

PSALM 119

BIBLE VERSIONS COMPARISON

I would like to start this with some questions. How do you view the Bible? Do you see it as a historical collection of views and information, the composition of men? Do you see it as the inspired word of God? If so, do you think God was able to preserve something reliable and authoritative, or is it just a vague remnant of something once reliable?

There are many aspects proving God has preserved His Word for us. It was important enough for Him to keep it for His people through the ages. Such proof is the topic for another time. Here I want to address the importance for those who know the Bible to be God's Word today. If you are already in the camp of faith, you need to think the translation issue through. What God gave us is like a legal document. As with any legal document, wording is everything! If you have rights, or not, is all in the wording. Any assumptions may leave you seriously disappointed on the Day of Judgment. Were the words you were counting on accurate, and did they apply to you? When we see the importance of close accuracy and reading, we will be diligent to get an accurate translation of His Word. If we find a certain translation takes a little thought to understand, it will not deter us from that "little thought". Our soul depends on getting it right!

One thing we know for sure, the devil will be working to lull us to sleep. He wants us to be in a false peace, thinking all is well, when we are in grave danger. He will try and slip in the works of those who don't care about accurately translating God's Word. If he can market it well, and put it in a sharp looking cover with the word "Bible" stamped on it, he will. What I want to cover, is one glimpse that shines light on the translation issue.

Psalms 119 is excellent for such an examination. There is next to no dispute about what the original text says. (Even with this, you will see, the enemy will try to confuse.) The psalm carries a message we need. We need the value system the writer had, to care about accuracy. As verse 103 points out:

103 How sweet are thy words unto my taste! *yea, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

I know the psalmist said God's Word was even sweeter than honey, but since he drew a comparison, examine honey for a minute. The psalmist would not have been happy getting drops of honey and sugar water mixed. The one gives health and protection from

corrupting bacteria, the other feeds the bacteria and promotes the decay. ALL God's words matter.

Further on we find:

123 Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness.

He went on to express intense desire for God's righteous words. No substitute would do.

This psalm was written as an alphabetical acrostic of eight verses to each Hebrew letter. Its foundation is based on the "covenantal" relationship God established with Israel, it structures itself on His statutes, decrees, laws, judgments, testimonies, words and other such legal terms. Accuracy in translating these terms cannot be "none-issue"! Translators must care whether or not they get it right, when itemizing these blessings of God!

Each word has specific differences of meaning that are important. We cannot randomly assign any multitude of words to each term. THEY ARE SPECIFIC. A good translation, done by men who realize the importance of keeping faithfully to the text, is a must.

In this review, I will cover five translations: The King James Version (KJV), Young's Literal Translation (YLT), The New International Version (NIV), The English Standard Version (ESV) and The Living Bible (TLB).

KING JAMES VERSION

OVERVIEW:

The translators made an understandable, accurate translation with minimal variation of the words. The more variations, the less we see the important structure.

The key words I chose are those relating to the law in some manner. There are other key words in this psalm, such as heart, mercy, grace, path and way, which I won't go into detailed examination of, but all should be translated consistently so we can see the structure and message intended.

1. *Torath* translated as:
law - 25; *Total usage* - 25 times
2. *Eduth* (its forms) translated as:
testimonies - 23; *Total usage* 23 times

3. *Mishpat* (its forms) translated as: judgments - 21; ordinances - 1; as thou usest to do (v. 132) - 1; *Total usage - 23 times*
 4. *Dvar* (its forms) translated as: word - 23; so shall I have - 1 (v. 42); *Total usage 24 times*
 5. *Huk* (its forms) translated as: statutes - 22; *Total usage - 22 times*
 6. *Mitzvoth* (its forms) translated as: commandments - 22; *Total usage 22 times*
 7. *Pikud* (its forms) translated as: precepts - 21; *Total usage - 21 times*
 8. *Imrath* (its forms) translated as: word - 19; *Total usage - 19 times*
- *Taam* (taste), v. 66
judgment - 1 (**Listed so there isn't a confusion, in this instance, with *Mishpat***)

HEBREW KEYWORD DEFINITIONS

1. Torah

Torah is used in the singular constructive form of “Torath”, throughout this psalm. Plural for “laws” is used elsewhere in scripture. The Torah has been taken to collectively refer to the first five books of the Bible, written by Moses. The root word indicates to throw or shoot, as with arrows. It implies direction so has been taken to mean instruction or doctrine. It is connected closely to the covenant God made with Israel and flows from that relationship. Due to this, it necessarily carries with it the strength of “law”. This is more than just instruction, directions or even just rules.

