

INTRODUCTION TO BIBLICAL LANGUAGES

by Franklin Jabini

An introduction to the original languages of the Bible by Dr. Franklin Jabini, giving theology students access to Scripture in its original Hebrew and Greek. The work provides foundational tools for studying the Bible in its source languages.

77 Chapters

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Recommendation

Recommendation

In his book, Introduction to Biblical languages, Dr Franklin Jabini contributes creatively to the growing collection of resources that give theology students access to the Bible in its original languages without struggling through one or two years of Hebrew and Greek grammar. By introducing students to two open access internet resources, E-Sword and The Word, he guides them through the first steps of interpreting the original Greek and Hebrew texts of the Bible. Traditional grammar courses in Greek and Hebrew for theology students produce a small number of Bible translators and some language specialists, but not many church ministers who regularly use the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament to prepare sermons and Bible studies. This book aims at achieving the latter objective. By opting for two free internet resources, Dr Jabini's approach is eminently sensible, especially for students in church communities across the global South with limited funds and limited access to Greek and Hebrew specialists.

Direct engagement with the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures by leaders of a Christian community is an essential prerequisite for a deeply contextual theology. No authentic self-theologising can take place without this engagement, since it enables a community to make creative connections between its own world and the life-worlds of Israel, Jesus and the apostles. This book will help theological students become competent users of these resources and thereby (hopefully) life-long creative interpreters of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures within their contexts.

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Foreword

Foreword

Learning the biblical languages has long haunted seminary students. The gifted few, who aspire to spend a lifetime of studying, teaching, and writing from the original languages, embrace the task with great gusto. However, the overwhelming majority, who feel neither called to such 'scholarly' pursuits nor capable of mastering the languages, labour through it with much anguish, memorise as much morphology and vocabulary as they can for the examinations, and then promptly forget all the forms. They may spend hundreds of hours studying Greek and Hebrew in seminary, but never use any of it in their ministries.

What has changed? Bible software! Modern software programmes do a lot of the donkey work for us. At the click of a mouse, we can open several lexicons and see complete parsing information for Hebrew or Greek words. This ability to access grammatical information without memorising paradigms opens up new ways of 'learning' the languages. By harnessing the power and appreciating the limitations and dangers of using software programmes for Bible study, we can gain many of the benefits of learning Hebrew and Greek without spending any time memorising paradigms. What is more, we can begin reaping the rewards instantly and we can keep using the tools in our day-to-day ministries.

Dr Jabini's Introduction to Biblical Languages has a modest aim: to teach students and pastors to use the original language tools found in software programmes profitably and responsibly. Jabini works from the two best free programmes currently available—e-Sword and The Word—because the leading commercial products are too expensive for many students. What I like most about Introduction to Biblical Languages is the practical way in which Jabini teaches us how to use good tools responsibly. With dozens of practical examples from both Testaments, he shows us how to use the tools. He shows the benefits we can derive from them, and cautions as to the limitations. His treatment is balanced and helpful.

This is a book for thinking practitioners. If you are a preacher or teacher of God's Word and wish to improve your exegetical skills without spending years learning to read Hebrew and Greek fluently, Introduction to Biblical Languages is a great place to start. I have no doubt it will add depth and breadth to your Bible study.

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Vice-Principal

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Preface

Preface

This book is an unusual introduction to biblical languages. Instead of following the traditional way of introducing the languages with lots of memorisation, I am using two software programs which analyse the text of the Bible. You do not have to memorise paradigm after paradigm any longer to be able to analyse God's word in its original languages.

I have also prepared a DVD with the two software programs, and all the resources in the public domain listed in chapter 12. The DVD is given away free as part of the printed book. Those who download the free edition of this book can download the resources from the websites listed in chapter 12.

I pray that this book will help you to appreciate the original languages of the bible, and that it will encourage you to study them.

Midrand, April 2011

Franklin S Jabini

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Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Why study a biblical language? A student once made the following comment:

O, Latin is a dead tongue,

As dead as it can be.

It killed the ancient Romans;

And now it's killing me.

For many people, learning biblical languages is like that. Biblical languages in their original form are dead, and it seems like they are also killing those who learn them.

Some people, therefore, are not prepared to study these languages. On top of that, research has shown that more than 70% of the people who studied Hebrew and Greek at seminary are not using them once they finished their training. During their years in seminary, they spent many hours every week studying and memorising Hebrew and Greek forms. They finally passed their exams and completed their studies. And yet, most of them will not go beyond using a few Hebrew and Greek words during a sermon. They do not make full use of the Hebrew and Greek grammar. They only do 'word studies'. Seminaries have had students who failed their Hebrew and Greek exams many times and could not graduate. If this is the case, why do seminaries focus so much on biblical languages? Why not offer a course on how to do word studies? There are many examples of great preachers who have not studied Greek or Hebrew. There are equally many scholars who are well versed in Greek and Hebrew who have caused serious damage to the church. So why pay attention to the original languages?

Christians believe that God gave us His word in these languages. It is therefore critical for the church to be able to read and study the word of God in the original language. We cannot just base our beliefs on a translation. And, if we do not study the languages, how are we going to continue with the work of Bible translation?

It is important for us to go back to the source languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Christian scholars who depend on the Holy Spirit's guidance for understanding the Scriptures will reap much fruit from their knowledge of biblical languages.

Interpretation of the Bible depends on far more than just a study of the original languages. It depends principally on a vital connection with the author of the book and a continual dependence on the Holy Spirit (Clark 1983:215).

