



# The Wartburg Project

February Report  
2017



The Wartburg Project is a group of WELS and ELS pastors, professors, teachers, and laypeople who are working together to produce a new translation of the Bible called the *Evangelical Heritage Version*® or *EHV*®.

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## Progress Reports

### TRANSLATION

We have drafts of all OT translations except for two chapters of one book, which we are awaiting from one translator.

### 2017 PREVIEW EDITION

The Northwestern Publishing House 2017 preview edition of the New Testament and Psalms is nearing completion. The paperback preview edition will be available this summer, God willing. Watch for announcements on pre-publication orders.

### LECTIONARIES

Some congregations are using and evaluating the lessons for the first half of the 2016-2017 church year. They can be downloaded from the [Lectionaries](#) link on our website (both those lectionaries used in WELS and in the LCMS). Congregations can use them free of charge. Other individuals and groups are testing them in their own private reading. We welcome suggestions for improvements.

The testing of the lectionaries provides much opportunity for constructive discussion. One recent example was that some readers asked about this passage from the story of David and Bathsheba: “She came to him, and he lay down with her. (She had been purifying herself from her menstrual uncleanness.) She then returned to her house.

### EDITING

We expect the editing of the poetical books to be completed by the beginning of March.

Isaiah and Jeremiah are ready for some final technical and popular reviews. Technical reviews of Ezekiel have been submitted and are ready to be processed. Finalizing these three books will be our focus over the next couple of months.

Northwestern Publishing House has set-ups ready for about 2/3 of the entire Bible, so we have a steady stream of the printouts for final proof-reading.

The woman became pregnant, so she sent a message and told David, “I am pregnant.” The question, of course, was about the word “menstrual.” Does it clarify anything in the meaning of the passage that would not be just as clear with the simple word “uncleanness”? It does, since without the words “purify from menstrual uncleanness” some readers might think Bathsheba was just taking a bath to prepare for her meeting with David, and they could miss the reason that the author included this seemingly irrelevant piece of information. This information makes two points: If Bathsheba has just completed the seven-day time of purification after a woman’s monthly period that is prescribed in Leviticus 15:19-24, it is certain the child is David’s not Uriah’s. Perhaps more important is

## LECTIONARIES (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

the second point: David and Bathsheba were more scrupulous about avoiding the ceremonial impurity incurred by contact with blood than they were about the moral impurity incurred by adultery. This highlights the hypocrisy of the sin. When we reach the study Bible level of EHV, these points will be made clear by the cross references to Leviticus 15 and other relevant passages. It does not seem that moving the reference to menstruation to a footnote would make the passage more child-friendly, since it is right in the middle of a story of an act of adultery that results in pregnancy.

Editors of our EHV Bible history books and possible children's Bible can, of course, deal with the issue of sexual references in the Bible on a case-by-case basis.

The issue of sexual language in the base version of the Bible is dealt with in our online course, "Between a Rock and a Hard Place," which is available in the library resources section of our website.

Remember that the Old Testament lessons, especially the prophets, have not yet undergone final editing. We can still incorporate changes in them.

The readings for the second half of the year will be made operative well before the time for their use.

## Coming Studies

As the date for the publication of the 2017 edition approaches, we will be issuing a number of study documents for those who would like to make a more in-depth study of the issues of Bible translation in general and the EHV in particular. Three that have been scheduled are:

- 1) A pamphlet collecting four articles
  - a. Why should I try the EHV?
  - b. What were the greatest difficulties encountered in producing the EHV?
  - c. What are some of the features that distinguish the EHV from other translations?
  - d. Becoming accustomed to a new translation
- 2) An in-depth 40-page study of the issue of prophecy in translation
- 3) A comparison of key doctrinal passages on the basis of ten translations

These will be issued about one a month over the next three months.

## FAQ 32 — “Aliens”

**I noticed that one of the recent lectionary readings used the term “aliens.” Isn’t this going to confuse people, who will think of ET or green creatures with big bug eyes? Couldn’t we use a term like “foreigners” instead of “aliens”?**

An inescapable feature of living languages is that words have particular (or we could even say peculiar) meaning and different emotional impact in different contexts. An essential part of being literate is that readers have to adjust to different meaning in different contexts.

