

John 3:16 in the Indonesian Literal Translation

by Louis A. Turk, Ph.D.

Very alarming to us, some people have been mis-led to believe that the so-called *Indonesian Literal Translation* of the Bible is the first printing of the translation by Dr. Louis A. Turk and his translation committee; it is not. **To clear up all confusion: Dr. Louis A. Turk and his team have no connection whatsoever with the *Indonesian Literal Translation*.** This article is a careful examination of the *Indonesian Literal Translation*, showing why Dr. Turk and his team can neither endorse nor use it.

We recently learned about a new, “more literal” Translation of the Bible into the Indonesian language called the *Indonesian Literal Translation* (hereafter called the ILT). It was reported to be translated word for word directly from the Masoretic Hebrew text and Textus Receptus Greek text. And in it “God” is translated as “Elohim” instead of as “Allah.” And best of all, both Old and New Testaments have already been translated and printed! When I first read this report about the ILT, I thought, Wow! If this is really true, then this is great news for Indonesia! Our translation project would no longer be needed if Indonesia already has an accurate translation of the Bible, and we would be free to spend more time evangelizing Indonesia. Why waste God’s money and our time making a new translation if a great translation already exists? Would not mission funds be more wisely spent purchasing a great translation already in print, rather than on a translation project not yet finished—if, in truth, there really is such a great translation already in print?

However, considering how often the Bible is counterfeited and corrupted by ungodly men, it would be irresponsible and foolish to believe such claims without first checking the facts. What if the ILT is not what is claimed, but pastors and churches are deceived to believe the false claims, and therefore no longer saw the need for our translation project? The result could very well be that millions of Indonesian souls would end up in Hell, because it is extremely difficult to evangelize a

people without an accurate translation of the Bible, and an accurate translation cannot be made without funding. Thus that false report would result in missions funds being wasted to purchase an imposter translation, and the delivery of a truly accurate translation of the Bible from the original texts to the Indonesian people being delayed by lack of funding for a very long time—perhaps even years—, and millions of souls ending up in the Lake of Fire forever as a direct result of that false report.

So, let’s do some fact checking.

The heart of the ILT

One of the first things a good doctor will do when examining a patient is to check blood pressure and heart rate. No matter why the patient came into his office, the doctor knows that every part of the body is affected by the heart. Applying the same principle to translations, let’s start our examination of the ILT by checking its heart.

A careful examination of John 3:16

It is universally agreed among Bible believers that the heart of the Bible is John 3:16, because this is the verse that clearly lays out God’s plan of salvation in a nutshell. So, let’s start with that verse, and then look at other verses in John chapter three.

Here is how John 3:16 reads in the inspired Textus Receptus Greek text:

“Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ’ ἔχη ζωὴν αἰώνιον.”

tinggikan, ¹⁵supaya setiap orang yang percaya kepada-Nya tidak binasa, tetapi memperoleh hidup yang kekal. ¹⁶Sebab Elohim demikian mengasihi dunia ini, sehingga Dia mengaruniakan Putra-Nya yang tunggal, supaya setiap orang yang percaya kepada-Nya tidak akan binasa, melainkan dapat memperoleh hidup kekal. ¹⁷Sebab Elohim mengutus Putra-

Figure 1: Photo of John 3:15-16 in the Indonesian Literal Translation. Note the word "memperoleh" used twice.

The King James Bible translators correctly translated the above divinely preserved Greek words of John 3:16 as follows:

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Joh 3:16 KJV)

Here is how John 3:16 reads in the Indonesian Literal Translation:

"Sebab Elohim demikian mengasihi dunia ini, sehingga Dia mengaruniakan Putra-Nya yang tunggal, supaya setiap orang yang percaya kepada-Nya tidak akan binasa, melainkan dapat memperoleh hidup kekal." (Yohanes 3:16 ILT)

Now for a short course in the Indonesian language so you can understand those Indonesian words. (There is an on-line Indonesian-English dictionary at <http://kamus.net> where you can check our translation of each word if you want.)

"Sebab" means "because."

"Elohim" you no doubt recognize as the Hebrew word for "God." This is the same word we use for God in our translation.

"Demikian" means "so."

"Mengasihi" means "loves."

"Dunia" means "world," and "ini" means "this."

