

# The Voice Bible translation focuses on dialogue

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (RNS)—The name "Christ" doesn't appear in [The Voice](#), a new translation of the Bible. Nor do words such as angel or apostle. Instead, angel is rendered as "messenger" and apostle as "emissary." Jesus Christ is "Jesus the Anointed One" or the "liberating king."

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That's a more accurate translation for modern American readers, said David Capes, lead scholar for The Voice, a complete edition released recently by publishing company Thomas Nelson. Capes says many people, even those who've gone to church for years, don't realize that the word "Christ" is a title.

"They think that Jesus is his first name and Christ is his last name," says Capes, who teaches the New Testament at [Houston Baptist University](#).

"Christ" is a transliteration of the Greek word *Christos*, the equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah—literally "Anointed One."

Seven years in the making, The Voice is the latest entry into the crowded field of English Bible translations.

Unlike the updated New International Version or the Common English Bible—both released last year—much of The Voice is formatted like a screenplay or novel. Translators cut out the "he said" and "they said" and focused on dialogue.

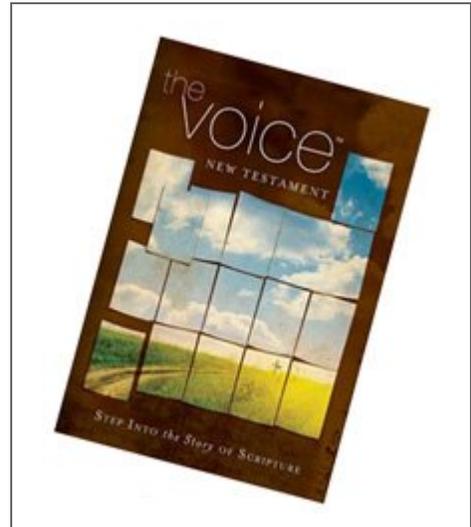
So, in Matthew 15, when Jesus walks on the water, scaring his followers, their reaction is immediate:

Disciple: "It's a ghost!"

Another Disciple: "A ghost? What will we do?"

Jesus: "Be still. It is I; you have nothing to fear."

"I hope we get people to see the Bible—not as an ancient text that's worn out—but as a story that they participate in and find their lives in," Capes said.



The title for The Voice came from the New Testament Gospel of John and from the Greek word logos. It's usually translated as "word" in verses such as John 1:1, which reads: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," in the New International Version, one of the most popular English translations.

In The Voice, that passage reads: "Before time itself was measured, the Voice was speaking. The Voice was and is God."

Frank Couch, the executive editor and publisher of The Voice said that translation better captures what logos means.

Mike Norris of [Franklin Road Baptist Church](#) in Murfreesboro, Tenn., disagrees. His congregation follows the belief that the King James Version

of the Bible is the most accurate translation in English. Other translations, he says, don't stick to a word-for-word translation.

"They say the other translations are easier to read and more accurate," he said. "We disagree."

Robert Creech, professor at Baylor University's [Truett Theological Seminary](#), contributed to The Voice. He readily acknowledges "no translation is perfect," but he defends the project—particularly against accusations that translators "took Christ out of the Bible."

"Jesus is clearly at the center of the entire project," Creech wrote recently in his blog.

"He is the center of Christian Scriptures and remains so in this translation. I am currently reading through The Voice for my daily Bible reading and worship. I'm finding it to be rich, and it is clear that Jesus, God's Son, is at the heart of the story."

*-With additional reporting by Heidi Hall of The Tennessean in Nashville and Managing Editor Ken Camp*