Some people have misgivings about the translation “aliens” because they think of ET. A stronger argument against “aliens” is that it may become politically incorrect if “illegal aliens” become “undocumented workers.”

We will first comment on the words *aliens* and *foreigners* in the Bible as a whole. This is an important issue in the Old Testament, in which the distinction of these terms expresses an important legal concept. The terms foreigners and aliens and temporary residents are not synonymous or interchangeable. They are overlapping but distinct categories.

The key Old Testament term in question is *ger*. Here is the EHV’s Old Testament rubric: *Ger* should be “resident aliens” or “aliens residing among you” in its first occurrence in a context, and “aliens” thereafter, particularly in political and legal contexts. *Gerim* were aliens permanently living in a land other than their place of origin. The term “foreigners” is not precise enough, because it is too inclusive a term. Not all foreigners were *gerim*. “Temporary residents” and “sojourners” are not precise enough either, because many *gerim* intended to stay in Canaan permanently, but they could never become “citizens.” Take the case of Isaac—he was native-born to Israel and was not a temporary resident, but he was still a *ger* in the view of his neighbors.

Early in the translation process for the EHV, we were almost convinced by the ET argument to move away from the term “resident aliens,” but when we were filling out some legal documents for our project, we accidentally discovered that “resident aliens” is still the legal term used in contemporary U.S. government documents. Even as I am writing this, the dispute over President Trump’s restriction on visitors from certain countries is very heated. The relevant laws governing the dispute, which are being read in the news media, repeatedly mention “aliens.”<sup>1</sup> The term still describes a recognized legal category (for how long, who knows?).

In most cases, therefore, our translators should stick with “resident aliens” or “aliens” for *gerim*; and use “foreigner” for combinations with *nakri*; “strangers” for *zar*; and “settlers among you” or “temporary residents” for *toshav*. The importance of preserving these distinctions is illustrated in the last verses of Exodus 12:

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<sup>1</sup> In this U.S. Law Code, the term “alien” is used 355 times: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/8/1182>. For example, the President of the United States read this paragraph to the press: “Whenever the President finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or non-immigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate.” The term “alien” is a proper legal term, a technical term of law.



*Abraham's Journey from  
Ur to Canaan.*

Oil on canvas  
by József Molnár. 1850.

<sup>43</sup>These are the regulations for the Passover: No foreigner is to eat of it. <sup>44</sup>Any slave you have bought may eat of it after you have circumcised him, <sup>45</sup>but a temporary resident and a hired worker may not eat of it. ... <sup>48</sup>An alien living among you who wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part, like one born in the land. No uncircumcised male may eat of it. <sup>49</sup>The same law applies to the native-born and to the alien living among you.

Foreigners and temporary residents could not eat the Passover; circumcised resident aliens could. NIV, NRSV, and now CSB, are almost the only other translations observing this distinction in Exodus 12, but they do not follow it consistently elsewhere. In some contexts, *foreigner* is not as precise as *alien*, so both terms must be used.

The legal distinction is less important in New Testament passages like 1 Peter 2:11, which is making a comparison rather than a legal distinction: "I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul."<sup>2</sup> Even here, the terms "aliens" and "temporary residents" express a Christian's relationship to the world more precisely than terms like "strangers" and "refugees."

There are many terms that might initially be confusing to readers because of the use or misuse of those terms in other contexts, but when it is necessary to observe precise distinctions, a translation must use the proper term and, if necessary, use footnotes to help readers understand. Fuller explanation sometimes must be left for study Bibles.

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<sup>2</sup> This is the only place the term "alien" is used in the EHV New Testament.

## Derived Works

As the electronic files for the EHV come closer to completion, we are in better position to give permissions to authors who want to produce works using the EHV translation. Some works of this nature already are available: the Passion History and the lectionaries. Others are completed and in the process of publication: a harmony of the Gospels and an evangelism pamphlet *Christ, the Cross, and You*. Others are in progress or in planning stages: a popular commentary on a New Testament book and a children's Bible history book. In more preliminary planning stages are catechisms and the study Bible. A publishing house (not NPH) has inquired about making an illustrated picture Bible using the EHV text. The final text of Psalms will soon be available to musicians who want to base compositions on the EHV text.