It has proved to be correct that some of the great Christian preachers in the history of Christianity were able to use the word of God in its original languages. In fact, William Carey, the great missionary to India, who was not well educated, taught himself biblical languages. He used that

knowledge to translate the word of God into many languages in India. Martin Luther knew Greek and Hebrew. He was able to see what the Scripture really said about the doctrine of justification by faith. John Calvin knew Greek and Hebrew. The great evangelist Billy Graham studied the word in Greek, and was able to explain it so that simple people could understand it. Frederick F Bruce, Gordon Fee, John Macarthur and many great preachers and teachers of our generation are firm believers in the importance for preachers of the original languages of the word of God.

It is important, however, to find ways to teach and study the biblical languages, so that it will be attractive and easier to use them in the busy life of Christian ministry. Memorising forms and paradigms of the Greek and Hebrew language is not a divinely inspired method for language study. Fortunately, there are people who saw the need for another approach to the languages, and contributed to it. Dr William Mounce wrote a Greek grammar that became the standard for theological students: *Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar and Workbook* 3rd edition (2009). But Mounce realised that not everybody learns Greek in the way he presented in his book. He therefore wrote another volume called *Greek for the Rest of Us* (2003). Lee Fields wrote a companion for Hebrew called *Hebrew for the Rest of Us* (2008).

Earlier in 1976, Professor Edward W Goodrick wrote a book called *Do it Yourself Hebrew and Greek: A guide to Biblical Language Tools*. Professor Goodrick taught Greek for many years at a theological school. Just like many teachers, he realised the need for a book that would help most of us. In 1983, Walter J Clark published his *How to Use New Testament Greek Study Aids*.

This course takes a different approach. Two free computer programs, E-Sword (ES) and The Word (TW), are being used to introduce you to the use of the languages. The principles taught here will also help when using commercial software such as BibleWorks and Libronix. These two programs come with much more and more up to date resources than ES and TW. They also have audio capacity (see Jabini 2010). For the student at the beginners level, ES and TW are the places to start.

Thousands of people are using ES and TW on a daily basis. E-Sword was developed by Rick Meyers. He was born in 1962 in California in the USA. He became a Christian when he was eighteen years old. He started the project in 2000. His motto is: 'Freely you received, freely give' (Matt. 10:8).

By mid-2009, the number of downloads for the program reached nine million. In 2010, the program was downloaded from 225 countries around the world. Its interface was translated into many languages. E-Sword comes with sound Bible-based resources.

Costas Stergiou released the first version of The Word in 2003. Costas lives in Greece and worked for a telecommunications company, as a programmer. What started as a program for personal use became an international software program. Costas' vision is:

To provide top quality software to aid fellow believers in the teaching and proclamation of God's Word free of charge.

These programs have some wonderful resources that can be a great help in learning and working with the original languages. The purpose of this course is to help you to make better use of the Greek and Hebrew resources which are available in these programs. It will help students of the

word to go deeper into the word. It will help preachers to preach the word of God, based on a careful study. Sometimes preachers come up with fanciful explanations of the word that are not based on a careful analysis of the text under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Have you heard sermons on the differences between the Greek words for love? Have you heard messages on the differences between the Greek words logos and rhēma? And, are they correct?

Using E-Sword and The Word for beginners

1.2. Using E-Sword and The Word for beginners

I will not explain how to use these programs. There are manuals which do that. It is assumed that you know how to operate these programs. If not, it is important to go through the manuals before you continue. You should be able to access the resources and adjust your screens. If necessary, you should be able to download additional resources.

The intention is to help you answer the following question: how can E-Sword and The Word help students of the word to make better use of the original languages? The focus will be on the original languages, with more attention to Greek.

1.2.1. First-year Greek

The traditional way of teaching the biblical languages is that in the first year there is a great focus on the morphology of the language. Morphology is the scientific study of the structure and form of words. Students should be able to decline the nouns and parse the verbs. Take the English verb 'was' for example. You will not find that word in the dictionary. You need to parse the verb. It is the past tense, third person singular of the verb 'to be'. This form of the verb, 'to be', can be found in the dictionary.

Greek students have to do the same thing in their first year. Let us take the word $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\alpha\mu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma$ from the Greek New Testament. This word should be parsed as follows: it is the first person plural, present active subjunctive of the verb $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\alpha\omega$. It should be translated as 'let us love'. In the traditional way of studying the languages the student had to memorise all the endings of the verbs and the nouns. Once he saw the ending ' $\mu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon\sigma$ ' as in the example given above, he knew that it is a first person plural, present active subjunctive, and so on.

Let me show you how this can be simplified by using ES or TW. This word was taken from 2 John 1:5. I highlighted the Greek word and the codes attached to it. You will see from this screenshot that the software analysed (parsed) the word. It indicates the 'tense, voice, mood, person and number'.

[See image01]

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In other words, you do not have to memorise the endings of the verbs or the forms of the nouns to be able to analyse them. The software does that for you. What is critical now is to be able to use these software programs effectively. They can help you to understand the Greek and Hebrew text much better.

1.2.2. Second-year Greek

In the second year, the student focuses on the use of Greek grammar, the syntax, in understanding the meaning of the text. Syntax is the scientific study of the grammatical arrangement of words in a sentence or paragraph. Let us take the example of 'was' given above. The student needs to find out the purpose of 'was' in the sentence. 'I was there' is clearly different from 'I will be there'. If we go back to the Greek verb, the student will ask the following question: what is the meaning of the Greek 'present active subjunctive'? What is it that the writer wanted to communicate? Let me try to illustrate the use of Greek grammar with two examples from the New Testament.

