

The LSB And Other Unusual Bible Questions

Servant

Slave

Yahweh

יהוה

Jehovah

δουλος

Dr. Steve Combs

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English Bible quotations in this book are from the King James Version, unless otherwise identified. This author considers the KJV to be completely accurate and the Word of God in the English language.

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SAMPLE PAGES

Dedication

This volume is dedicated to my precious, beloved wife, Suzanne, who gives me strength and encouragement and wisdom. She has stood by me for many years in spite of my many faults and failures. She has helped me get up when I fall and advised me on how to keep going. God knew what He was doing when He gave her to me.

Other Books written by the Author

The Fellowship of the Mystery: The Book of Ephesians
The Power of the Gospel: The Book of Romans
A Practical Theology of Bible Translating
The Translator's Grammar of the Textus Receptus
Election and Predestination
Every Word to Every People
Regions Beyond: The Task of Missions in the Twenty-First Century

Books Edited by the Author

The Greek New Testament
The Parallel Greek-English KJV New Testament

SAMPLE PAGES

Chapter One

What is the LSB?

Recently I received a communication from a friend asking me about John MacArthur's new Bible translation. This was a surprising question, because John MacArthur is not a Bible translator. Nevertheless, I learned that he was the prime mover of a new Bible translation. So, we must answer the questions, "What is the LSB," and "What has it done to the name of God?" Before we do, let's get a bit of information about John MacArthur for those who do not know him.

John MacArthur was born June 19, 1939. He attended Bob Jones University from 1957 to 1959. He graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 1963 from The Bible Institute of Los Angeles' new Talbot Theological Seminary in La Mirada, California. He received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Grace Graduate School in 1976 and from Talbot Theological Seminary in 1977. In 1964, he began to serve as associate pastor of Harry MacArthur Memorial Bible Church under his father, Jack MacArthur, the senior pastor. This church later changed its name to Calvary Bible Church and is in Burbank, California. In 1969, he was made senior pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, California, where he is still the pastor. Since 1977, he has spoken on the international radio program, *Grace to You*. In 1985, he became president of Master's University and in 1989 he was made president of the newly created Master's Seminary.¹

John MacArthur announced a new translation project in April 2020. MacArthur's favorite version of the Bible has long been the New American Standard Bible. The new translation is a revision of the NASB and the translators are professors at Master's University and Master's Seminary. The new translation is called *The Legacy Standard Version*. John MacArthur believes the NASB was the most accurate translation in English and the Legacy Standard Version (LSB) would make it even more accurate. That was his stated goal. Let's permit John MacArthur himself tell us about it.

We're just grateful to the Lord. Today, I did something really unusual. Something that is not only

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unusual for me but is unusual... I've never heard of anything like this.

As you know for, well, half a century, I've taught the word of God and I've always preached from the New American Standard Bible, the most accurate English translation. We have been given a gift, and that is we have been given the opportunity to take the New American Standard Bible, and to be licensed to do a translation work that will make that translation even more accurate.

Who's going to do that? Well, Dr. Abner Chou, who heads up the biblical studies department at The Master's University, and Will Varner, New Testament scholar, Jason Beals, another scholar, linguist from the University, and then from the Seminary, Joe Zhakevich, who is an Old Testament scholar, Harvard-trained in Hebrew and Semitic languages. Mark [Zhakevich] who's trained in New Testament Greek, and Paul Twiss. All six of these guys are going through the Hebrew and the Greek of the entire Bible, tightening this into a... can I say it this way... an already accurate, but more refined translation from the original Hebrew and the original Greek.

And it's basically driven toward two things: one is even greater accuracy and the other is greater consistency. This is an incredible thing that they're doing. I'm amazed at the work they're doing. I've seen some of it. What's going to come out of this is a new edition called the Legacy Standard Bible.

It's going to be the expositor's dream Bible, to have the absolutely accurate, consistent text to study, to preach, and it's... it's bound to be the most accurate, the most consistent, translation in English, and that is a gift to the church. And the Lockman Foundation that did the original work on the NASB has given us the opportunity to do that. So it's our men from the

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University and the Seminary who're doing this refining translation. ²

The NASB Legacy

The Legacy Standard Bible now has a web site, www.lsbible.org. According to the web site, one of the purposes of the LSB is to preserve the legacy of the NASB.