2. Eduth

Eduth are the “testimonies” of God. The root lies in bearing witness. If you will remember the two and a half tribes on the east of Jordan made an altar for a “witness” to the rest of the tribes that they served Yahweh. They named that altar “Ed” for “Witness” or “Testimony”. *Eduth* specifically bear witness of God. (Joshua 22:21-34)

3. Mishpat

Mishpat are judgments. The *Mishpat* of God are manifest in observing how God dealt with Israel as well as the instructions given to Moses as to how to deal with specific cases. *Strongs* defined it, “properly, a verdict”.

4. Dvar

Dvar or *Dabar* is, “a word; by implication, a matter or thing; adverbially - a cause”. As seen in comparison to *Imrath*, seen in this psalm, *Dvar* is more formal, like a written statement (as opposed to something like, “and he said” - which would use *Imrath* in one of its forms).

5. Huk

Huk encompasses the laws of creation, of nature round about us (Job 28:26). God sets the bounds of the sea, “thus far will it go and no further,” - that would be a *Huk*. We find Moses defining them in Exodus 18:16: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make *them* know the statutes of God, and his laws. The root of *Huk* means, “to cut and to portion”. This seems to be that of guiding into specifics for instruction and direction. Another form of the word, *Hukkah* denotes the laws of a particular festival or ritual, such as “the *Hukkah* of the Passover”, a code of instruction on how the Passover is to be observed.

6. Mitzvoth

Mitzvoth is the plural of *Mitzvah*. You might be familiar with the Jewish practice of “*bar-* or *bat-mitzvah*”. This means a “son- or daughter-of the commandment”. *Mitzvoth* are commandments.

7. Pikud

Pikud carries two primary ideas. The one being that of setting something in charge of, or over something else - having an oversight, given a charge. The other idea is punishment. In regards to God’s commandments, this would appear to define His commandments that give the oversight to right conduct or define evil conduct. As an earthly judge looks at certain laws to see how they apply to a specific case under investigation, so those laws act as the “oversight” to assist him in rendering the proper judgment and sentence in the case. Those laws would be the *Pikud*.

8. Imrath

Imrath is a form of *Amer*. This word is used so much in scripture. You will find it when you see, “And Yahweh said to Moses...” That “said” is the *Amer*.

1. The King James translators stayed consistent for *Torath*. All 25 times they translated it as “law”.
2. *Eduth* again proved consistent.
3. *Mishpat* had two variations but prevailed with “judgments”, which is the literal meaning. We will take a closer look at the “as thou usest to do” under *Verses of Note*, verse 132.
4. *Dvar* is a simple “word” but they remained consistent with one exception.
5. *Huk* remained consistent in every usage and “statutes” is a good rendering.
6. *Mitzvoth* remained consistent as “commandments”, and this is a perfect rendering.
7. *Pikud* was also consistent as “precepts”.
8. *Imrath* is another word for “word”. It remained consistent for the whole psalm.

VERSES OF NOTE:

- 58 I intreated thy favour with *my* whole heart: be merciful unto me according to thy word.

The word of issue with this verse is that translated as “be merciful”. It is the Chen which is the Hebrew word equating to “grace”. The Hebrew for “mercy” would be Checed. There is a subtle but important difference, though most English speakers probably wouldn’t notice any.

- 132 Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name.

*This verse has two points of interest. The first is that word “merciful”. It is that word for “grace” of Chen. The second point is how they translated the *Mishpat* as “thou usest to do”. More literally it reads, “as judgment to lovers of your name”. You can see the difficulty that would pose in understanding the phrase.*

SUMMARY:

It is an excellent translation of Psalm 119. The Psalms, in the KJV, have been tested for a readability level and they fell at a grade level of 3.91. If you have at least a 4th Grade reading ability, you can handle the KJV Psalms. After a close comparison of this psalm with the Hebrew Masoretic Text, I feel it is a reliable and honest English rendering.

YOUNG’S LITERAL TRANSLATION

OVERVIEW:

Young’s Literal Translation is an older version, from

1887. Young used the same manuscripts the King James Translators did. It is good for comparison to help get a better understanding of the text, though it is not perfect. It was the work of one man, as opposed to a large committee, like the King James Version. It is rougher reading since it is a literal translation (the drawback of literal translations).

1. *Torath* translated as:
law - 25; *Total usage* - 25 times
2. *Eduth* (its forms) translated as:
testimony(ies) - 23; *Total usage* 23 times
3. *Mishpat* (its forms) translated as:
judgment(s) - 21; ordinances - 1;
as customary (v. 132) - 1; *Total usage* - 23 times
4. *Dvar* (its forms) translated as:
word(s)- 24; *Total usage* 24 times
5. *Huk* (its forms) translated as:
statutes - 22; *Total usage* - 22 times
6. *Mitzvoth* (its forms) translated as:
command(s) - 21; precepts (v. 176) - 1;
Total usage 22 times
7. *Pikud* (its forms) translated as:
precepts - 19; appointments (v. 128) - 1;
commands (v. 173) - 1; *Total usage* - 21 times
8. *Imrath* (its forms) translated as:
saying - 18; word (v. 82) - 1; *Total usage* - 19 times

