

# HOW TO READ THE BIBLE FOR ALL ITS WORTH

CHAPTER 2 – THE BASIC TOOL:  
A GOOD TRANSLATION

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- NKJV: “If any man thinks that he is behaving improperly toward his virgin . . .”
- NASB: “If any man thinks that he is acting unbecomingly toward his virgin daughter . . .”
- NIV: “If anyone is worried that he might not be acting honorably toward the virgin he is engaged to . . .”
- NEB: “If a man has a partner in celibacy and feels that he is not behaving properly towards her . . .”

# COMPILATION OF SCRIPTURE

- 66 Books
- 40 Authors
- 1,500 years
- 3 Languages

# LANGUAGES OF SCRIPTURE

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- Aramaic – Half of Daniel and 2 passages in Ezra
- Greek – The New Testament

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- Consult commentaries to analyze differences

# THE SCIENCE OF TRANSLATION

- Text
- Textual Criticism - The wording of the actual text

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  - Textual Criticism - The wording of the actual text
- Language
  - Transferring of words and ideas from one language to another

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM

- Controls of Textual Criticism

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- External Evidence

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- Controls of Textual Criticism
- External Evidence
  - The character and the quality of the manuscripts
- Internal Evidence
  - The mistakes copyists were known to make

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM – EXTERNAL

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- Sources of Text – Old Testament

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  - Medieval copies with careful copying tradition – 10<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> C.
  - Hebrew manuscripts in Masoretic Text (MT) – 9<sup>th</sup> C.
  - Earlier Hebrew manuscripts, Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) – 2<sup>nd</sup> C. BC
  - Ancient Manuscripts, (Greek Septuagint LXX) – 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> C. BC

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  - Documentation found from early Roman empire supports the Egyptian record

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  - Focused on copyists and authors
  - What mistakes were common to copyists?
  - What language and style did the author normally employ?

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM – INTERNAL

- 1 Samuel 8:16

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- NKJV/NASB – “he will take...your finest young men and your donkeys”

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- 1 Samuel 8:16
- NKJV/NASB – “he will take...your finest young men and your donkeys”
- NRSV/NIV – “he will take...your cattle and your donkeys”

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM – INTERNAL

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- NKJV – “Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s”
- NIV – “Therefore honor God with your bodies.”

# TEXTUAL CRITICISM – INTERNAL

- The words “in your spirit, which are God’s” are not found in all early and best manuscripts
- They appear in the late medieval period
- Added later to combat Greek philosophy’s low view of the body. This is not from Paul and not inspired.

# LANGUAGE

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- How ideas and words are translated from one language to another is a science and complicated.

# LANGUAGE – IMPORTANT TOPICS

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- Original Language – The language the text is being translated *from*.

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- Receptor Language – The language the text is being translated *into*.

# LANGUAGE – IMPORTANT TOPICS

- Historical Distance – How different is the original language from the receptor (words, grammar, idioms, culture, and history)?

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- Formal Equivalence – A “literal” translation remaining as close to the original as possible.

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- Functional Equivalence – A “dynamic” translation allowing the text to mean the same thing in either language.

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- History and facts remain intact, but language, grammar, and style are updated.

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- Free Translation – A “paraphrase” allowing ideas to be brought from one language to another without keeping any historical distance.
- Easily can become “too free” as the translator embeds their perspective into the original text.

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- Holy Kiss = Handshake of Christian love

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- All theories of translation have challenges and must be updated and challenged.

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- Free Translation which made Paul's Letter to "Rome", Paul's letter to "Washington"!

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- Robert Young's literal translation from 1862 butchered 1 Corinthians 5:1
  - It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife.

# LANGUAGE – IMPORTANT TOPICS

- “Whoredom is actually heard of among you, and such whoredom as is not even named in the nations – as that one hath the wife of the father.”

# LANGUAGE

- “Best theory of translation is the one that remains as faithful as possible to *both* the original and the receptor language – without losing the meaning of the original language...”

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- Use a literal translation as a secondary source (NKJV/NASB)

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- Free translations (Message/The Living Bible) are interesting, but care must be taken when reading

# LANGUAGE

Formal Equivalence  
(literal)

1. KJV

2. NKJV

NASB

HCSB

RSV

NRSV

Functional Equivalence  
(dynamic)

NIV<sup>1</sup>

NIV<sup>2</sup>

NAB

NJB

GNB

REB

JB

NLT

Free

NEB

LB

The Message

ESV

# TRANSLATION – PROBLEM AREAS

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- Weights, Measures, and Money
  - Matthew 18:23-24 (talents vs gold)
  - Isaiah 5:10
    - Bath = 6 gallons, Homer = 360 lbs, Ephah = 36 lbs

# TRANSLATION – PROBLEM AREAS

- Euphemisms

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- Use the *formal equivalent* which may be offensive
- Use a *functionally equivalent euphemism*

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- Euphemisms
- 1 Samuel 24:3

# TRANSLATION – PROBLEM AREAS

- Euphemisms
- 1 Samuel 24:3
  - KJV - Saul went in to cover his feet.
  - NIV – Saul went in to relieve himself
  - TLB – Saul went into a cave to go to the bathroom

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- Vocabulary

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- Functional Equivalence here tends to create a clearer meaning (flesh = body, human nature, sin nature, worldly perspective, etc)

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    - “Ripe” is the wordplay, yet it is lost in a formal equivalence

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- 1 Samuel Chapters 1-4

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  - 1 Samuel Chapters 1-4
    - Kabed = Heavy
    - Kabod = Honor
    - Ichabod = No glory

# TRANSLATION – PROBLEM AREAS

- Euphemisms
- 1 Samuel Chs 1-4
  - Eli died because he was “heavy” (*kabed*) and fell and broke his neck. He was *kabed* because he did not honor (*kabod*) God through the eating of sacrificial meat and therefore the glory of God left Israel (*Ichabod*).

# TRANSLATION – PROBLEM AREAS

- Euphemisms

- 1 Samuel Chs 1-4

- Eli died because he was “heavy” (*kabed*) and fell and broke his neck. He was *kabed* because he did not honor (*kabod*) God through the eating of sacrificial meat and therefore the glory of God left Israel (*Ichabod*).

- No *Kabod* made Eli *Kabed* and resulted in *Ichabod*.

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- Formal Equivalents become difficult to read when they are too structured.
- Application of “possession”
  - 1 Corinthians 3:9 – “God’s Co-Workers” or “Co-workers in God’s service”

# TRANSLATION – PROBLEM AREAS

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- Psalm 1

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- NRSV and NASB are good updates to KJV. NRSV is easier to read than NASB
- The Message, Amplified, The Living Bible and other Free Translations are not study Bibles

# NEXT WEEK - HOMEWORK

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- We will study it together next week.