The Legacy Standard Bible is a translation that— at its core—seeks to be a window into the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. By translating individual words as consistently as possible within their various nuances, it allows the reader to discern the Author's intent. In this way, the refinements in the LSB also preserve the legacy of the NASB. ³

On the web site you can read the preface to the LSB and the Text of the LSB beginning in Genesis 1. The preface lists several goals of the LSB. Among them are the following.

1. ... "to uphold the style and translational choices of the NASB as much as possible."
2. ... "it has endeavored to follow through on the NASB's stated intent to be true to the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek ... the goal of this translation is to be a window into the original text."
3. "Within that goal, this revision has focused upon accuracy and consistency." ⁴

Basically, this new version is a warmed up and rebooted new New American Standard with a few changes in wording. Otherwise, it is the same NASB as the old New American Standard. If you caught it, they want this version to be a window into the "original text." They did not say the original *language*, but, rather, the original *text*. What do they mean by this? They could not mean *original* text, could they? The original writings are the first writings, and they no longer exist. The translator's explain what they mean later in the preface, and it is *not* the *original* text.

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The Legacy Standard Bible utilizes the latest edition of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* together with the most recent light from lexicography, cognate languages, and the Dead Sea Scrolls ... The Legacy Standard Bible has the benefit of a number of critical Greek texts in determining the best variant reading to translate. The 27th edition of Eberhard Nestle's *Novum Testamentum Graece*, supplemented by the 28th edition in the General Epistles, serve as the base text. On every variant reading the Society of Biblical Literature GNT as well as the Tyndale House GNT were also consulted.⁵

So, the Old Testament of the LSB came primarily from *Biblia Hebraica*, which was developed by Rudolph Kittel and first published in 1906. The basis for this first edition was the Second Rabbinical Bible of Jacob Ben Chayim, published in 1524/1525 by Daniel Bomberg. Over the next several centuries, the Ben Chayim OT was universally recognized as the definitive Hebrew text. The KJV translators used it as the basis of the King James Version.⁶ The second edition of *Biblia Hebraica* was published in 1913 with only slight differences from the first edition.⁷

However, the textual basis was different for the third edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, published in 1937. It abandoned the Ben Chayim text and used the Hebrew Leningrad manuscript as the basis of the text. The Leningrad manuscript is dated about 1008 AD. It is said to be a "Ben Asher" text and to have many similarities to the Ben Chayim text.

However, the third edition is not the current edition in use today. Editions after the third edition became known as *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* and have been replaced since 2004 with the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*. The *Stuttgartensia* incorporated variants from other sources, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls. The *Quinta* extends these variations further. The preface to the LSB does not make it clear which of these editions is in view by the statement "the latest edition of Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*." However, even if it is the third edition of *Biblia Hebraica*, which is the Leningrad manuscript, it is clear that the basis of the OT translation is not Ben Chayim and, therefore, not the same as the KJV. It is also clear that the LSB basis of OT translation goes beyond the

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Hebrew text to the Dead Sea Scrolls and other sources, which can easily cause more variations from the KJV.

For the New Testament, the “27th edition of Eberhard Nestle’s *Novum Testamentum Graece*, supplemented by the 28th edition in the General Epistles, serve as the base text.” This was also supplemented by several other Greek texts. The Nestle text used to be called the Nestle-Aland text because Kurt Aland helped edit it. Kurt Aland was also involved in editing the United Bible Societies Greek text. The UBS Greek text is in its 5th edition (2014) and the Nestle text is now in its 28th edition (2012). Both Greek New Testaments have an identical text.⁸

The Nestle and UBS Texts differ greatly from the Received Greek Text, from which the KJV was translated. There are thousands of word differences between them. Everett W. Fowler evaluated the third edition of the UBS Greek Text compared to the Received Text, which, as mentioned before, is the same text as the Nestle from the 26th through the 28th edition. He published the results in *Evaluating Versions of the New Testament*.⁹ Figure 1 enumerates the whole verses and partial verses missing from the UBS text as compared to the TR.

Number of whole verses missing in UBS	17
Omissions of whole and partial verses	1309

Fig. 1

The total word differences were categorized as follows. These do not include differences in spelling of proper nouns. The category of "words classed as different words" does not include "spelling variations shown in Greek lexicons as accepted ways of spelling words which have identical meanings, but which are not listed as different words (for example: labor=labour)."