1. *Torath* was consistently translated as “law”.
2. *Eduth* was also consistent with either plural or singular of “testimony”.
3. *Mishpat* followed the exact same pattern the KJV translators did with “judgment(s)”, and two variations.
4. *Dvar* followed consistently through with “word(s)”.
5. *Huk* stayed consistent as “statutes”.
6. *Mitzvoth* stayed consistent with “command(s)”, interesting difference from “commandments”. He did one at the end of the psalm as “precepts”. Why the change? It was a long psalm and maybe he was tired when he worked on that and got a little sloppy. When you are working on a project alone, as opposed to a committee, you have no real proof-reader to help catch and correct that type of manuscript translation error. (Only a suspicion though.)
7. *Pikud* was almost consistent as “precepts”. Two other variants, of which the “commands” of verse 173 contributed to my suspicion of Mr. Young being tired. It is another questionable variance, and you might

notice it is only three verses from the unusual variance found in verse 176, at the end. (See my comment on v. 144 under, Verses of Note.)

8. *Imrath* used a unique rendering of “saying”, with one exception. Saying does seem to be a good rendering.

VERSES OF NOTE:

► 36 Incline my heart unto Thy testimonies, And not unto dishonest gain.

Compare this with the KJV: 36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

This shows the benefit of using a literal translation in conjunction, for more thorough study, with a reliable English translation, such as the KJV. In comparing the two versions, we see one little difference: “dishonest gain” and “covetousness”. So which was used here?

If we look up the ten commandments in Exodus 20:17 on not coveting, we see the word Chamadth was used whose root meaning is “to delight in”. I.e. we are not to take delight in our neighbor’s goods. That is to “covet”. The word used here is Batzach whose root means “to plunder, gain (usually unjust)”. So if you think about it, they are synonyms. Either word points us to the same thing the psalmist is praying protection from.

► 73 Thy hands made me and establish me, Cause me to understand, and I learn Thy commands.

Comparing this with the KJV: 73 Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.

Here we see the sole variation of “establish me” and “fashioned me”. Is there a difference? The Hebrew used is Chun, which means “to set up, establish”. The YLT is using the closest literal translation. The previous words, of God’s hands making him, set the frame for understanding the idea he was expressing. It is describing a finished work short of what needed to be done in his soul, what he was praying for. So we see “fashioned” in context with the “made” leaves us with the understanding of that finished object of creation. The same picture YLT gives. However, “to set up”, would have given a clearer picture. Together, both versions gave a contribution of what was found in the Hebrew.

► 99 Above all my teachers I have acted wisely. For Thy testimonies are my meditation.

Comparing this with the KJV: 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation.

The difference here is YLT’s, “acted wisely” or the KJV’s, “understanding”. The Hebrew being rendered is Schal meaning, “to be circumspect, hence intelligent”. “To act wisely” is “to be circumspect and intelligent” about things. It is applying truth in a profitable way, not just cataloging facts. So what about “understand-

ing”? “To be circumspect” can only come about if one has “understanding”. What we see here is both versions looked at the same word and used two different synonyms. Each expounds on the Hebrew at hand in an accurate way. Both are accurate and acceptable.

► 113 Doubting ones I have hated, And Thy law I have loved.

Comparing this with the KJV: 113 I hate vain thoughts: but thy law do I love.

Well, this is certainly an interesting variation. Is it, “doubting ones” or “vain thoughts”? The Hebrew word under investigation is Seaphim which means, “divided in mind, a skeptic, half-hearted, divided”. A doubting one is certainly the same as a skeptic. Divided in mind and half-hearted would definitely leave one with vain thoughts. Like Jesus said - we cannot serve two masters. We will go nowhere with that.

The difference really comes down to the YLT’s rendering a hatred of a certain class of people. The KJV’s rendering a hatred of something that goes on in the head, whether it comes from ones own mind or encountered in contact with others who entertain such a way of thinking and speaking. As far as I can see, the word can be rendered either way, it is “thoughts” or those who entertain those thoughts.

Compare the two halves of the verse. It is a clean and simple verse: what he hates and what he loves. The love of the Torath is of faith. The hatred is of lack of faith. The one is simply the mirror opposition to the other. Whatever is the opposite of the faith of the Torath is its enemy and to be hated. As far as people who have doubt, the psalmist would naturally want to help them step into the faith. His enemy would be those thoughts that have become ensnared by the devil. He would work to help de-ensnare its victims. I would suggest it is the doubts who are the hated ones, unless the doubters firmly embrace their skepticism, unrepentantly. In that case he would shake off the dust of his feet for a testimony against them and move on.