1.2.2.1. Galatians 2:12

The first example is Galatians 2:12, where we read 'he did eat with the Gentiles' in the KJV. The word translated 'he did eat' has the following codes, V-IAI-3S, and is analysed by the software as 'Verb, Imperfect, Active, Indicative, 3rd and Singular'. How should we understand the imperfect here? What is Paul trying to say? One of the resources in the software is Robertson's Word Pictures. It gives the following explanation: 'it was his habit'. In other words, Paul is saying that, 'it was Peter's habit to eat with the Gentiles'. It was not a once-off thing. However, when a group from James came, he did not want to eat with them any more. That was clearly hypocrisy. He stopped doing what he used to do, to please the group from Jerusalem. This message is very timely for our day. I have seen Christian leaders doing exactly that. They changed their habits when influential people visited them. Missionaries suddenly stopped using drums in the church, as they were in the habit of doing, in order to impress foreign visitors who supported them financially, but did not believe in having drums in church.

1.2.2.2. 1 Corinthians 15:4

The second example is taken from 1 Corinthians 15:4. Paul said that Christ 'rose again'. According to the KJV with Strong's number, this word is G1453. When we look at the Greek text with morphological codes, it gives us the following grammatical information about this verse: V-RPI-3S. This abbreviation is explained as: Verb, peRfect, Passive, Indicative, 3rd, Singular. This verbal form is different from the one that Paul used before in this passage. Robertson makes the following comments about the verbal form in this verse:

There is reason for this sudden change of tense. Paul wishes to emphasize the permanence of the resurrection of Jesus. He is still risen.

The perfect tense here emphasises the permanence of the resurrection. Christians, according to Paul, believe in a Saviour who rose and is still alive! Christians believe in a Living Saviour. This is the major difference between Christianity and other religions. Whereas other religions knew and know the concept of the death and resurrection of a deity, they do not have the idea of one who died and rose, never to repeat that process again. The god Baal of the Canaanites, according to their tradition, died every year and came back to life every year. In the case of Jesus Christ, he died once, he was buried once, and he rose again to live forever!

The codes are explained in detail later. As you can see, the software programmes and their resources make learning and using biblical languages very easy.

Introduction to resources

1.3. Introduction to resources

E-Sword and The Word come with a number of Greek and Hebrew tools. Most of these tools are in the public domain, so they are free. More than 80% of the tools are the product of 19th century scholarship. That century produced a number of great resources for the biblical languages. These resources have served as the basis for ongoing scholarship right up to this century. The language tools are excellent, and are available for free download on the Internet. In the following sections, some of these resources are discussed for people who do not have in mind training in the languages. Texts, grammars, dictionaries, and commentaries will be discussed, with an explanation in other chapters of how to use them. For now, they are simply listed with a brief background description.

1.3.1. Text

1.3.1.1. KJV with Strong numbers

The first text that I would like to discuss is an English translation with codes, the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible with Strong numbers. Dr James Strong (1822–1894), an American Methodist theologian, published an exhaustive concordance to the King James Bible in 1890. His concordance was more than just a list of where each word appeared in the English Bible. Together with other colleagues, he provided every word with a unique number which referred to a root word in the original language.

Let me use English to illustrate what he did. If his purpose was to help readers of the English bible to find the root of English words, he would have done the following. For the English word 'ate', he would provide a unique number, let's say 2000. That number refers to the word 'eat', the root form of the word. The word 'eaten' would receive the same number, since it is the past participle of 'eat'. The same is true for the present form 'eats'. This numbering system allows the reader to see the root form of every word. The root form, also called lemma, is the form that can be found in the dictionary. You will not find the word 'ate' in the dictionary; you will find the root 'eat'.

Strong's number system allows students of God's word to find the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek root behind each English word in the English translation of the King James Version (KJV).

The numbers also serve another purpose. They allow the student to see how a Greek or Hebrew word was translated by different English words, and how an English word was used to translate different Greek or Hebrew words. The English verb 'to love', for example, is the translation of two Greek words, coded as G25 (agapa■) and G5368 (phile■). In the Old Testament the word 'to love' is the translation of H157 ('■hab or '■heb).

Strong's concordance has been superseded by modern tools, such as ES and TW computer software. Yet, many original language resources are still coded to Strong, and Bible translations in many languages are also coded to Strong. Even though most modern bible readers prefer another

translation rather than the KJV, the KJV with Strong numbers allows them to go beyond the English text to the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words that are used.

There is also an edition of the KJV text with Strong's numbers and morphological codes, the KJV + TVM (Bible) and TVM (Dictionary). TVM stands for Tense, Voice and Mood. This edition allows the reader to study the grammar of the original languages, based on the King James Bible. Let me illustrate that with one of the examples given earlier. How do we know the tense of the verbs in Galatians 2:12? This KJV has two codes after the words 'he did eat' (G4906 [G5707]). The codes, which will be explained in the next chapter, provide the lexical and morphological information about the verb. They tell us, among other things, that the verb is in the imperfect tense, active voice, and indicative mood. Without memorising the Greek grammar, you are able to parse the Greek verb behind the English translation. In Greek classes, you would have to put the information in the following table.

Greek word	Tense	Voice	Mood	Meaning
sunethien	Imperfect	Active	Indicative	to eat

1.3.1.2. Original language Old Testament Texts

The Old Testament was written mainly in Hebrew, with a small part in Aramaic. In the previous section, I spoke about the KJV + TVM. This tool is not only useful for the Greek New Testament, but also for the Hebrew and Aramaic Old Testament. What you can do with the New Testament, you can also do with the Old Testament.

There is another way in which a student can use the Old Testament text directly. The standard text for the Old Testament is provided in Groves-Wheeler Westminster Hebrew morphology. This module, however, is not free. Users must pay a fee to access it. At the present time it is the best tool, since it comes with morphological codes and reference to Strong numbers.

