

What Lutherans Believe

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

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Check Your Bible Translation!

Selected Mistranslations with NASB for comparison

How does your favorite translation render the following verses?

Why NASB? Although not the most readable translation to the modern ear, the NASB is respected for being a very “accurate” translation in terms of how it renders the text. That does not mean it is a superior translation for study or devotional reading; it is one of the translations that seeks to retain the meaning and word use of the original languages as much as possible.

Remember, the best translation is... the one that you will read!

Gen. 1:1-2 (Replacement of words)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth proved to be formless and waste and there was darkness upon the surface of the watery deep; and **God's active force** was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters.

NASB: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and **the Spirit of God** was moving over the surface of the waters.

Zech. 12:10 (Inversion of perspective -- God is speaking)

...they will look upon **the one** whom they have pierced...

NASB: ...they will look on **Me** whom they have pierced...

John 1:1 (Insertion of indefinite article)

In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a** god.

NASB: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 8:58 (Improper rendering of YHWH)

...'Most truly I say to you, before Abraham came into existence, **I have been.**'"

NASB: ...'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am.**'"

Luke 23:43 (Relocation of punctuation to change the interpretation)

And he said to him: “Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise.”

NASB: And He said to him, “Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.”

Acts 10:36 (Insertion of “others”)

...to the sons of Israel to declare to them the good news of peace through Jesus Christ: this One is Lord of all **others**.

NASB: ...to the sons of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ (He is Lord of all).

Colossians 1:15-17 (Insertion of “other”)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all **other** things were created in the heavens and upon the earth.... All **other** things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all **other** things and by means of him all **other** things were made to exist.

NASB: He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth... all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

Titus 2:13 (Rewording to present Father and Son as separate)

While we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God, and **of the** Savior of us, Christ Jesus.

NASB: Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.

What are some of your favorite verses? What differences do you find between various translations?

Most of these examples come from the New World Translation. Do you detect a common thread in these selected mistranslations of the original languages? Why would translators not always strive for accuracy in conveying the meaning and aspect of the original words?