Passages such as this, are no simple matter to translate. We must listen to the studied conclusions of those who do know the language and consider their opinions. Either position is an honest attempt to faithfully translate the words found in the text and not a case of careless, who cares, I’ll translate it however I feel today.

► 144 The righteousness of Thy testimonies is to Cause me to understand, and I live!

Comparing this with the KJV: The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

The only thing I can figure here for such difference is error in working on his version alone, rather than with a committee. The committee would catch the error, through multiple proof-readers. The way I can

account for the difference is Young missed the Hebrew the KJV translated as, “is everlasting”. The Hebrew is Leolam meaning, “to eternity”. I’d say that either Young’s Hebrew copy had accidentally left it out or a pair of blurry, tired eyes missed it.

► 160 The sum of Thy word is truth, And to the age is every judgment of Thy righteousness!

Comparing this with the KJV: 160 Thy word is true from the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.

The issue comes from YLT’s rendering of, “the sum of” or the KJV’s rendering of, “from the beginning”. The Hebrew word used is Rosh which indicates the top or beginning of something. Hence we see this word’s root used in the first word of the Bible, Bereisheet - In the beginning.

About Rosh’s last of all meanings is “sum”. It wasn’t dishonest to choose “the sum”, but I feel it is in error. The primary meaning of Rosh would be best translated as “from the beginning”. It also makes the most sense, considering the layout of the verse. The second half poses the ending of time, i.e. “for ever”. This verse starts with the beginning and ends with eternity. Maybe Young had trouble understanding the first half, so he took the lesser meaning because it was the only thing he could make sense of. To me, the “from the beginning” makes perfect sense. One, the Hebrew Emeth translated “truth” also means “faithful”. The beginning of scripture is a true and faithful account of what took place. The psalmist boldly shows his faith with his statement. He continues to show the scope of that detail of his faith, when he encompasses God’s Mishpat preserved forever. In other words, he knows all of scripture is “providentially preserved”. He can count on it. He didn’t have a worry that God’s Word was not able to be accurately preserved for him. Neither do we!

SUMMARY:

Looking over Young’s Literal Translation has definitely provided food for thought. It has shown it to be a good resource for digging into scripture. Though good, it has errors and should not be used as one’s sole English translation. Young was certainly diligent in his work to produce a literal translation of value. Being a literal translation may make harder reading on some passages, but provides a better opportunity to understand the intent of the psalmist.



NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

OVERVIEW:

The NIV was first published in 1978. It has been one of the most popular versions. I take issue on its choice of manuscripts and their attack of the Majority Texts and the Masoretic Text. This review only barely touches that issue however, since I want to focus on how they translated. I felt this kind of Psalm 119 comparison would do the job of illumination on that issue. Following are the results of that comparison:

1. *Torath* translated as:
law - 25; *Total usage* - 25 times
 2. *Eduth* (its forms) translated as:
statutes - 23; *Total usage* - 23 times
 3. *Mishpat* (its forms) translated as:
laws - 20; punish; 1; is righteous - 1;
as you always do (v. 132) - 1;
Total usage - 23 times
 4. *Dvar* (its forms) translated as:
word - 23; Missing one time (v.42);
Total usage - 24 times
 5. *Huk* (its forms) translated as:
decrees - 22; *Total usage* - 22 times
 6. *Mitzvoth* (its forms) translated as:
commands - 22; *Total usage* - 22 times
 7. *Pikud* (its forms) translated as:
precepts - 21; *Total usage* - 21 times
 8. *Imrath* (its forms) translated as:
word - 6; promise - 13; *Total usage* - 19 times.
- *Taam* (taste), v. 66
judgment - 1 (**Listed so there isn’t a confusion, in this instance, with *Mishpat***)

1. Clearly these translators thought *Torath* was singular for law and *Mishpat* was the plural for laws.
2. *Eduth* was translated consistently with “statutes”. This translation loses the meaning of “bearing witness” which the Hebrew contains. They should have translated it as “testimonies”.
3. *Mishpat* was almost consistently translated at “laws”, which it is not. *Mishpat* speaks of “judgement”. It denotes the act of giving sentence. “Laws” and “judg-

ments” are different things. Using the rendering of “laws” messed this up. This is disgusting and disreputable. (See keyword definitions.)

4. *Dvar* was consistently translated as “word” with one exception.

5. *Huk* was consistently translated as “decrees”.

6. *Mitzvoth* was consistently translated as “commands”. This does carry the base of actual commands. Such as the ten mitzvoth.

7. *Pikud* remained consistent, translated as “precepts”.

8. *Imrath* was not translated consistently. They paraphrased just over twice as much as they translated it. Give them a “thumbs down” on *Imrath*!

VERSES OF NOTE:

► 9 How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word.

Here we see the “gender” neutering issue. The “young person” was substituted for “young man”. Just stay faithful to what the Holy Spirit inspired text says please! The Hebrew reads, “his path” or “his way”, not “the path”.

