,

and your shepherd's rod^a

makes me feel safe.

5 You treat me to a feast,

while my enemies watch.

You honor me as your guest,

and you fill my cup

until it overflows.

6 Your kindness and love

will always be with me

each day of my life,

and I will live forever

in your house, LORD.

^a **23.4** *shepherd's rod*: The Hebrew text mentions two objects carried by the shepherd: a rod to defend against wild animals and a long pole to guide and control the sheep.

28 New Century Version (1991)

Name: New Century Version

Year: 1991

Purpose: Provide an easy-to-read translation carefully following the Hebrew and Greek originals.

Ancestors: United Bible Societies' Greek text (third edition) and "the latest edition" of the Biblia Hebraica.

Organizer: unknown

Translation Source: [New01]

Noteworthy:

- Produced by people with translation experience gained with the NIV, NASB, and NKJV.
- Vocabulary choice based on *The Living Word Vocabulary*, which is the standard for *The World Book Encyclopedia*.
- Claims to use inclusive pronouns are used, but some footnotes do not.
- Some words, expressions, and even rhetorical questions have been rewritten to use more familiar English.

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The Lord the Shepherd

A psalm of David.

23 The LORD is my shepherd;
I have everything I need.
2 He lets me rest in green pastures.
He leads me to calm water.
3 He gives me new strength.
He leads me on paths that are right
for the good of his name.
4 Even if I walk through a very dark valley,
I will not be afraid,
because you are with me.
Your rod and your walking stick^a comfort me.
5 You prepare a meal for me
in front of my enemies.
You pour oil on my head;^b
you fill my cup to overflowing.
6 Surely your goodness and love will be with me
all my life,
and I will live in the house of the LORD forever.

23:4 walking stick The stick a shepherd uses to guide and protect his sheep. **23:5 pour oil...head** This can mean that God gave him great wealth and blessed him.

Part VII

Paraphrases

29 The Living Bible (1971)

Name: The Living Bible (LB)

Year: NT: 1967; entire Bible: 1971

Purpose: Help the author's children understand the Scriptures during family devotionals.

Ancestors: ASV

Author: Kenneth N. Taylor

Noteworthy:

- Taylor wrote the paraphrase while commuting to and from his office at Moody Press.
- In the mid-1970s, almost half of all Bibles sold were Living Bibles.
- The New Living Translation was released in 1996. It is a translation for conservatives.

Translation Source: [Liv71]

23 Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I have everything I need!
^{2,3} He lets me rest in the meadow grass and leads me beside the quiet streams.
He restores my failing health. He helps me do what honors him the most.

⁴ Even when walking through the dark valley of death I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me, guarding, guiding all the way.^a

⁵ You provide delicious food for me in the presence of my enemies. You have welcomed me as your guest;^b blessings overflow!

⁶ Your goodness and unfailing kindness shall be with me all of my life, and afterwards I will live with you forever in your home.

23a Literally, "Your rod and your staff comfort me." 23b Literally, "You have anointed my head with oil, my cup runs over."

30 The Message (2002)

Name: The Message

Year: NT: 1993; OT Wisdom: 1997; OT Prophets: 2000; entire Bible: 2002

Purpose: Use language similar to that used in ordinary life.

Ancestors: unknown

Author: Eugene H. Peterson

Noteworthy:

- Peterson was a pastor of Christ Our King Presbyterian Church in Bel Air, Maryland.

Translation Source: [Pet02]

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A DAVID PSALM

23 GOD, my shepherd!
I don't need a thing.
You have bedded me down in lush meadows,
you find me quiet pools to drink from.

True to your word,
you let me catch my breath
and send me in the right direction.

Even when the way goes through
Death Valley,
I'm not afraid
when you walk at my side.
Your trusty shepherd's crook
makes me feel secure.

You serve me a six-course dinner
right in front of my enemies.
You revive my drooping head;
my cup brims with blessing.

Your beauty and love chase after me
every day of my life.
I'm back home in the house of GOD
for the rest of my life.

Part VIII

Other

31 Septuagint Bible by Charles Thomson (1808)

Name: Charles Thomson's Bible

Year: 1808

Purpose: To make available the Septuagint in the English language.

Ancestors: for the OT, the Puritan Septuagint derived from John Field's 1665 Cambridge text; for the NT, Textus Receptus?

Author: Charles Thomson

Noteworthy:

- The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Old Testament, frequently used by the early Christians. New Testament writers almost always quote from the Septuagint, not the Hebrew texts.
- Thomson is intimately connected to the beginnings of the United States. He served as a tutor of Latin and Greek at Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Academy. He served as secretary of the Continental Congress from 1774 to 1789.
- It is unclear to the author if Thomson or Muses is responsible for the formatting below.

Translation Source: [Mus54]

XXIII

A Psalm by David

THE Lord is my shepherd, I shall want nothing. [2] In a verdant pasture He hath fixed my abode. He hath fed me by gently flowing water [3] and restored my soul. He hath led me in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. [4] For though I walk amidst the shades of death: I will fear no ills, because Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff have been my comfort. [5] Thou hast spread a table before me; in the presence of them who afflict me. With oil Thou hast anointed my head; and Thine exhilarating cup is the very best. [6] Thy mercy will surely follow me all the days of my life; and my dwelling shall be in the house of the Lord to length of days.

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Psalm 23, often just referred to as "The Lord is My Shepherd," is the most well known of all the psalms, and is revered by Christians and Jews alike. According to tradition, all of the psalms were written by King David, one of the earliest kings of Israel, a.k.a. the guy with the slingshot who took out Goliath. He reigned from around 1055-1015 BC, give or take a few decades (source). In other words, a really long time ago. Many modern scholars, however, believe the psalms were actually written by several different authors, but David's supposed authorship is all part of the tradi