

INTRODUCTION TO THE LSV

The Literal Standard Version of The Holy Bible is a major revision of Young's Literal Translation (YLT). It maintains many of Robert Young's great contributions to the field of Bible translation and research. The relationship of the LSV to Young's Literal Translation is similar to that of the English Standard Version (ESV) to the Revised Standard Version or the New King James Version (NKJV) and Modern English Version (MEV) to the KJV. Young's Literal Translation was the most literal translation of The Holy Bible ever made into English up to this point for three key reasons: 1. Preservation of verb tenses, 2. Consistent word-for-word translation, and 3. General preservation of word order.

The LSV maintains the first two rules while having more flexibility with the third, which actually results in a more literal end-result. To understand why, you must first understand the nature of language. Language is a series of written and/or spoken words that convey meaning. Words and meaning are inherent to the definition of language. Furthermore, words have meaning by themselves, but also when structured together. A word by itself contains meaning but has no context. As grand an undertaking as the YLT was, it suffered from overdependence on word order at the expense of readability. This begs the question: if word order is maintained, but a sentence is unreadable, is a translation truly made? Languages not only differ in alphabet, but also in word order and sentence structure. For instance, in the Latin languages "I love you" would be structured "You I love." In the Germanic family it would be the former. In more complicated sentences, the differing

word order can result in unintelligible translation if the word order is maintained. Since context and sentence structure are as vital to translation as capturing the proper meaning of each word, the translators of the LSV have used these three key principles in translation: 1. Preservation of verb tenses, 2. Consistent word-for-word translation, and 3. Preservation of word order when readability is unimpacted, but revised word order when necessary for readability.

The use of these three principles in combination with other LSV peculiarities *discussed below* has resulted in the most literal translation of The Holy Bible into modern English, as well as the most distinctive.

Another translation, why?

There have been a slew of new English translations in the past half-century, which may cause some to wonder why the need for another. The translators agree with the premise that different translations can serve different demographics and different reading levels to maximize exposure to God's word. In this sense, the LSV is not a competitor to other excellent translations, but is complimentary. As the most literal modern English translation, the LSV is an excellent resource for deep and thoughtful Bible study and research, essentially an interlinear in terms of word-for-word translation, but arranged with English sentence structure. At the same time, some newer translations and revisions are twisting the Holy Scriptures in order to appease a postmodern, progressive, and secular readership. The LSV is a line in the sand against such perversion. Let God's word speak on its own terms. The LSV has been translated to improve upon what has come before and to ensure that God's word in English is passed along to the next generation.

The Name of God

One of the first things a reader may notice about the LSV is the use of the transliterated Tetragrammaton (“Yhwh”) instead of “Lord.” This decision was made on the premise that God did in fact reveal His Name as Yhwh to the Israelites of antiquity and many Scriptures emphasize the importance and sacredness of His Name. Replacing His actual Name with an English title does disservice to the Name and to the many Scriptures that emphasize the Name. At the same time, an impersonal title such as “Lord” may cause the reader to view an ever-present and very personal God impersonally. We want the reader to recognize that God has indeed given us His Name and we must respect His decision. Moreover, while a handful of translations use a pronounceable name, we thought it best to recognize that none of these names are universally accepted in scholarship and the original unpointed Hebrew did not provide us with the vowels. *Yahweh*, *Yehovah*, and others, are mere suggestions based on differing bodies of research. While “Yahweh” or something of very similar pronunciation seems the most likely, or at least as close as we may come at the present time, we have chosen to use the transliterated Tetragrammaton because it is more than likely accurate, represents the original unpointed Name, and leaves it to the reader to respectfully and thoughtfully pronounce the Name according to the research they are more personally persuaded by. At the same time, we have opted to retain many Anglicized names, including the Name of God’s Son, *Jesus*. Our reasons are threefold: *first*, it is already a name and not a title; *second*, the Name is in near-universal use in the English-speaking world; and *third*, it is a close transliteration of the original Greek *Iesous*.