"Sehingga" means "that" or "so that."

"Dia" means "he" or "him" depending on the context. So far so good, but from here things start going downhill.

"Mengaruniakan" means "to give a gift or reward to a person of lower status." This word raises a serious question: is salvation a gift, or is it a reward? If it is a reward, then eternal life is earned by good works.

"Putra-Nya" means "His Son." In Indonesian, adjectives, and pronouns denoting ownership or possession, follow the noun they modify. So, "Putra" means "Son," and "Nya" means "His."

"Yang" in this context means "which is," and often must be added when translating into Indonesian to make a sentence read smoothly, in which case it should be in italics.

"Tunggal" means "only." So, "Putra-Nya yang tunggal" means "His only Son." There would be no problem here were it not for the fact that the word "begotten" is left out! The word "begotten" is very important because it refers to the fact that Jesus is God's Son in the sense of being physically born from a human mother. The Greek word *μονογενῆ* means "only begotten" (not "unique") in spite of the denial of this fact by the Westcott-and-Hort-loving crowd. Unbelieving theologians hate the term "only begotten" being used in this verse because it directly acknowledges that Jesus Christ was physically born of a human virgin with God as his Father. All believers are sons of God spiritually speaking, but we are not "only begotten" sons.

"Supaya" means "so that."

"Setiap" means "each." This is another problem. "Setiap" should be "barangsiapa" which means "whosoever." "Whosoever" implies that anyone can be saved if he believes, but "each" does not so imply.

"Orang" means "person."

"Yang percaya" means "which believes."

"Kepada-Nya" means "in Him" or "toward Him."

"Tidak" means "no" or "not" or "does not."

"Akan" means "will."

"Binasa" means "destroyed." This word "binasa" is another problem. The correct word for use here is "musnah," which means "perish." Perish implies a loss of life. While destroyed does not. If all a man's possessions are burned up in a fire, he may correctly say he has been destroyed, but if he is still alive he hasn't perished. In the context of this verse, perished points to the second death in the Lake of Fire. Destroyed is a much weaker word than perish.

"Melainkan" means "but" or "to the contrary." This is bad grammar; melainkan is correctly used only with nouns. The correct word to use here is "tetapi,"

which also means “but” or “to the contrary,” but is used with verbs. Of course, this is not important theologically. The following words, though, *are* important theologically.

“Dapat” means “can” or “is able.”

“Memperoleh” means “to earn, win, acquire, or obtain something by working for it.”

“Hidup” means “life.”

“Yang kekal” means “which is eternal.”

By adding the word “dapat” (can), and replacing what should be “mempunyai” (have) with “memperoleh” (to earn, win, acquire, or obtain by working for), this vitally important verse has been changed in the ILT to say the exact opposite of what Jesus actually said! This is how John 3:16 in the ILT reads to an Indonesian:

Because God so loved this world, that he awarded his only Son to people of a lower status, so that each person which believes in him will not be destroyed, but can earn eternal life by working for it.

We know from Eph. 2:8-9 that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ alone, not of works lest any man should boast. But the implication given by the ILT is that the believer in Christ *can earn* salvation by *working for it*, but might not do so, and that believer might therefore end up in Hell. That, my friends, is a deathly dangerous mistranslation, and this same error is also found in verse 15. The ILT translation is afflicted with fatal heart disease. Of what value is a Bible in which John 3:16 has been so corrupted?

Let us look now at verse 36 of this same chapter. This time I’ll not bore you with another language lesson of the whole verse, but will simply give you the English translation of the ILT translation. In the King James Bible, the verse reads, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” In the ILT it has been changed to read like the corrupt Revised Standard Version: “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.” Note that “he that believeth not the Son” has been changed to “he who does not obey the Son,” thus once again teaching the exact opposite of what Jesus actually said! In Indonesian, what should be the word “memercayai” (believes) has been changed to “mentaati” (obeys). This is an erroneous translation of the most dangerous kind, for it will send souls to Hell if believed.

Other serious facts about John chapter 3 in the ILT

No difference is made between singular and plural pronouns in the ILT. Words are added in just about every verse without putting them in italics. In verse 2, what should be translated “mujizat-mujizat” (miracles) is translated as “tanda-tanda” (signs). [To continue our Indonesian lesson, in Indonesian nouns are made plural by repeating them.]