► 16 I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.

“Neglect” is not the same as “forget”. The Hebrew reads, “forget”. They chose to paraphrase. If you were using this version, you’d never know when you were getting the real scoop or someone’s uninspired paraphrase. If the Holy Spirit had wanted to use the word “neglect”, He could have. Hebrew has a word for that and He didn’t use it.

► 30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness; I have set my heart on your laws.

Judgments and laws are not the same thing! If he wanted to say laws, he would have used another Hebrew term.

“Heart” is a specific and important key term used in this psalm. Inserting it randomly is not smart. It is not found in this verse. To lay or put God’s “judgments” before him (which is what it says) is not the same as “setting my heart on your laws”. The phrase used expresses more of something akin to opening a book of cases to examine how certain court cases have been ruled on. “Setting one’s heart on His laws” would create the impression of having an overall commitment of lifestyle to live in a Biblical manner. Of course we should all do that, but the issue isn’t whether the rendering is stating some truth, but is it faithfully transmitting what scripture said in the verse thus translated.

► 32 I run in the path of your commands, for you have broadened my understanding.

Here we do find that important keyword for “heart”.

In the KJV we find, “when thou shalt enlarge my heart”. This is a good rendering. “Understanding” in Hebrew would have used a different word. Again, the writer didn’t use that word. He used “heart”.

► 37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word.

Out of all the manuscripts that exist, two read “word” instead of “way” and the NIV translators choose that almost nonexistent reading. This is what one can expect from the NIV.

► 51 The arrogant mock me unmercifully, but I do not turn from your law. 52 I remember, Lord, your ancient laws, and I find comfort in them.

We find “law” and “laws” side by side. The typical reader would logically think the one was the plural of the other. What else would one think? You’d be in error. The first “law” is Torath. The second, “laws” is Mishpat, which we have seen are judgments. Judgments are a form of law in action. From Mishpat, we see God stands behind His Word and will not let the wicked go unpunished. That is why the writer finds comfort in them in verse 52. It is for us to follow His law and remember His judgments, thereby remembering His faithfulness and righteousness.

► 124 Deal with your servant according to your love and teach me your decrees.

This version switches God’s mercy for His “love”. There is a direct Hebrew word for “love”. It wasn’t used. Checed was used here and the KJV put it correctly when they said, “. . . according unto thy mercy”.

► 139 My zeal wears me out, for my enemies ignore your words.

The KJV does a good job on this verse: “My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.”

We saw Jesus Christ in the temple chasing out the money changers and were told how that fulfilled prophecy about Christ where His zeal consumed Him. That zeal caused Him to purge God’s house of the money changer wickedness. If we said it “wears Him out”, our mental picture would be quite different. We would see someone laying there puffing and panting because of some kind of emotional overload. “My zeal wears me out” is a ridiculous rendering!

“Ignore” and “forgotten” have different meanings. The Hebrew is for “forget”, not “ignore”. They may start by ignoring, but end up forgetting. This is a strange thing, but if men ignore God’s Word, it is taken from them, they do forget it. Jesus told of this in the parable of the seed sown on different ground. Remember the seed the birds of the air devoured? (Matthew 13:1-23)

► 144 Your statutes are always righteous; give me understanding that I may live.

Compare with the KJV: “The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting. . .”. I’ve already covered some of the differences between statutes and testimonies, so won’t belabor that here. What I want to look at is the difference between “are always righteous” and “is everlasting”. The Hebrew reads literally, “to eternity”. The KJV has it right. God’s testimonies will not change. They have been righteous and will always be so. The NIV rendering changes that. It simply looks back on what the writer has seen and deems the character of His statutes to be always filled with a certain virtue of being righteous. Kind of like saying, “Yep, that was a good call on that crime, God”. The NIV rendering does not say, with absolute certainty, God will always be righteous in all His statutes, only they have been so far. It’s kind of like saying to a baseball pitcher, “Your pitches are always tops”. We know he will age and they won’t always be that way. It would be quite another thing to say, “Your pitches will be great for eternity”.

SUMMARY:

The NIV fell unacceptably short in its rendering of *Mishpat* as the plural of *Torath*. *Eduth* being translated as “statutes” was also a poor choice. On some of the terms it did fine, on others, it crossed a line of unfaithfulness in translation.

The NIV translators obviously had an agenda they were working into the text, both in regards to the manuscripts used as well as a gender neutering one. A later NIV took another step down that path.

For one psalm, the NIV left us a rather large number of “eyebrow raising” verses to examine. Such handling of the text should scare any honest observer from choosing that version.

ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION

OVERVIEW:

The ESV was first published in 2001. It has become one of the popular versions used today.

With some of the key words of this psalm, the translators of the ESV remained consistent. Others, they went all over the place. My greatest concern was mostly on the issue of how they translated the words. Consistency is one thing - accuracy is another, and these translators messed up big-time with *Mishpat*!