## Logo Contest

We are developing logos for EHV, WP (Wartburg Project, and WB (Wartburg Bible). The WP and WB logos can be the same design. The logos may consist of just the letters or the letters plus some other visual element. If you would like to design and submit a logo for consideration, you may send it to the response form of the website or perhaps it would be better to submit the logos as attachments to [wpbrugj@gmail.com](mailto:wpbrugj@gmail.com).

Below is a collection of various logos for popular Bible translations.



**NLT**  
*The Truth Made*  
**CLEAR**



**CHRISTIAN  
STANDARD  
BIBLE**

*Faithful and True*



## Some Recent FAQs

Our two most recent FAQs seem to be ripped right out of the headlines. FAQ 32 (included in this report) deals with the use of the term aliens in the Bible and the distinctions between *aliens*, *resident aliens*, *foreigners*, and *temporary residents*. The terms are not interchangeable.

FAQ 3b deals with the capitalization or non-capitalization of the pronouns that refer to God, including the Messiah. It has this strange number because this topic came up early in the translation topic as FAQ 3. The topic is back in the news because of the Christian Standard Bible's decision to remove the capitalization from such pronouns in its new edition. Because of the interest this has created in the topic, we are posting an expanded and updated version of this topic.

Until now our FAQs have been posted only by number. In the not too distant future you will be able to search them either by number or by topic.

## Article of the Month

Because of the interest in the topic and the length of the FAQ, the study of capitalization will also serve as the article of the month.

### Website

See our website ([wartburgproject.org](http://wartburgproject.org)) for more information relating to the EHV. See FAQ #15 on the Bible name. A paper explaining our name is posted in the "Library" section.

Sign up on the "Contact" page to receive free e-reports. Like us on Facebook to receive the latest updates posted there. (The purpose of our Facebook posting is not debate, but we've been able to share information with many people very quickly that way (sometimes close to 10,000).

We continue to be a "purely positive" effort, avoiding debates and controversy. We are just quietly trying our best to translate the Bible "to spread its light from age to age." So far, so good! God has richly blessed us. To God be the glory and praise for all of his blessings!



# February 2017

## PROGRESS CHART

Key
✓ Completed for publishing
● Tech review complete
○ Completed initial draft
+ Assigned or in progress
➤ Updated this month

### OLD TESTAMENT

Pentateuch	Historical I	Historical II	Poetical	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
✓ Genesis	✓ Joshua	✓ Ezra	➤ ✓ Job	➤ ● Isaiah	○ Hosea
✓ Exodus	✓ Judges	✓ Nehemiah	✓ Psalms	➤ ● Jeremiah	○ Joel
✓ Leviticus	✓ Ruth	✓ Esther	➤ ✓ Proverbs	○ Lamentations	○ Amos
✓ Numbers	✓ 1 Samuel		➤ ✓ Ecclesiastes	➤ ● Ezekiel	● Obadiah
✓ Deuteronomy	✓ 2 Samuel		✓ Song of Songs	○ Daniel	○ Jonah
	✓ 1 Kings				○ Micah
	✓ 2 Kings				● Nahum
	✓ 1 Chronicles				● Habakkuk
	✓ 2 Chronicles				● Zephaniah
					● Haggai
					+ Zechariah
					● Malachi

### NEW TESTAMENT

Gospels – Acts	Epistles I	Epistles II and Prophetic
✓ Matthew	✓ Romans	✓ Hebrews
✓ Mark	✓ 1 Corinthians	✓ James
✓ Luke	✓ 2 Corinthians	✓ 1 Peter
✓ John	✓ Galatians	✓ 2 Peter
✓ Acts	✓ Ephesians	✓ 1 John
	✓ Philipians	✓ 2 John
✓ Passion History	✓ Colossians	✓ 3 John
	✓ 1 Thessalonians	✓ Jude
	✓ 2 Thessalonians	✓ Revelation
	✓ 1 Timothy	
	✓ 2 Timothy	
	✓ Titus	
	✓ Philemon	

Completed Initial Drafts are in various phases of review and editing. The Wartburg Project process is rigorous and will take time. Some books are being carefully checked by “technical reviewers.” Other books are being read by “popular reviewers.” After all of this input, we seek to produce the most accurate and clear translation we can.

**We are on track to publish a New Testament and Psalms special preview edition in summer of 2017, God willing.**