In verses 3 and 7 what should be “dilahirkan kembali” (born again) has been translated “dilahirkan dari atas” (born from above) in the ILT. While it is true that ἀνωθεν is translated “from above” in verse 31 of this chapter in the KJV, it is *not* true that ἀνωθεν is mistranslated as “born again” in verses 3 and 7 in the KJV. The correct translation is determined by the context. In Mat. 27:51 and Mark 15:38, ἀνωθεν is properly translated “from the top.” In Luke 1:3, ἀνωθεν is properly translated “from the very first.” And in Gal. 4:9, ἀνωθεν is properly translated as “again,” with the context showing clearly that ἀνωθεν could not possibly mean “from above” in this verse: “how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again (ἀνωθεν) to be in bondage?” (Gal 4:9 KJV). Would anyone dare say that this verse means, “ye desire from above to be in bondage.” So, it is not the King James Bible translators who are in error about how to translate ἀνωθεν, but rather it is the translators of the ILT who erred by copying Jay P. Green’s error (see below).

In verses 13 and 14, “Son” has been changed to “child” in the ILT.

And in verse 14, “even so must the Son of man be lifted up” has been changed to “even so ought the Son of man be lifted up.” Christ was saying that his death on the cross was not just something that “ought” to happen, but rather something that “must” happen in order for us to be saved.

In verse 28, Χριστός should be translated “Kristus” (Christ), but is instead translated “Mesias” (Messiah) in the ILT. While it is true that Christ means Messiah, a translator must translate, not interpret. The Greek transliteration for Messiah is Μεσσίας (see Joh 1:41), but the Greek word found in this verse in the Textus Receptus is Χριστός, not Μεσσίας.

The source text of the ILT

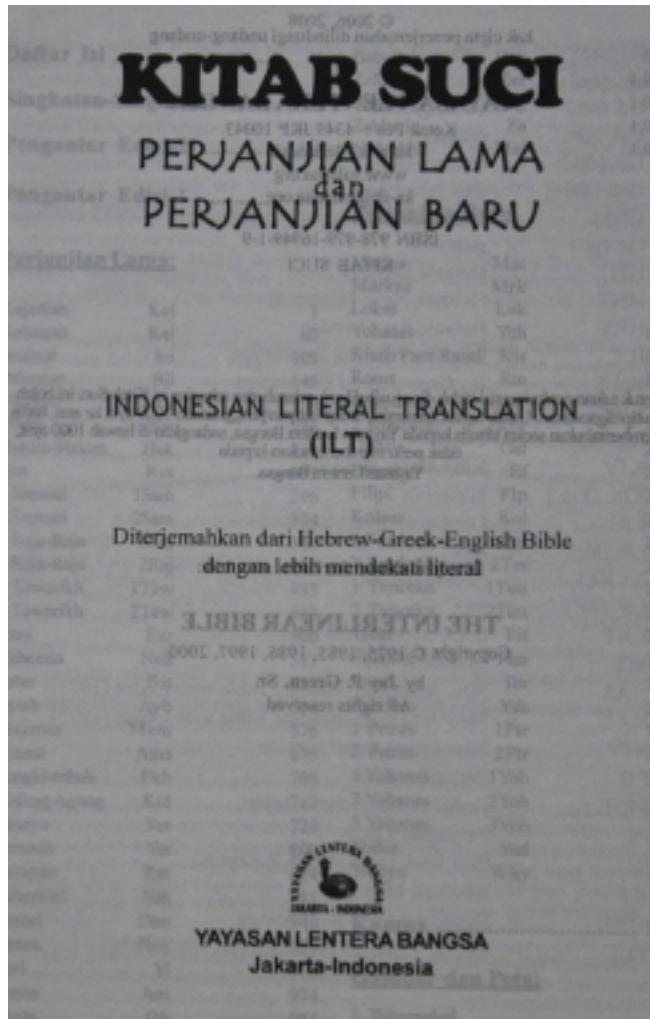


Figure 2: Photograph of the title page of the Indonesian Literal Translation.