[See image02]

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There is a Hebrew text, with Strong's numbers, but without the morphological codes. The Hebrew Old Testament Interlinear (TW) and Hebrew Old Testament (Tenach) with Strong's numbers (ES) will help the student to do word studies, without a grammatical analysis. What E-Sword has is a Transliterated Hebrew Old Testament/Greek New Testament and a Transliterated Bible (with Strong's numbers). These texts transliterate the Hebrew and Greek characters into Latin scripts, so that they are easy to read for those who do not recognise these characters. You can put the two types of texts together on the screen, and have the Greek/Hebrew texts on one side and the transliterated Greek/Hebrew on the other side of the screen. This makes reading Greek/Hebrew easy.

1.3.1.3. Old Testament Greek texts

The Hebrew and Aramaic text of the Old Testament were translated at an early stage into Greek. This Greek translation, known as the Septuagint (LXX), was the Old Testament of the early

church.

TW has a version of the LXX with Strong's numbers and morphological codes. This allows for an analysis of the text. A transliterated version allows for reading of the actual Greek text. There is an English translation of the LXX available, which was translated by the Plymouth Brethren scholar, Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton, in the 19th century. The student has the possibility of having different texts open on screen, such as the LXX in Greek characters, a transliterated version, and an English translation.

Here is one example of how the LXX can help us study the word of God. Earlier the question was raised about sermons that are based on the alleged differences between the Greek words for love. The word *agapa* refers to the divine, sacrificial love, whereas the word *phile* refers to affectionate love. Have you heard this before? Have you preached a sermon on it? If so, you are not alone. I did, as did some of the great Greek scholars of the past. You will still find it in their books. We have to admit, however, that that distinction was not clearly made in Hellenistic Greek. Is the word used in that way in, for example, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX)? We can find this out by doing a concordance search. A quick search for the word G25 in the LXX reveals the following. The word appears 196 times in the OT. If we limit our study to 2 Samuel 13, we will find the following. The word appears four times in the chapter (vv. 1, 4, 15, 21). This chapter is about Amnon's love for his sister Tamar. What do we see in verse 15? The English translation of LXX (Brenton) reads:

Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love (*agapa*) with which he had loved (*agapa*) her, for the last wickedness was greater than the first: and Amnon said to her, Rise, and be gone.

It would be impossible to argue that Amnon's love for his sister was 'divine, sacrificial love'. There was nothing sacrificial in the way in which Amnon loved his sister. It means that the verb *agapa* does not in itself have the meaning of 'divine, sacrificial love'. He wanted to have sex with his sister, and that was what happened. The LXX helps us to be careful, and stops us making a claim that is not true. It would be better to say that when God is the subject of *agapa*, it is divine, sacrificial love. But that connotation is not in the word itself.

1.3.1.4. New Testament Greek texts

Most of the original language resources in both ES and TW are based on the Greek text of the New Testament. For beginners, the most helpful modules are those with Strong's numbers and morphological codes. These modules allow the student to do both word studies and grammatical analysis. One module comes as an interlinear Greek-English text. After each Greek word an English translation is provided. It is possible to view the Greek text with Strong's number, morphological code, and English translation.

[See image03]

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TW comes with Westcott-Hort with NA27/UBS4 variants (1881), Greek NT with Strong's Numbers and parsing info. ES has the module Robinson/Pierpont Byzantine Greek New Testament (w/

Strong's) which also comes with parsing information. As explained in chapter 11, these texts come from different traditions, and it is helpful to have them all.

1.3.2. Dictionary

There are Greek and Hebrew dictionaries available with Strong's numbers. ES and TW provide the definitions from Strong's dictionary and two well-known lexicons that are coded to Strong's. The New Testament has Thayer's Greek Definitions (Thayer). Joseph Henry Thayer (1828-1901) graduated from Andover Theological Seminary in 1857, and served as a pastor of a Congregational Church from 1859 till 1864. In 1864, he was appointed as professor at Andover Theological Seminary. He maintained this position until he resigned from it in 1882. In 1884 he was appointed as professor at Harvard's divinity school until his resignation in 1901. His main publications were translations and reworking of works that had been done by others. These include:

A Grammar of the Idiom of the New Testament, Grammar of the New Testament Greek, and his major contribution A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, published in 1885 with an updated edition in 1889. His lexicon was more than a translation. Thayer spent 25 years working on the lexicon and made thousands of revisions to the translated text.

The Old Testament comes with Brown-Driver-Briggs' Hebrew Definitions (BDB). BDB is a revision of Gesenius' Hebrew-German lexicon that was translated by Edward Robinson into English (1836; 5th edition 1854). Francis Brown (1849-1916), Samuel Rolles Driver (1846-1914) and Charles Augustus Briggs (1841-1913) reworked this lexicon from 1891 to 1905. The influence of the liberal Old Testament scholarship of the 19th century is seen throughout this work. It served for many decades as the authoritative lexicon for the Old Testament.

These dictionaries provide references to other more advanced modern language tools. These advanced tools, however, are not yet available for these software programs. ES and TW provide the definitions of these dictionaries but not the full discussions of the words.

A special dictionary in TW and ES is Robinson's Morphological Analysis Codes (RMAC). It provides an explanation of all the morphological codes. This is what first-year Greek students normally have to memorise. With this tool, you can analyse the whole bible morphologically.

TW has a module of Liddell-Scott-Jones Lexicon of Classical Greek (LSJ). The first edition of this lexicon was published in 1843. This is the full 1940 edition of the lexicon, but it comes without Strong's numbers. It requires knowledge of the Greek characters. After you have worked through this course you will be able to use this lexicon.