Words in the Received Text omitted from UBS	3602
Words classed as different words	3146
Words in UBS not in the Received Text	976
Words spelled different, but not different words	950
Total word differences	8674

Fig. 2

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Why do we have such concern over individual words, even if some of them do not materially affect the translation? There are a total of 8,674 word differences between the Received Greek Text and the Nestle/UBS Greek Text. The New Testament was inspired in Greek and every Word of God is important. God, Himself, emphasizes the importance of every word. Either the Nestle Text is the Word of God or the Received Text is. They cannot both be His Word.

Therefore, based on the basic texts used for translating the NASB and the revision of it, the LSB, there should be serious errors in the English Bible text. Indeed, there is. In fact, the majority of the errors in the old New American Standard are present in the new Legacy Standard Version. Below is a list of some of the more serious errors. These are only a few of the many problems of the LSB New Testament text and they should be viewed as categories of errors, because the errors are many.

1. Matthew 1:2

LSB: Abraham **was the father of** Isaac, and Isaac **was the father of** Jacob

KJV: Abraham **begat** Isaac; and Isaac **begat** Jacob;

Comment: The translations “was the father of” and “begat” are both from the same Greek word, ἐγέννησε (egennese), which is a form of the word, γεννάω (gennaō). According to Thayer, γεννάω, means “of men who fathered children: to be born, to be begotten.”¹⁰ In other words, it means to give birth to. Strong’s defines it “to procreate.”¹¹ The translation “was the father of” is not a literal translation of the word. “Begat” is literal. The way the LSB rendered the Greek word is what we would call an English idiomatic translation. Unfortunately, it is not an idiomatic phrase that is very close to the meaning of the Greek word. The word in Greek, γεννάω, means to physically give birth to someone, that is, to be a person’s biological parent. We all know that, in English, to be someone’s father does not always mean to be that person’s biological father. You can be a stepfather or an adoptive father. Therefore, “was the father of” is not a very good translation. But, this is just the beginning of woes.

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2. Matthew 1:25

LSB: but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus

KJV: And knew her not till she had brought forth her **firstborn** son: and he called his name JESUS.

Comment: The LSB leaves out the theologically important word "firstborn." They also added the word "virgin," which isn't even *in their* Greek text. The KJV translated this sentence literally, but the LSB translated it idiomatically, in this case showing that the LSB is *not* an accurate translation. They used a method known as *dynamic equivalence*, which allows translators to use whatever words they think are necessary, whether or not they are in or implied by their Greek text.

3. Matthew 5:22

LSB: But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court

KJV: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother **without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment

Comment: The LSB leaves out the phrase "without a cause." Since Jesus Christ did get angry at his Jewish brethren, this omission judges Jesus Christ as a guilty sinner!

4. Matthew 5:44

LSB: But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

KJV: But I say unto you, Love your enemies, **bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you,** and pray for them which **despitefully use you, and persecute you;**

Comment: The LSB leaves out the whole highlighted section.

5. Matthew 12:6

LSB: But I say to you that **something** greater than the temple is here.

KJV: But I say unto you, That in this place is **one** greater than the temple.

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Comment: The words *something* and *one* in these verses are not in the Greek text.

1. The KJV puts the word *one* in italics to indicate that it is not in the Greek text, but the LSB leaves the word *something* in normal type.

2. The Nestle and the TR basically read the same in this verse. The KJV translators inserted the word *one*, so that the reader would understand that it refers to Christ. The LSB inserts the word *something* referring to ... what? Does this reveal something about the LSB (or NASB) translator's view of Christ?

3. The Greek text reads this way, "But I say to you, that a greater than the temple is in this place." The word $\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega\nu$ (*meizon*), a greater, is an adjective. Adjectives in Greek describe nouns, just as they do in English. What noun does this word describe? To help identify the noun being described, we must look for a noun that matches the grammar of the adjective. *Meizon* in Greek is Nominative case, singular number, and masculine gender. What other word matches this in the context? There is a word in verse 8, *Son*. This is the only word that matches the adjective in grammar in the immediate context. Therefore, the Greek, $\mu\epsilon\acute{\iota}\zeta\omega\nu$, "a greater," refers to Jesus, and it is accurate to insert the word *one*, referring to a *person*. The translation *something* is an insult to the Lord Jesus Christ. But, insulting the Lord Jesus is something the LSB excels at. Moreover, the Greek word is masculine gender, so it is not referring to some *thing*. It is referring to *some man*.