Justified typographic alignment, the caesura mark, and other formatting peculiarities

The LSV may be the only English translation of The Holy Bible entirely formatted with justified typographic alignment throughout. This same format is maintained in poetic literature. While some readers may prefer paragraph breaks in narrative and line breaks in poetic portions for the purpose of readability, it was the decision of the translators to mimic the style of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek autographs in presenting God's word as a continuous text block. This decision wasn't arbitrary. In formatting the text this way, the LSV sets itself against the modern push for more and more formatting within the text, in favor of simplicity. Furthermore, the modern trend even extended to differentiating the words of Christ in red letters, as if God's word should be divided in such a way. The LSV is the polar opposite, regarding the entirety of Scripture as God-breathed, with its different genres of literature resting on a level playing field.

In summary, this formatting decision was made to mimic the style of the original autographs, elevate the entirety of Scripture as God-breathed, exclude the possibility of formatting passages in a way contrary to the author's intended delivery, and finally: it was made for ease of sharing in an era where digital reading is as common as reading from paper. Whether it be a printed copy, an eBook, an app, or some other format, the LSV is the easiest translation to copy and share ever made. In addition, justified typographic alignment throughout reduces the overall length of the printed and digital editions by a substantial margin, offering considerable cost savings to publishers and distributors seeking to get God's word into as many hands as possible.

Like alignment, the LSV adopts a more ancient approach to handle quotations. Recent translations continue the trend of deeply-nested quotation marks, which many readers find confusing. The original biblical autographs contained no punctuation denoting the opening or closing of a quotation, whereas many modern translations use alternating double quotes (“ ”) and single quotes (‘ ’) to nest quotes two, three, or even four levels deep. The LSV utilizes a middle approach between modern translations and the older English translations like the KJV, which didn’t use quotation marks at all. The LSV uses double quotes to denote the outermost quotation within a single chapter (similar to recent translations), and a capitalized opening word of a nested quote (similar to the King James Version). This lends itself to a simpler, more elegant, and easier-to-follow text.

For ease of readability, the LSV includes the double pipe (“||”) caesura mark to separate phrases within poetic portions of Scripture. The caesura mark was extensively used this way in ancient Greek, Latin, and English poetry. Verse numbers, periods, colons, semicolons, question marks, exclamation marks, and em dashes generally stand in for caesura marks in these passages if they are followed by a capital letter. Finally, clarifying, interpolated words are placed in unbolded brackets (“[]”) to make clear that they do not form part of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek text. Bolded double brackets (“[[]]”) are reserved for identifying words, phrases, and passages whose inclusion in the original text is disputed.

Definite articles and prepositions

The greatest flexibility in translation can be found in regard to definite articles and prepositions. The LSV is

generally more literal with definite articles than the YLT. Definite articles are often surrounded by brackets when they are missing from the original text (although not always—when the use of the definite article in English is demanded). When the definite article’s usage is flexible, the LSV generally defers to the original text in its absence or inclusion.

While the LSV doesn’t use a single word to consistently translate each preposition, the LSV does strive to maintain consistency in semantic range (in other words, a certain set of English prepositions are matched to each Bible language preposition, and the consistency is maintained wherever possible). This consistency results in the LSV being equally literal and readable.

Church, repentance, baptism, and age

The LSV chooses a literal translation even for “theologically loaded” words like ἐκκλησία (LSV: “assembly”), μετάνοια (LSV: “conversion”), βάπτισμα (LSV: “immersion”), and עוֹלָם and αἰών (LSV: “age” or “continuous,” depending on the context). These decisions were not made to disparage the common translations and were not made lightly. They were made to give the reader the best sense of what the original words mean in English, without the use of words that are the result of centuries of theological tradition. The frequent translation of metanoia as “repentance” has been particularly troubling to scholars who emphasize the fundamental differences in their etymology and meaning, with the original Greek word referring to persuasion, conversion, or a change of mind or belief.

Literal Standard Version

The Holy Bible in English, Literal Standard Version

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