Another tool is Synonyms of the New Testament by Richard Chenevix Trench (1807-1886). Trench served as an Anglican Archbishop from 1864 to 1884. His Synonyms studies different Greek words which are used to translate a particular English word. It is a great work, but it is based on an old assumption of Greek synonyms. It will, for example, follow the old view about the difference between the Greek words for love. We will return to the value and use of these older works.

1.3.3. Grammar and commentaries

1.3.3.1. Greek

The resources listed so far may seem boring. They are like skeletons. These skeletons need flesh. The most helpful resources at present are the commentaries. The New Testament is well served with Vincent's Word Studies and Robertson's Word Pictures. Marvin Richardson Vincent (1834-1922) was a Methodist minister who later became a Presbyterian. In 1888 he accepted a professorship at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Vincent published a three-volume Word-Studies in the New Testament between 1887 and 1889. His work became a standard tool for pastors and students of the New Testament. He moves verse by verse through the New Testament, explains key Greek words behind the English translation, and gives their meaning and derivation.

The other important commentary is the one by Robertson. Archibald Thomas Robertson (1863-1934) was a Baptist Greek scholar, who served at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary as Professor of New Testament Interpretation from 1895 to 1934. He published more than forty books, including a number of works on the Greek text of the New Testament. A Grammar of the New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, which he first published in 1914, is the grandfather of all modern Greek grammars. Robertson is, however, better known to the English reader for his six-volume Word Pictures in the New Testament (1932-1933). In the same way as Vincent, he moves verse by verse through the New Testament, and explains the Greek words behind the English translations. Robertson provides more, by giving insights into the Greek grammar. His work is therefore a dictionary and a grammar at the same time.

There are a few Greek grammars available. Dr James Strong's Greek in a Nutshell is a beginner's grammar, and can be used alongside this course. The other grammars, which are classics, may not be useful for the beginner student at this time. These include the following:

- Ernest De Witt Burton's Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek.
- James Hope Moulton's A Grammar of New Testament Greek (volumes 1 and 2).
- Archibald T Robertson's A Grammar of the New Testament in the Light of Historical Research.

1.3.3.2. Hebrew

The study of the original Old Testament text is very limited in ES and TW. There is no Vincent or Robertson for the Old Testament. The only advanced commentary which studies the Hebrew and Aramaic text is Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament (K&D). The Hebrew grammar by Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius, Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, which is available, is too advanced for the beginner student. I will say more about Gesenius in another chapter.

Conclusion

1.4. Conclusion

E-Sword and The Word have bibles, dictionaries, grammars, and commentaries that make the study and use of the biblical languages much easier. You can study the original text through the KJV with Strong's numbers and morphological codes. Keil and Delitzsch provide grammatical interpretation in their commentary for the Old Testament. Robertson and Vincent do that for the New Testament.

The next chapter introduces you to the study of the biblical languages through the KJV.

Introduction

2.1. Introduction

The English bible can be a gateway to the original languages of the bible. ES and TW have a KJV with Strong's numbers and morphological codes, which make it possible to see the original language words behind the English translation. The student is able to do a number of things through these numbers and the codes.

Study the Hebrew bible through the KJV

2.2. Study the Hebrew bible through the KJV

2.2.1. Hebrew word behind English

In Genesis 1:1 we read that God 'created' the heavens and the earth. The word 'created' H1254[H8804] has two numbers assigned to it in the KJV+TVM. The first number, H1254, provides a lexical explanation. The 'H' indicates that it is a Hebrew word. In the New Testament the number will be preceded by 'G' (Greek). The number refers to a Hebrew root word. These root words are explained in the Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries (Strong) and Brown Driver and Briggs' Hebrew Definitions (BDB).

When I click on the number H1254, the BDB dictionary will give me the Hebrew word behind 'created'. It is the word בָּרָא. In Hebrew the 'א' is pronounced as the 'a' in 'father.' We will come back to the pronunciation of Hebrew words. Strong's definition here is very basic.

A primitive root; (absolutely) to create; (qualified) to cut down (a wood), select, feed (as formative processes): - choose, create (creator), cut down, dispatch, do, make (fat).

BDB gives the following definition of בָּרָא:

- 1) To create, shape, form
- 2) To be fat

What does BDB offer? It gives a subdivision of the use of the word in the Old Testament. Under '1a', it indicates that when the word is in the Qal (a Hebrew verbal form), God is always the subject. The word is used when God shaped, fashioned, or created heaven and earth, individual man, new conditions, and circumstances. In Genesis 1:1, the reference is to God's creation of heaven and earth.

BDB refers to another tool that has a more detailed study of this word, TWOT (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament). This book is not available in ES or TW.

2.2.2. Concordance search for Hebrew word

What can be the next step? It might be interesting to see how this Hebrew word is used in the rest of the Old Testament or in Genesis. A search on the Hebrew word can be done based on Strong's number. The quick search on the Hebrew word reveals that God is the subject of the verb in all its appearances in Genesis. It refers to God's creation of heaven and earth (1:1; 2:4), every living creature in the sea (1:21), man (1:27; 2:4; 5:2; 6:7), and everything (2:3).