Is the Indonesian Literal Translation actually translated directly from the original Hebrew and Greek texts? It appears so at first glance, unless one pays close attention to detail. The title page says:

INDONESIAN LITERAL TRANSLATION

(ILT)

Diterjemahkan dari Hebrew-Greek-English Bible

dengan lebih mendekati literal

Note the last two lines, which mean, literally, “Translated from the Hebrew-Greek-English Bible, with more close to the literal.” This title page can be viewed on-line here: http://issuu.com/sahabatilah/docs/ks-ilt_edisi2?mode=a_p

The word “English” is the first clue that the ILT is not actually translated from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. Then at the bottom of the next page (page 5 of the same URL as above) we find:

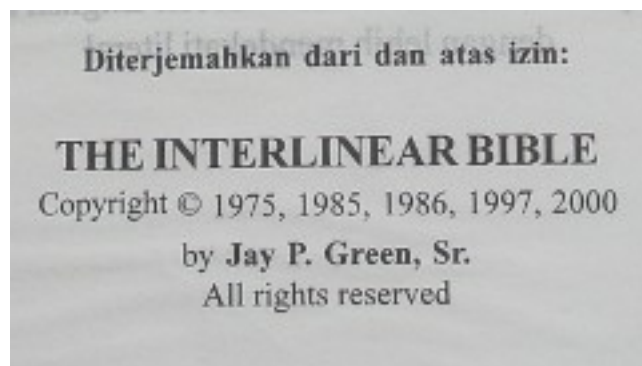


Figure 3: The back of the title page of the ILT. “Diiterjemahkan dari dan atas izin” means “translated from and with permission [of].”

Permission is not needed to translate directly from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. This is another sure and plain sign that the ILT was translated mainly, if not entirely, from the English words of Jay P. Green, Sr’s English language translations, and not from the original language texts.

Green’s Interlinear Bible is actually two Bibles in one. In the right column of each page is found the interlinear, and in the left column is found Green’s English translation called the KJ3-Literal Translation Bible. **On page ix of the ILT it is plainly stated that officials of Yayasa Lentera Bangsa, the publisher of the ILT, met with Green in Lafayette, Indiana, USA on the 21 of September of 2005 to sign an agreement granting them permission to translate from Green’s The Interlinear Bible, and his Literal Translation of the Bible, and his KJ3-Literal Translation Bible.**

Jay P. Green’s true feeling about the Textus Receptus and the KJ Bible of 1611

A translation can be no better than the text from which it is translated (but can be far worse). It is obvious that many of the errors found in the ILT were simply the translations of errors found in Green’s translations. Green obviously called his Literal Translation Bible the KJ3 in an attempt to tap into the King James Bible market. But it is interesting to note his true feeling about the KJ Bible.

There is no need to make a new translation of the Bible if there is already a good one in the target language. Jay P. Green, Sr. believed there were many errors in the KJV, which in his translation he endeavored to "correct." Here is what Green states in the preface to his *Literal Translation Bible*:

"The King James Version (1611, latest revision 1769) was the predominant Bible in the English-speaking world for over 360 years. However, it was not a perfect translation of the Hebrew and Greek words before them. Therefore it does not report to the reader all the very words that God wrote (breathed out - see 2 Timothy 3:16). Because of this, the reader of that version...cannot know precisely...what God has written for the guidance of all peoples. This is because those knowing Hebrew and Greek have not consistently translated literally and word-for-word the original words God has written." (page vii)

The preface to Green's translation also claims that the King James of 1611 translators added to and subtracted from God's words, and that Green's translation is the first one in history to produce an English Bible with all of God's words:

"...every English version in the past and present add words to God's words, and take away many of his words...For the first time you have a Bible that has no words but God's own words. This the first time ever a translator has produced a Bible with God's words, all of them." (page ix)

"'Miracle' is not a Scriptures word" according to Green. Nor is "begat" which he claims should be "regenerate." (page xv)

So, according to Green all of the pastors and churches using the King James Bible are using a Bible that has kept people in ignorance for over 360 years, and does not contain all of the words of God, and has even added some words of men. Therefore, we cannot know precisely what God has written by reading it. And God performed signs, not miracles as we thought.

