

## Are There Literal Translations? (continued exchange with Edward D. Andrews)

### Description

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This post continues an exchange I've been having with Edward D. Andrews regarding translating Genesis 1:1 and translation philosophy. You can read our exchange in order by following these links: [my original post](#) > [his blog post replying to my original post](#) > [my reply](#) > his comment (scroll down to the comments section in the last link) > and then my next response is what you can read below.

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Hi Edward

I hope you're doing well since our last exchange. First, I want to express that I appreciate you saying that you may have mistaken my intended purpose. It never bodes well when someone is unwilling to consider the possibility that they may have mistaken the meaning of their conversation partner. It's just such a normal thing to happen, especially when two people are only beginning to interact. I certainly don't take misunderstandings personally or regard it as an offense. While I'll try my best to understand you accurately, there's always a chance that I'll misunderstand something you say, so if that happens at any point, please feel free to let me know and to clarify your meaning.

Okay, so to the subject of literal translation: In your comment on [my previous blog post](#), you mentioned that if two translations are literal, they should read the same. Specifically, you said, "Now, both are not literal translations. If both were literal translations; then, they would read the same." I'm not entirely sure what you mean by this. On the surface, it sounds like you're saying that if two translations differ in their wording, they can't both be literal translations. But this would imply that there can only be one literal translation, which isn't the impression I've been getting from other things you've said. For example, in [your article](#) responding to [my original post on Genesis](#), you identified several translations that you consider "literal translations." The list you gave is: KJV, YLT, ASV, RSV, NASB, UASV. Now, obviously, these translations are not exactly the same. Their wordings differ from one another on numerous occasions. Maybe in your comment, you were using the word "literal" in a more strict sense. If that's the case, I'm totally fine with it, so long as we also keep in mind that you use it in a less strict sense as well since you list several translations that differ from one another as being "literal translations."

When I said in [my response to you](#) that both translations I compared in [my original post](#) were "quite literal word-for-word translations of Genesis 1:1," I was using the word "literal" in a sense more akin to how you used it in [your blog post](#). In other words, I was using it in a sense that allows for differences in wording. Why do I consider both translations of Genesis 1:1 to be "quite



When it comes to translating this passage into English, the translation should inform the reader of the facts of the Hebrew text, including these facts.

I had considered making an additional post addressing something else you said in your comment, but conversations that go in multiple directions at once can be hard to keep track of. Plus, I try to find the most fruitful direction for discussion and, since this is a public blog, one that will be of benefit to the readers.