2.2.3. Establish the meaning of a Hebrew word

I will try to establish the meaning of another word that I came across while reading different translations. It concerns Potiphar. Who was he? According to the KJV, he was one of Pharaoh's

officials, the captain of the guard (Gen. 37:36). The Young's Literal Translation (YLT) translated the word for 'official' as 'eunuch', a castrated man. The Strong's number for this word is H5631. According to BDB the Hebrew word is saris and means 'official, eunuch'. A quick concordance search reveals that the word saris appears 42 times in the Old Testament. The KJV translates the word a few times as 'eunuch' (see 2 Kgs 9:32, 20:18; Isa. 39:7; 56:3,4) and 'chamberlain' in Esther (1:10, 12, 15; 2:3, 14, 15; 4:4,5; 6:14, 7:9). The KJV translators, like all translators, had to make a choice. Was Potiphar 'an official', 'a chamberlain', or was he 'a eunuch'? Neither of the two other words excludes his being a eunuch. In a case like this the student needs more than the meaning of the Hebrew word. He should consider more advanced resources, such as commentaries and theological dictionaries. Keil and Delitzsch said the following in their commentary, which is available in ES and TW.

Saris (eunuch) is used here, as in 1Sam. 8:15 and in most of the passages of the Old Testament, for courtier or chamberlain, without regard to the primary meaning, as Potiphar was married.

This explanation, however, is not conclusive but is possible. Potiphar was married, but the behaviour of his wife may suggest that something was not right in their marriage. The more advanced and modern Hebrew lexicon HALOT suggests the meaning of the word in this verse is 'eunuch'. This is also the suggestion of the full BDB dictionary.

If a bible teacher works only from a translation, he might miss some of these issues. Translators cannot add all the different meanings and possible translations of the original word in the text. They have to make choices based on the context.

2.2.4. How to analyse a Hebrew verb

The King James Version with Strong's Tense Voice and Mood allows the student to do more than just word studies and concordance searches. With this tool it is possible to study the grammatical form of the verbs in the original languages. The software comes with a TVM dictionary (Strong's with Tense Voice and Mood). This tool is only available for the verbs. I will go back to the word 'created' in Genesis 1:1 to illustrate this.

[See image04]

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The word has three Strong's numbers (H1254 [H8804] H853), which are highlighted. We looked at the first number in the previous section. The third number actually is not related to the word 'created'. It is a particle in Hebrew which is not translated into English. It refers to the object of the verb. The grammatical code is the number between brackets: [H8804]. The TVM dictionary selected explains this number. It says that the stem of the verb is Qal and the mood is perfect.

English word|Hebrew|Stem|Mood|

Created|b■r■|Qal|Perfect|

Can you recall what BDB said about the word for 'created' in the Qal form? It said it always refers to God. What is Qal and what is Perfect? On the screenshot you will see that TVM refers to two

other numbers. These numbers will give an explanation for the Qal and the Perfect. The Qal stem [H8851] is explained as follows:

Qal is the most frequently used verb pattern. It expresses the 'simple' or 'causal' action of the root in the active voice.

The Perfect tense [H8816] has a simple explanation, 'the Perfect expresses a completed action'. This is followed by a more detailed elaboration. This elaboration is necessary, because of the complexity of the Hebrew verbal system. If we use this simple explanation we may explain 'created' in Genesis 1:1 as a simple completed act of God in the past. The judgment of the student should not be based on his or her own analysis alone. It is critical to consult other advanced resources. As stated earlier, there are not enough resources for Hebrew and Aramaic to guide the beginner reader through ES and TW. The student should tread cautiously. For now it is important to rely on the Keil and Delitzsch commentary (K&D) and other technical commentaries which explain the Hebrew and Aramaic text. I will refer to some helpful works in the final chapter of the book. K&D made the following remarks about 'created':

In Qal...(b■r■) always means to create, and is only applied to a divine creation, the production of that which had no existence before.

What can we learn from this? God created heaven and earth. They did not come into being due to a big bang or through the process of evolution. It was a direct act of God.

In conclusion, then, it is possible to study the Hebrew bible through the KJV. The resources in ES and TW allow the student to do word studies, concordance searches of the original texts and grammatical analysis of the verbs. In the next section, this is illustrated for the New Testament.

Study a Greek word through the KJV

2.3. Study a Greek word through the KJV

2.3.1. Greek words for crown

In Revelation 19:12, John described a person who sat on a white horse. According to John there were many 'crowns' on his head. What is the meaning of 'crowns' in this verse? In Revelation 6:2 there was another person on a white horse. A 'crown' was given to that rider as well. Are these crowns the same? We cannot establish that by looking at the English bible. If we look at the Strong's number for these two crowns, we will see that they are not the same. In Revelation 19:12 the number is G1238 and in Revelation 6:2 it is G4735. Strong's dictionary and Thayer's Greek Definitions will give us the Greek words and their basic meaning. Thayer's definition is more detailed than Strong's.

In Revelation 19:12, the word is diadēma (G1238). Thayer has the following definitions for the word:

- a) A blue band marked with white, which Persian kings used to bind on the turban or tiara
- b) The kingly ornament for the head, the crown

In Revelation 6:2 the word (G4735) is stephanos. Thayer has the following definitions for this word:

- a) A mark of royal or (in general) exalted rank. The wreath or garland which was given as a prize to victors in public games
- b) Metaphorically the eternal blessedness which will be given as a prize to the genuine servants of God and Christ: the crown (wreath) which is the reward of the righteousness
- c) That which is an ornament and honour to one

In his exposition of synonyms in the Greek New Testament Archbishop Richard Trench explained in detail the differences between these two crowns. He also explained what a diadēma looked like. He said:

In classical literature stephanos does not denote the kingly or imperial crown. Instead, it refers to the crown that symbolized victory in the games, civic worth, military valour, nuptial joy, and festal gladness ... In the New Testament, Paul always used stephanos to refer to the conqueror's, not the king's, crown ... A diadēma was a 'token of kingdom,' a white linen band or fillet that encircled the brow.