6. Matthew 17:21

LSB: [But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.]"

KJB: Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Comment: the LSB puts this verse in brackets implying it should not be there. It puts doubt in the mind of the reader that the verse is truly inspired. This make the verse entirely ineffective

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in the minds of some, because the Word of God requires faith to be effective (1 Thess. 2:13). Matthew 8:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Lk. 17:36; 23:37; John 5:4; 7:53-8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34 are also bracketed.

7. Matthew 27:35

LSB: And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots.

KJV: And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: **that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.**

Comments: The entire phrase is omitted, hiding from God's people that the event is a fulfillment of prophecy.

8. Mark 1:2, 3

LSB: As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, Who will prepare Your way; The voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make ready the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight.'"

KJV: As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

Comment: The LSB comment that the quotes here are from Isaiah the prophet is an open lie. The quotes are from both Isaiah and Malachi (Mal. 3:1; Is. 40:3). The KJV gets it right by attributing the quotes to "the prophets."

9. Mark 16:9-20 are in brackets in the LSB and an alternative short ending is given after that, also placed in brackets. "[*And they promptly reported all these instructions to Peter and his companions. And after that, Jesus Himself sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable preaching of eternal salvation.*]" The KJV has no brackets and omits the short ending. This short ending is in a strange style and vocabulary compared to the rest of the Book of Mark.

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10. Luke 1:28

LSB: And coming in, he said to her, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord *is* with you.”

KJV: And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: **blessed art thou among women.**

Comment: The marked phrase is omitted in the LSB and the first part of the verse is altered and “the angel” is omitted.

11. Luke 2:14

LSB: “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace **among men with whom He is pleased.**”

KJV: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, **good will toward men.**

Comment: This verse is doctrinally significant. it deals with God’s purpose in sending the Lord Jesus Christ to earth. These two marked translations come from the same basic Greek words, except that the word for good will, εὐδοκία, eudokia, is in the nominative case in the TR and in the genitive case in Nestle. Nevertheless, that difference does not justify the loose translation in the LSB. *The LSB wording is an interpretation, not a translation.* However, that is not the most important thing. What was God’s purpose in sending Christ? Was it to bless good men with whom He is pleased? Is God really looking for men who are doing well so He can reward them for their goodness and good works? Or, did He send Christ because of *His* good will toward men? Did Christ come to bring the grace of God and the gift of eternal life to men who need it? Men do not earn salvation by works. They are given salvation by grace through faith. The importance of this verse is show that Christ came to give God’s grace to sinners. “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

12. Luke 2:33

LSB: And **His father** and mother were marveling at the things which were being said about Him.

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KJV: And **Joseph** and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

Comment: Joseph was not Jesus' true father, yet the LSB says that he was. The KJV acknowledges his true origin, God. This verse is also doctrinally important.

13. Luke 23:38

LSB: Now there was also an inscription above Him, "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

KJV: And a superscription also **was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew**, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Comment: The highlighted words are omitted in the LSB. This is significant, in that, these words can be used to prove that Jesus' language on earth was Hebrew, not Aramaic.

14. John 1:18

LSB: No one has seen God at any time; **the only begotten God** who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

KJV: No man hath seen God at any time; **the only begotten Son**, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Comment: The difference between the highlighted phrases is very significant. Was Jesus truly a begotten God? Did God the Father bring Him into existence sometime in eternity past? If God begat Jesus as God, doesn't that make Him a lesser god than the Father? Doesn't that also mean He is separate from the Father and that the Godhead is really three Gods? Doesn't that make us polytheists? Aren't the Russellites (the JW's) right after all? ¹² The LSB reading is heresy of the grossest sort.

15. Acts 9:6

LSB: but rise up and enter the city, and it will be told you what you must do.

KJV: **And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.**

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Comment: The entire marked portion is omitted in the LSB. The omission of the portion hides the change in Paul's attitude. This is an illustration of man's repentance before God; a change of heart from "I will do what I want to do" to "Lord, what will you have me do?"

16. Acts 9:29

LSB: And he was talking and arguing with the Hellenistic *Jews*, but they were attempting to put him to death.