1. *Torath* translated as:
law - 25; *Total usage 25 times*
2. *Eduth* (its forms) translated as:
testimonies - 23; *Total usage - 23 times*
3. *Mishpat* (its forms) translated as:
justice - 1; as is your way (v. 132) - 1; just - 1;
rules - 17; judge - 1; appointment - 1; judgments - 1;
Total usage - 23 times
4. *Dvar* (its forms) translated as:
word - 23; then shall I have - 1 (v. 42);
Total usage - 24 times
5. *Huk* (its forms) translated as:
statutes - 22; *Total usage - 22 times*
6. *Mitzvoth* (its forms) translated as:
commandments - 22; *Total usage - 22 times*
7. *Pikud* (its forms) translated as:
precepts - 21; *Total usage - 21 times*
8. *Imrath* (its forms) translated as:
word - 6; promise - 12; commands - 1;
Total usage 19 times

► *Taam* (taste), v. 66
judgment - 1 (**Listed so there isn’t a confusion, in this instance, with *Mishpat***)

1. They nailed it right with *Torath*.
2. *Eduth* kept it consistent with a proper rendering.
3. *Mishpat* was sickening, to tell you the truth. The most common word they translated it as was “rules”. It simply doesn’t mean that. Look at it this way. In the United States the government is divided into three branches. The Legislative branch makes laws. The Judicial branch judges on whether the laws are being upheld. It is considered corruption when a judge makes the laws up as he goes. It is for the judge to issue “rulings” on a case. It has no power, officially, to issue “rules”. “Rulings” are *Mishpat*, not “rules”.
4. They hit it on the head with *Dvar* (*one exception*).
5. *Huk* did another good job.
6. *Mitzvoth* got it consistently right.
7. *Pikud* followed through in a good consistency.
8. Finally, *Imrath* is well translated with “word”. Their other renderings are paraphrase. They put into it what they felt it was referring to. A big problem with this, if they are wrong, you will never know. If they translated what was there, even if they didn’t fully understand the passage, they would have left it clearly translated so you might be able to see what they could not.

VERSES OF NOTE:

- 149 Hear my voice according to your steadfast love; O Lord, according to your justice give me life.

It is interesting they chose to translate Mishpat as “justice” instead of their prevailing, “rules”. We find the KJV translation of this being, “O LORD, quicken me according to thy judgment.” There is a difference between “justice” and “judgment”. “Justice” speaks of hard and fast punishment, or vindication without any temperance of mercy.

The psalmist is crying for God’s quickening of life as his “judgment”, which is the best translation of the Hebrew Mishpat. Judgment, issued by the Great Judge, encompasses Chen - grace. Without God’s Chen, our deserved justice is terrifying. He is merciful to the repentant heart and we can count on “His judgment” to save us!

- 159 Consider how I love your precepts! Give me life according to your steadfast love.

This may seem inconsequential to many, but in the Hebrew, God is addressed by name. He is called upon to give the psalmist life, or receive His quickening life. Basically, it is very important we call upon Him by name to be saved, to be quickened, to receive life! Don’t leave His name out! The KJV renders it, “quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.”

SUMMARY:

The ESV surprised me, since it is newer than the NIV. It fared slightly better than the NIV in translating *Eduth* accurately. My two points of contention are significant warning signs. Their translation of *Mishpat* as “rules” is way out there. The casual reader, who took them at their word, would never know they were being fed a bad rendering. The other point, seen at verse 159 is a serious, unacceptable drop out. I wouldn’t want a version that so easily left God’s name out without so much as a, “How do you do!”

THE LIVING BIBLE

OVERVIEW:

This version was popular with the youth when I was a teenager. It came out in 1971. I saw many using it and I’ve heard tell people were converted through it. God can use anything to bring people to Him. I heard of a conversion story, back in the early 1900s, where a man heard the street preacher preaching from the story of the “austere man” (Luke 19:18-21). This man didn’t

hear it correctly and thought he said, “oyster man”. Well, he was an “oyster man”. It really resonated with him. He knew what it was like to cut his hands and suffer as an “oyster man”. He became a Christian and went out preaching in the streets with his misunderstanding of the story. Of course someone corrected him, but it does go to show how God can, and does, use even such misunderstanding. Such a fact however, does not justify changing scripture.

A Bible must truly be a, “thus saith the Lord” or it’s an imposter. From this comparison, I hope all will see the so called, “Living Bible” is an imposter. It poses itself as God’s Words, but adds and deletes many words. It mistranslated the key words in this Psalm, showing the writer of the “Living Bible” was not familiar with the material he was working with and did not care about faithfully handling God’s Word. I couldn’t help feeling the man who created this “Bible” should have been thrown in jail (at the minimum) for the crimes he committed, massacring the Holy Word. In some cases, half of a verse was unaccounted for and others, what it said was nothing like scripture.

