

Moskala makes one major error throughout the dissertation. The seven pairs of clean animals that Noah brought on the ark (Gen 7:1-2) were only for sacrifice, not for food. When Noah offered sacrifice (Gen 8:20), he already followed an accepted practice (Gen 4:4). Only *after* the flood was Noah conceded the right to eat meat (Gen 9:3). This concession includes the entire animal kingdom, "every living thing that moves." If it were limited to pure animals, the text would have said so. The alimentary restriction to pure animals is first commanded to Israel in Lev 11: only quadrupeds qualified for the altar are eligible for the table.

Three main errors also stand out. "The impurity of unclean animals" (276-277; i.e., of carcasses) is indeed contagious (cf. Lev 11:26b, 27b, 28). Also, the dietary regulations are not applicable to aliens (278, 352-353), with the exception of the blood prohibition (Lev 17:10, 13) and the need to undergo purification after eating dead or torn animals (Lev 17:15). Furthermore, all priests are holy, even if they are blemished (227). Similarly, the dietary laws help Israel attain holiness even if they are blemished.

If these errors can be corrected, the dissertation could be published as a book. The blue pencil, however, should be applied generously, especially to the repetitive style in the theology section (chap. 4).

Some of my work will be helpful. For example, Moskala is absolutely correct in rooting the dietary laws in creation. He will find confirmation in *Maarav* 8 (1993): 107-116, where I demonstrate that the distinction between *šeqes* and *tâme* animals is rooted in the six days of creation. Also, since only *visible* defects disqualify priests and sacrificial animals (Lev 21 and 22), so too the rabbit family (Lev 11:5-6), which *appears* to be chewing its cud, and the camel (Lev 11:4), which *appears* to possess no split hoof.

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Ryken, Leland. *The Word of God in English: Criteria for Excellence in Bible Translation*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002. 336 pp. Paper, \$15.99.

Among English teachers, Leland Ryken is the best-known conservative writer on the Bible as literature. My wife and I both used his textbooks when we were in college thirty years ago, and he is still writing and teaching English at Wheaton College.

The Word of God in English is influenced by the experience Ryken gained in the past few years serving as the literary stylist for the English Standard Version of the Bible. His assignment was to read through the entire Bible, making changes that would heighten the literary beauty of the version. The ESV is the prime example of Ryken's theories in action. The version reads well aloud, as Ryken meant it to. The language tends toward elevated diction meant to set it apart from more mundane writing.

Ryken has divided his book into five sections: "Lessons from Overlooked Sources"; "Common Fallacies of Translation"; "Theological, Ethical, and

Hermeneutical Issues”; “Modern Translations: Problems and Their Solutions”; and “Criteria for Excellence in the English Bible.” Understanding that many readers might begin with whatever chapter seems most relevant to their interests, Ryken repeats many of his points in each chapter. For the scholar who reads from beginning to end, this makes the book seem quite repetitive.

Ryken’s thesis is that only a literal translation adequately communicates the Word of God. I appreciate his celebration of the deliberate ambiguity often found in Scripture and his explanation of how making the ambiguity “clear” results in deleting one or more other meanings intended to reside together within the ambiguity. Every seminary student assigned to translate a passage of Hebrew or Greek would do well to heed Ryken’s warning on this. (Of course, students and even professional translators who have not immersed themselves in great poetry or the writings of Shakespeare may not grasp the idea of ambiguity. Ryken might agree that the dynamic equivalence approach to translation is partly due to the realization that the majority of readers either don’t notice ambiguity or aren’t comfortable with it.)

Unfortunately, Ryken believes in verbal inspiration (and carries this rather close to verbal dictation, even though he may not realize it). He argues that the Bible in Hebrew and Greek is God’s very words, the words God wanted us to have. If one grants this presupposition, it is difficult not to agree with Ryken that only a literal translation should be called God’s Word. Of course, his position is not in line with what most theologians know about the composition of Scripture, and it is not even in line with the self-understanding of Scripture (correctly interpreted).

Anyone writing scholarly papers on biblical literature knows that one benefit of using a very literal translation is that it lets one make one’s point without having to resort to a lot of extra explanations of what the text actually says in Hebrew or Greek. Of course, the difficulty is that a word-for-word equivalent translation may not allow for the fact that many Hebrew and Greek words have more than one meaning. A verse may be translated “literally” in a number of arguable ways, and sometimes the most likely translation is at odds with some church doctrine. One of the things I like best about the NEB is that the extensive translator’s notes keep reminding readers that even when translators are trying to get as close to the original meaning as possible, choices must be made. In thousands of instances regarding word choice in translation, we simply don’t know, so we do the best we can. Ryken seems unaware of this.

Indeed, as best as I can tell, Ryken has never bothered to study Hebrew or Greek. He deals only with the English text, and it seems that for him the ideal translation must have the grandeur of the KJV. (And he has achieved this in the ESV.) I don’t think he realizes that in the original languages, some of Scripture is smooth, but some is rough; some is elevated, but some is earthy; some is simple, but some is complex or unclear. It seems to me that one of the great weaknesses of the KJV was the translation team’s effort to produce a stately, majestic Bible from a text that was often not stately and majestic. I much prefer a translation that

reserves literary excellence for the passages where literary excellence exists in the original. That's part of being "literal." If the original is abrupt, let the translation be abrupt. (A recent review of the ESV in *JETS* lauds versions that use the word "behold" and deprecates versions that translate the original Greek word as "listen" because "behold" is iambic and flows smoothly, whereas "listen" is trochaic and too abrupt. Of course, the Greek word translated "behold" happens to have a trochaic rhythm. Really, it doesn't matter.)

Despite my negative remarks, *The Word of God in English* is a thought-provoking and sometimes persuasive book. Readers will be alerted to why a literal translation matters and to how much is lost in a dynamic equivalent version. Teachers would do well to assign at least parts of the book to students who have to do their own translations from Hebrew or Greek. Ryken knows a lot about English style. In a great many instances there is no reason why a translated passage should be not only accurate, but beautiful. Ryken offers many useful pointers about how to achieve this. Even teachers will gain a new appreciation of the Bible's literary beauty.

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Wright, N.T. *The Resurrection of the Son of God*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003. xxi + 817 pp. Hardcover, \$49.00.

With the issuance of *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, N. T. Wright adds volume 3 to his monumental series *Christian Origins and the Question of God*; the first and second volumes appearing under the titles *The New Testament and the People of God* (1992) and *Jesus and the Victory of God* (1996). The fourth volume in the series is slated to be on Paul, with a fifth volume to address the subject of "why the Gospels are what they are."

In the preface, Wright states that the length of the book is to be attributed in part to his seeking to correct a "misleading" understanding among current NT scholarship that "the earliest Christians did not think of Jesus as having been bodily raised from the dead; Paul [being] regularly cited as the chief witness for what people routinely call a more 'spiritual' point of view" (xvii). Nevertheless, he assures the reader that he has only cited a few examples "here and there," preferring rather to attend to the primary sources.

Wright describes the book as a "monograph with a single line of thought." He acknowledges that his argument is not a novel one, but instead claims his "point of entry" as the unique contribution to scholarship. This entry point is "the study of the way in which 'resurrection', denied by pagans but affirmed by a good many Jews, was both reaffirmed and redefined by the early Christians" (xvii-xviii). Wright asks the question, "So what did happen on Easter morning?" This, as a historical question, is the "central theme of the present book" (4). While acknowledging the problem of intertwining history with theology, he seeks to answer this question by means of two subquestions: "What did the early