KJV: And he spake boldly **in the name of the Lord Jesus**, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him.

Comments: The LSB omits the highlighted portion. There are many verses where the LSB omits or puts in italics the name of the Lord. When the LSB puts a word in italics it is saying to the reader that it is doubtful that the word is in the original text. In these same verses the KJV includes the name of the Lord and does not put it in italics, because the word is found in the Textus Receptus.

17. 1 John 5:7

LSB: For there are three that bear witness:

KJV: For there are three that bear record **in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.**

Comment: The LSB omits the highlighted words. 1 John 5:7 is the greatest and clearest verse in the New Testament on the Trinity. Therefore, it is the most attacked verse in the New Testament. All popular modern versions attack these words. This includes the NKJV which casts doubt on the verse in a footnote. For an extended discussion see the authors book, *A Practical Theology of Bible Translating*, available from The Old Paths Publications.

These few examples will hopefully be enough to show the reader that the LSB is merely one more modern version that is built on corrupted copies of the original language texts. A great deal more could be added to this list. The last half of Romans 8:1 is omitted, the blood is missing from Colossians 1:14, Christ is omitted in 1 Cor. 9:1, 18 and other places, Jesus is omitted in 2 Cor 5:18 and other places, Lord is omitted in

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2 Cor. 4:10 and other places, and so on with many omissions and additions. You can find a good guide to check this and other versions on the web site for Global Bible Translators, www.bpsglobal.org/information-for-translators.html.

Distinctives of the LSB

The LSB boasts two unusual distinctives. One is that they profess to consistently translate the Greek word, δοῦλος, *doulos*, as *slave*, rather than as *servant* like the KJV does. They explain this in the preface to the LSB.

The NASB has already translated the Greek term *doulos* frequently as “slave” in the NT. The LSB made this consistent across the NT. This upholds the lexical definition of the term, its consistent translation, and its distinction from other terms that do denote a “servant.” Such consistency also highlights a biblical theological reality that Christians were slaves of sin but now are slaves of Christ (Rom 6:16–22). Biblical writers did not shy from this term because it condemned a wicked form of slavery (i.e., to sin, Satan, and death), highlighted the power of redemption, and affirmed one’s total submission to the lordship of Christ.¹³

The KJV translates δοῦλος as *servant*, *bond*, or *bondman*. John MacArthur and the translators of the LSB seem to believe that to translate this word as *servant* is an error. In a later chapter, we will take an in depth look at that question. We will find that the question is far less simple than that. There are more aspects to it. Slaves in the Roman Empire were captive bondmen with no free will. Do Christian servants fit the profile of a slave in the Roman Empire? We shall see in chapter four.

The other LSB distinctive has to do with the name of God in the Old Testament. The KJV translates the name Jehovah as LORD almost every time it is used in the Old Testament. The LSB has dispensed with LORD and uses the Hebrew name; or so they say. They say it is Yahweh

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rather than Jehovah. The LSB retains the English name for other Hebrew names of God. They do not transliterate the Hebrew name as they do for Jehovah. *Elohim* is translated *God*. *Adonai* is translated *Lord* and so on. Let's allow the LSB to speak for itself.

In the Scriptures, the name of God is significant and understandably so. Traditionally, the translation "God" renders the Hebrew word Elohim. Likewise, the word "Lord" is a translation of Adonai. In the LSB, God's covenant name is rendered as Yahweh. The meaning and implication of this name is God's self-deriving, ongoing, and never-ending existence. Exodus 3:14–15 shows that God Himself considered it important for His people to know His name. The effect of revealing God's name is His distinction from other gods and His expression of intimacy with the nation of Israel. Such a dynamic is a prevalent characteristic of the Scriptures as Yahweh appears in the OT over 6,800 times.¹⁴

It may seem reasonable to many to use the Hebrew name for the LORD in an English translation, rather than the traditional English name, LORD. The wonderful Hebrew name for the Lord God is made known to English speakers through Exodus 6:1-4. Nevertheless, putting the Hebrew name into English letters is not translating. When a foreign word is taken directly into another language in letters of the receiving language's alphabet, it is called transliterating. But, it not *translating*. Beyond that issue, there is another and greater issue. Is God's Hebrew name Yahweh or Jehovah? Which is the right pronunciation? This is a very controversial and complicated subject. We will investigate these issues in the next chapter.