We must realize that as soon as we touch a paraphrase, the best we are reading is only a commentary. Limited and corrupted by the individual(s) who worked on it. One cannot expect a commentary to be adequate for either a devotion or to replace true Bible reading.

1. *Torath* translated as:
law(s) - 14; word - 1; obeying you - 1;
commands - 2
Left out 7 times.
2. *Eduth* (its forms) translated as:
law(s) - 7; will - 3; commands - 1; promises - 1;
rules - 2; demands - 1; commandments - 2
Inserted 1 time.
Left out 6 times.
3. *Mishpat* (its forms) translated as:
decree - 2; punish - 1; corrected me - 1; law(s) - 6;
instructions - 1; word - 1; decisions - 1; desires - 1;
punishments - 2; right - 1; your way (v. 132) - 1
Inserted 4 times.
Left out 6 times.
4. *Dvar* (its forms) translated as:
word - 9; promises - 6; plan - 1; laws - 2;
then I will have - 1
Inserted 1 time.
Missing 6 times.
5. *Huk* (its forms) translated as:
rules - 1; plans - 1; instructions - 1; laws - 8;
good paths - 1; lead - 1; every wish - 1
Inserted 4 times.
Missing 8 times.

6. *Mitzvoth* (its forms) translated as:
instructions - 1; commands - 5; laws - 5;
the right paths - 1; words - 1; they - 1;
commandments - 4
Inserted 2 times.
Left out 4 times.
7. *Pikud* (its forms) translated as:
what you want - 1; your desires - 1; rules - 1;
path - 1; demands - 1; will - 1; laws - 9
Inserted 1 time.
Missing 7 times.
8. *Imrath* (its forms) translated as:
word - 2; promise(s) - 10; all you say - 1; laws - 3;
as you said - 1
Missing 2 times.
- *Taam* (taste), v. 66
judgment - 1 (**Listed so there isn't a confusion, in this instance, with *Mishpat***)

1. *Torath* - the writer didn't see the need to faithfully use this term when the Holy Spirit thought otherwise. The writer ignored it seven times. He mixed it with Law(s), Word or even Commands. "Law" isn't perfect for *Torath*, but is the closest English has.

2. *Eduth* was added once where it didn't exist in the Hebrew. He dropped it from scripture six times. Again, to him, this term ran the whole gamut of meanings. *Eduth* is founded on the core meaning of bearing a witness of something.

3. *Mishpat* was recklessly added four times and left out six. This is a look at one psalm. Imagine what he did to the whole Bible! He gave *Mishpat* the gamut from "law" (how would the reader know he wasn't referring to *Torah*?) to "decree", to "desires". This word is well translated in the King James as "judgments". The base of this word is that used for the book of "Judges" in the Hebrew scripture.

4. *Dvar* was inserted once and cut out six times from God's Holy Word. By the way, it means "word". The other renderings are paraphrase. Realize that any time a paraphrase is inserted, you will usually find a Hebrew or Greek word (New Testament) that does exist for it. If the Holy Spirit had wanted to use that other word, He could have. He chose not to, based on His infinite wisdom, then comes a paraphraser and overwrites the wisdom of God! The only place I can see a paraphrase working, is when the grammatical structure of the sentence doesn't work in English. Its sole purpose then should be to render the translation comprehensible. This should be indicated in *italics*, like the KJV and YLT did.

5. *Huk* was added four times and ignored eight. It was translated numerous ways, with "laws" being the most frequent.

6. *Mitzvoth* were inserted twice and left out four times. They were translated a variety of ways, including "laws", "commands" and "commandments". When we see numerous words all translated the same, such as "laws", how would we have any clue what was actually said?

7. *Pikud* was inserted once and left out seven times! They chose "laws" as the most frequent way to render it.

8. *Imrath* wasn't added at all, but was ignored twice. It was translated with a large variety of words with "promise" being the most common, and "laws" coming in at number two.

Just think, when a reader sees "laws", he has no way of knowing if the real word was *Imrath*, *Pikud*, *Mitzvoth*, *Huk*, *Dvar*, *Mishpat*, *Eduth* or *Torath*! TLB used "laws" for a translation of every one of these key words. Outrageous! The things they were referring to obviously meant NOTHING TO THE TLB WRITER! The drops of honey of God's Word were easily discarded as unimportant. It shows the lack of fear in tampering with God's inspired Word - changing, adding and deleting where ever it suited.

VERSES OF NOTE:

► 40-42 I long to obey them! Therefore in fairness renew my life, for this was your promise—yes, Lord, to save me! Now spare me by your kindness and your love. Then I will have an answer for those who taunt me, for I trust your promises.

