

What translation of the Bible is the most literal and accurate and the least interpretive?

The most literal English translation of the Bible surely must be The Concordant Version. You can find samples of it at www.concordant.org. But I think most people will find it too literal for them, so literal that it does not read smoothly and is somewhat hard to understand.

The next most literal translation is perhaps the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901. The New American Standard Bible (NT 1963, whole Bible 1973) was intended to be an update of the ASV and was the Bible of choice for fundamentalist Protestants not wedded to the King James Version of 1611. That was until the New International Version (NIV) took its place as the

“conservative” alternative to the “liberal” Revised Standard Version (1946, 1952) and its update, the New Revised Standard Version (1989). The RSV is generally a word-for-word translation, and the NRSV is basically the RSV with attempts at gender neutrality.

I recommend three other translations on the word-for-word end of the spectrum. The first is the New Jerusalem Bible (1985). It has the most extensive notes of any English Bible, more cross references and is much more literal than the original 1966 Jerusalem Bible. It is the best study Bible in my opinion, and because of all its notes and other aids, it is the one I would take with me to lead a Bible study – if I could only

THE REV.
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and distribution. The Schocken Bible, translated by Everett Fox, tries very hard to reproduce the “rhythms, nuances and stylistic devices” of the original Hebrew and therefore is quite literal and at the same time, very

have one translation. I also recommend the new Jewish translation called Tanakh (1985), now available in a beautiful edition with Hebrew and English in parallel columns. The third still is in the process of publication

understandable (quite an accomplishment!). It also renders names in their Hebrew forms instead of the traditional English forms. Thus Moses is Moshe, Abraham is Avraham, Isaac is Yitzhak and Jacob is Yaakov. Personally, I love this translation!

I suggest comparing how different translations render the same passage and see what speaks to you. That is, after all, what the Bible is supposed to be: the Book through which God speaks to the hearts and minds of the faithful.

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