Also, Green did NOT accept Acts 9:5-6 and the extremely important 1 John 5:7 as "true Scripture," claiming that they were added to the Greek text by men not moved by the Holy Ghost. In his preface he says, "we have not deleted these from the Greek text as supplied by the Trinitarian Bible Society — though we do not accept them as true Scripture." So, in his translation he puts those verses in italics to mark them as spurious. If those verses aren't true Scripture, then they

must be bogus and perhaps lies. Why does Green include these verses at all if he doesn't accept that they are "true Scripture"? Perhaps because he knew he would be regarded as a heretic by if he did. Nevertheless, he couldn't resist trying to destroy people's faith in those verses by placing them in italics. By including verses he believed to be bogus, he has purposely produced a translation that he believes adds to "the words of the prophecy of this book" (Rev 22:18), but which in reality "take away from" the words by marking some of them as illegitimate with italics.

While these verses are not in italics in the ILT (nor are any words the ILT translators added put in italics!), the fact that these verses are in italics in the source text from which the ILT was translated still discredits them.

Errors translated from Green's KJ3-LTB into the ILT

We were able to find the following errors in the LTB and the ILT within just a few minutes by simply looking for verses generally mistranslated in almost all Westcott and Hort based translations.

In Daniel 3, the KJ Bible correctly reads:

23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 24 Then Nebuchadnezzar the king was astonished, and rose up in haste, and spake, and said unto his counsellors, Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? They answered and said unto the king, True, O king. 25 He answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. (Dan 3:23-25 KJV)

The "Son of God" in the furnace with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego was obviously the preincarnate Jesus Christ himself.

Green's KJ3-LTB changes the last part of verse 25 of this passage to read "and the form of the fourth is like a son of *the* gods."

The Indonesian translation is even worse: "Dan rupa dari yang keempat itu adalah seperti anak ilah." The

preface of the ILT explains that the Arabic word “ilah” (which actually means god in Arabic) is used in the ILT to mean *false god*. So, translating their translation back into English we have: “And the form of the fourth is like a false god’s child.” Thus making Jesus Christ to be a child—even female perhaps—of a false god!

In Isaiah 14:12 Green changed “Lucifer” to “shining star,” and the ILT translated his error to become their error also.

In the KJ Bible, Luke 2:11-14 correctly translates the Textus Receptus to read as follows:

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Luk 2:11-14 KJV)

In this verse the translators of the ILT not only deviated from the Textus Receptus, but also deviated from Green’s translation, and changed the last part of verse 14 to read: “dan damai sejahtera di antara manusia yang berkenan” (and peace among men which please [God]). It is pretty obvious that they simply copied the meaning of the text found in the Westcott and Hort based translation of Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia.

Conclusion

The Indonesian Literal Translation translators correctly translated God as “Elohim” instead of as “Allah.” But that alone doesn’t make the ILT usable. By translating from Green’s English translation, they copied many of his errors. And by changing key verses to teach the exact opposite of what the Bible actually teaches about how to be saved, they totally failed to meet Indonesia’s need for an accurate translation of the Bible.

Our translation is still very badly needed. And so, with your prayers and financial support, and by God’s grace, we will continue to translate until the whole Bible has been completed. Please keep this translation project in your daily prayers and support it. Many thanks to everyone already supporting this ministry!

The correct translation of John 3:16 into the Indonesian language is as follows:

Karena Elohim sedemikian mengasihi dunia ini, sehingga Ia sudah memberikan Putra kandungNya yang tunggal, supaya barangsiapa yang percaya kepadaNya tidak akan musnah, tetapi mempunyai hidup yang kekal.



Figure 4: Photo of the cover of the Indonesian Literal Translation, also called the ILT. The ILT has altered John 3:16 to teach salvation by works, and is NOT the work of Dr. Louis A. Turk or of his translation team.

The Indonesian Literal Translation is NOT the work of Dr. Louis A. Turk or of his translation committee. Dr. Turk’s team is truly translating the New Testament from the Textus Receptus Greek text, with diligent comparison to the King James Bible. The Old Testament will be translated from the Ben Chayyim edition of the Masoretic Hebrew text, as was the King James Bible. Unlike the Indonesian Literal Translation, their translation reads exactly like the King James Bible. It is truly a translation, not an alteration. Unlike the Indonesian Literal Translation, the translation by Dr. Turk’s team teaches eternal salvation by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not of works lest any man should boast, as do the original language texts.