Psalm 119, written as an acrostic, makes a clear break between each section. A particular point is developed upon the meaning or main word usage in each letter. When you go from one letter section to the next, it is definitely a new paragraph of thought. TLB was unaware of this, thereby demonstrating his lack of knowledge of the material he was working with. The "Waw" section begins after verse 40, leading in with verse 41. TLB even got rid of the verse break between these verses.

► 44-46 Therefore I will keep on obeying you forever and forever, free within the limits of your laws. I will speak to kings about their value, and they will listen with interest and respect.

Compare this to the KJV:

44 So shall I keep thy law continually for ever and ever. 45 And I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts. 46 I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.

*TLB got rid of the *Torath* "law" making it plural with *Toroth*. It gave *Pikud* the inappropriate rendering of "laws". Following God, we are set free from the bondage of sin. That is why we find "I will walk at liberty", and not the TLB rendering of "free within the limits...". That rendering speaks of continued bondage like a prisoner*

who is released from his cell to have freedom in the fenced and guarded courtyard - free within the limits of the larger fence, not that of the cell. The KJV makes a significant difference. There we see "liberty". The Hebrew used is Rachavah, which is, "roomy, in every direction, a broad place". There is no hint of confinement in the Hebrew used. Further, the psalmist gives the reason "for" he seeks God's Pikud. The position and framework is totally askew within TLB's rendering.

In verse 46, TLB mistranslates Eduth, properly "testimonies" in the KJV, substituting "their", which would take us back to "laws" in verse 45. The Hebrew had Pikud back in verse 45. Do you begin to see how messed up this gets?

To top it off, the rendering of, "and they will listen with interest and respect", is crazy! It's not even necessarily true. The KJV rendering, "and will not be ashamed" is a beautiful rendering. Not being ashamed, when one gives his or her Christian testimony, shows a boldness and confidence that we are in the right, **NO MATTER HOW THESE LEADERS VIEW THAT TESTIMONY**. For many, they will not "listen with interest and respect", but even being scorned and condemned by them, **WE WILL NOT BE ASHAMED!**

► 54 For these laws of yours have been my source of joy and singing through all these years of my earthly pilgrimage.

A more accurate reading is:

54 Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

Here we see Huk mistranslated as "laws", but what I want to pay attention to, is the free addition of other words. They are no where in the inspired text. He adds, "my source of joy" and "all these years". Not every follower of God will be able to say, "all these years" yet they have found His Huk to be a song for them, even on wobbly legs that have just begun the journey. Within this verse, we find seven added words just with those two additions. Think how many additions must be in the whole of TLB.

► 71-72 The punishment you gave me was the best thing that could have happened to me, for it taught me to pay attention to your laws. They are more valuable to me than millions in silver and gold!

We must compare with the KJV again here:

71 It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. 72 The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

The Hebrew of Aunah means, "to be afflicted and humbled", KJV chose "afflicted". "The punishment" is definitely a paraphrase, and the true Hebrew word for "punishment" of Anisha wasn't used. Consider Paul, the apostle, mentions a suffering he was going through

that helped him stay humble. He did not say he was being punished (2 Corinthians 12:7). Such a suffering doesn't necessarily indicate wrong doing on the part of the afflicted at all!

Finally, you will see more of the common recklessness of legal terms. The Hebrew uses two, Huk and Torath. TLB lost one of them. Instead of "the law of thy mouth", which is a good rendering of the Hebrew, they simply gave us, "they are" which must refer back to the "laws" of verse 71. In verse 71 we found Huk. So TLB just ignored the inspired Torath that was so valuable of 72.

► 100 They make me even wiser than the aged.

Here is the KJV:

100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts.

This one doesn't take much comment. TLB just left off the second half of the verse. There is one of your missing Pikud's and obedience!

SUMMARY:

Let's take one last look at the additions and subtractions from God's Word. We found a total of 46 missing, and 13 added words. Not counting the other missing and added words that weren't legal terms. Consider the immense volume that must be missing and added to the whole of scripture in this version!

No paraphrase can be considered a legitimate Bible translation. Nor could it morally be called "Living". Put the two together and you get a double whammy of a lie.

CONCLUSION

I hope this helps get a better understanding on the issues facing "faithfulness" and "truth" at risk.

Aside from the manuscript, there are issues of how they translate. "Dynamic equivalency" is a modern technique that covers for changing what it really says.

To copyright a new version, publishers need to make a certain percentage of changes. That new version makes a lot of money for their owners. When one version makes a good rendering, they have to change it enough to avoid breaking copyright laws. There are only so many ways to render a sentence, and remain accurate. This is a major problem for money-makers. Don't buy into their salesmanship. Stick with something that was a work whose men took scripture seriously. Men who knew the Bible was God's Word. Such men were not perfect, there are none, but they did realize what they were working with and knew they would account to God for what they did with His Book.