This distinction was clearly there. Was this distinction also made during the time of Biblical Greek? Robertson made the following remarks while commenting on Revelation 4:4:

John uses diadēma (diadem) for the kingly crown in Rev12:3; Rev13:1; Rev19:12, but it is not certain that the old distinction between diadem as the kingly crown and stephanos as the victor's

wreath is always observed in late Greek.

Robertson's warning should be taken into consideration. Yet, the student can do a little more research. How is *diadēma* used in the New Testament? A quick search for the Strong's number (G1238) reveals that the word appears three times, all three times in the book of Revelation, namely: Revelation 12:3; Revelation 13:1; Revelation 19:12. Who are the ones wearing the *diadēma*? In Revelation 12:3, it is the red dragon that had seven crowns (*diadēma*) on its seven heads. In 13:1, it was the beast with ten crowns (*diadēma*) on its ten horns. Finally in Revelation 19:12, it is the Lord Jesus Christ who had many crowns. In the LXX, the word appears a few times as well. In the books of Esther (1:11; 2:17; 8:15) and Isaiah (62:3), the references are to the royal crown. What about the *stephanos*? I will limit my search to the book of Revelation, where the word appears eight times (Rev. 2:10; 3:11; 4:4, 10; 6:2; 9:7; 12:1; 14:14). The *stephanos* was worn by the victorious believers (2:10; 3:11; 4:4, 10), the woman (12:1), and Christ (14:14). The distinction made by Bishop Trench seems to be correct. The *diadēma* is the kingly crown and the *stephanos* is the victor's crown. Trench's explanation will also help us to see why it is possible for one person to have many kingly crowns as in Revelation 19. He said:

... the diadem strictly was a very different thing from what a crown now is or was; and it was no other than only a fillet of silk, linen, or some such thing. ... Revelation 19:12 depicts Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, with the words 'on his head were many crowns'. This phrase would be difficult to understand if the crowns were similar to those worn by present monarchs, but the meaning is immediately apparent if they are 'diadems,' the narrow fillets that encircle the brow.

This explanation is helpful indeed.

2.3.2. How to analyse a Greek verb

How do we analyse a Greek verb? The steps are the same as with the Old Testament verbs. For the New Testament I will take John 1:1. In the beginning 'was' the word. 'Was' has the following numbers: G2258 [G5713].

[See image05]

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According to Thayer's definition, G2258 is the Greek word 'ἦν', meaning 'was'. Thayer refers to the root word for this verb, which is 'eimi', 'to be'. TVM explains the code [G5713] as an Imperfect tense, indicative mood. The Imperfect according to the description 'generally represents continual or repeated action'. However, the following comments were made about the verb 'to be'.

In the case of the verb 'to be', however, the imperfect tense is used as a general past tense and does not carry the connotation of continual or repeated action.

What John is saying here is that the Word was there before the beginning. No matter how far back you go, the Word was. John did not say that the word came into existence in the beginning. Robertson explains the use of 'was' in this verse as follows:

Was (■n). Three times in this sentence John uses this imperfect of eimi 'to be' which conveys no idea of origin for God or for the Logos, simply continuous existence. Quite a different verb (egeneto, became) appears in John 1:14 for the beginning of the Incarnation of the Logos. See the distinction sharply drawn in John 8:58 'before Abraham came (genesthai) I am' (eimi, timeless existence).

These simple examples are enough to help the reader make use of the original languages resources in ES and TW.

How to do word studies

2.4. How to do word studies

Are there general rules for doing Hebrew and Greek word studies through ES and TW? No, but there are some guidelines. As a beginner it is important to walk with the giants. This point cannot be emphasised enough. The purpose of this book is to show you how to walk with the giants in your study of biblical languages. The following guidelines may be helpful when you are doing word studies.

2.4.1. Guidelines for word studies

1. Select the English word you want to study. This is your first step. It should be a word that is important to help you understand the passage. A word study on the Greek word behind the English word 'the' may not be helpful. However, sometimes the meaning of a preposition can be crucial in understanding a passage. What about the word 'lifted up' in John 12:32? It is the basis for a well-known English song.

Lift Jesus higher, Lift Jesus higher,
Lift Him up for the world to see,
He said if I be lifted up from the earth,
I will draw all men unto me.

What was Jesus saying? Is the meaning that was given to the words in the song the right meaning?

2. Identify the Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek word. Once you have selected the English word, you should be able to find the original language word behind it. The original language should be your point of departure for a word study. If you do a search on the English word, you may end up with more or fewer hits than you would find in the original language. The English word in John 12:32 with Strong's number is: I be lifted up G5312 [G5686]. The lexical code G5312 according to Thayer is hupso■. He gives the following definitions:

- 1) To lift up on high, to exalt
- 2) Metaphorically
 - 2a) to raise to the very summit of opulence and prosperity
 - 2b) to exalt, to raise to dignity, honour and happiness

3. Find other appearances of the word. The next step should be to find all the appearances of the word in the specific book. In this case we should find all appearances of hupso■ in the Gospel of John. The search can always be expanded to other writings of the same author, and then to the

rest of the New Testament and also the Old Testament (LXX). The word appears five times in four verses in John (3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34). The word is always translated as 'lift up' in the King James Version of John. If the search was based on 'lifted up', the hits would have been twelve in ten verses. Another word is also translated as 'lifted up', for example in John 6:5, when Jesus 'lifted up his eyes'.

A full search of the New Testament gives twenty-two hits in sixteen verses.

