



The Lexham English Bible

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Preface

With approximately one hundred different English translations of the Bible already published, the reader may well wonder why yet another English version has been produced. Those actually engaged in the work of translating the Bible might answer that the quest for increased accuracy, the incorporation of new scholarly discoveries in the fields of semantics, lexicography, linguistics, new archaeological discoveries, and the continuing evolution of the English language all contribute to the need for producing new translations. But in the case of the *Lexham English Bible* (LEB), the answer to this question is much simpler; in fact, it is merely twofold.

First, the LEB achieves an unparalleled level of transparency with the original language text because the LEB had as its starting point the *Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* and the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*. It was produced with the specific purpose of being used alongside the original language text of the Bible. Existing translations, however excellent they may be in terms of English style and idiom, are frequently so far removed from the original language texts of Scripture that straightforward comparison is difficult for the average user. Of course distance between the original language text and the English translation is not a criticism of any modern English translation. To a large extent this distance is the result of the philosophy of translation chosen for a particular English version, and it is almost always the result of an attempt to convey the meaning of the original in a clearer and more easily understandable way to the contemporary reader. However, there are many readers, particularly those who have studied some biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek, who desire a translation that facilitates straightforward and easy comparisons between the translation and the original language text. The ability to make such comparisons easily in software formats like Logos Bible Software makes the need for an English translation specifically designed for such comparison even more acute.

Second, the LEB is designed from the beginning to make extensive use of the most up-to-date lexical reference works available. For the Old Testament this is primarily *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT), and for the New Testament this is primarily the third edition of Walter Bauer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG). Users can be assured that the LEB as a translation is based on the best scholarly research available. The Hebrew text on which the LEB Old Testament is based is that of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*. The Greek text on which the LEB New Testament is based is that of *The Greek New Testament: SBL Edition* (SBLGNT), a new edition produced by Michael W. Holmes in conjunction with the Society of Biblical Literature and Logos Bible Software. In its evaluation of textual variation, the SBLGNT uses modern text-critical methodology along with guidance from the most recently available articles, monographs, and technical commentaries to establish the text of the Greek New Testament.

Naturally, when these two factors are taken into consideration, it should not be surprising that the character of the LEB as a translation is fairly literal. This is a necessary by-product of the desire to have the English translation correspond transparently to the original language text. Nevertheless, a serious attempt has been made within these constraints to produce a clear and readable English translation instead of a woodenly literal one.

There are three areas in particular that need to be addressed to make a translation like the LEB more accessible to readers today, while at the same time maintaining easy comparison with the original language text. First, differences in word order have to be addressed. In this regard, the LEB follows standard English word order, not the word order of biblical Hebrew, Aramaic, or Koiné Greek. Anyone who needs to see the word order of the original languages can readily consult the *Lexham Hebrew-English Interlinear Bible* or the *Lexham Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*, which contain a sequence line which gives this information. Second, some expressions in biblical languages are idiomatic, so that a literal translation would be meaningless or would miscommunicate the true meaning. The LEB uses [lower corner] brackets to indicate such expressions, with a literal rendering given in a note. Third, words which have no equivalent in the original language text must sometimes be supplied in the English translation. Because the LEB is designed to be used alongside the original language texts of Scripture, these supplied words are indicated with italics. In some cases the need for such supplied words is obvious, but in other cases where it is less clear a note has been included.

Finally, the reader should remember that any Bible translation, to be useful to the person using it, must actually be read. We encourage every user of the LEB, whether reading it alongside the original languages text or not, to remember that once we understand the meaning of a biblical text we are responsible to apply it first in our own lives, and then to share it with those around us.

The Editors

LEB

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, both joints and marrow, and able to judge the reflections and thoughts of the heart. (Heb 4:12 LEB).

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