John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up G5312...the Son of man be lifted up G5312|

John 8:28 When ye have lifted up G5312 the Son of man, |

John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from G1537 the earth, will draw all men unto me.|

John 12:34 The Son of man must be lifted up G5312?|

Luke 1:52 exalted G5312 them of low degree.|

Luke 10:15, Capernaum art exalted G5312 to heaven, |

Luke 14:11 For whosoever exalteth G5312 himself.|

Luke 18:14 one that exalteth G5312 himself.|

Acts 2:33 the right hand of God exalted G5312|

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted G5312|

Acts 13:17 God...exalted G5312 the people|

Matt. 11:23 Capernaum ... art exalted G5312|

Matt. 23:12 Whosoever shall exalt G5312 himself|

1Pet. 5:6 God ...may exalt G5312 you|

Jas. 4:10 he shall lift G5312 you up. |

2Cor. 11:7 ye might be exalted G5312|

4. Study and classify the usage of the word. It is important to study the different ways in which the word is used. In this exercise the study is limited to John's Gospel. In John 3, John speaks about Moses literally lifting up the serpent, by putting it on a tree. In like manner must the Son of Man be lifted up. Does the lifting up of the Son of Man, then, mean lifting up from the earth and hanging on a tree? Let's consider the other references. John 8 also speaks about the Son of Man being lifted up. John seems to be referring to an event in which the Son of Man will literally be lifted up. In John 12, the reference is also to the Son of Man being lifted up.

5. Summarise your conclusion. Even though the references are not always clear, John 12 seems to be very clear, because of the explanation given in verse 33. John 12:33 says: 'Now he said this to indicate clearly what kind of death he was going to die' (NET). The phrase then refers to the kind of death Jesus was going to die. This agrees with John 3, which refers to Him dying on the cross. So, 'lifted up' in John 12:32, does not mean 'to exalt', it means 'hanging in the air' (on a

cross). What do you think about the explanation of the word given in the song 'Lift Jesus Higher'?

6. Consult your resources. Vincent made the following comments on the word in John 12:32: 'The primary reference is to the cross, but there is included a reference to the resurrection and ascension'. Robertson agrees with this interpretation.

2.4.2. Good and bad Etymology

What is etymology? It is the study of the origin and history of words. Etymology has its value, but also its limitations in the interpretation of Scripture. The original language sources in ES and TW put substantial emphasis on the use of etymology. This is one of their weaknesses. The use of etymology was very strong in biblical scholarship of the past generation. However, new studies and especially linguistic research have revealed some of the limitations of this approach.

If the older sources are used carefully and with wisdom, that problem can be solved. I remember reading a book that explained the word that Judas used when he greeted the Lord Jesus, in Matthew 26:49. Judas said 'Hail, master' (KJV). The Greek word translated 'hail' is *chaire*. The writer explained the etymology of the word, which means 'to rejoice, be glad'. According to him, Judas, who knew that he was going to betray Jesus, told him 'Rejoice, be glad master'. He explained that Judas was a hypocrite. He knew that he was going to betray the Lord yet still asked him to rejoice. The etymology of the word as explained by the writer was correct. However, the word was used as a normal greeting in those days. The root meaning of 'rejoice, be glad' was not taken into consideration by the speaker. It is the same thing with the English greeting 'goodbye'. It is derived from 'godbwye', a contraction of 'God be with ye'. Even atheists greet people with 'goodbye'. And surely their intention is not to say 'God be with ye'. 'Goodbye' is a modern way of greeting. We do not take account of the etymology of the word in the present-day greeting.

There are, however, words where the etymology can be very helpful. The word for 'gospel' in Greek is euangelion. It is composed of eu (good) and angelion (announcement). Euangelion is a good announcement, hence Good News.

The Greek word for Christ is Christos. It is derived from the verb *chriō* meaning 'to anoint'. Christ is the anointed one.

Etymology can be useful, but we have to be very careful not to base the meaning of a word solely on that. Consider the use of the word in its context.

Exercise

2.5. Exercise

I heard a discussion recently on the meaning of the word 'day' in Genesis 1. One person said that the Hebrew word for day in Genesis 1 and 2 always means a period of '24 hours'. The other person disagreed, and said it can mean a period of millions of years. You are now invited to join the discussion. What can we learn from the Hebrew word for day in Genesis 1 and 2? Does it refer to a period of 24 hours or millions of years?

Conclusion

2.6. Conclusion

The KJV with Strong's numbers and morphological codes makes it possible to see the original language words behind the English words.

- It makes it possible to do word searches, based on the words in the original languages.
- It makes it possible to do word studies based on the original languages.
- It makes it possible to study the morphology of the verbs in the original languages.

However, in order to make good use of this resource, it is important to follow proper guidelines. Conclusions on the meaning of words should not be based on etymology, but on the usage of the word in context. Conclusions reached through independent study should be compared with the original language resources. The next chapter introduces students to the Greek language, followed by a practical use of Greek in ES and TW. It will expand on what we have seen so far.

Introduction to the Greek language

3.1. Introduction to the Greek language

The original language of the New Testament is Greek. Why was that language chosen? In this chapter, I introduce the Greek language and its alphabet, and explain that Greek was the dominant language during the time when the New Testament was written. Evidence is also given for the fact that the English alphabet is similar to the Greek alphabet, making the Greek alphabet easy to learn.

The Greek of the New Testament was called the Koiné, common Greek. It was the Greek used by all the Greek-speaking people at that time. What are the specific features of the Greek language? How does it differ from English and other languages? The answers to these questions will give us an insight into the Greek language. This chapter is intended to be a basic introduction to the Greek language of the New Testament. It will introduce the following topics:

- (1) The Greeks and their language, and
- (2) The Greek alphabet.

After you have completed this chapter, you will be able to recognize all the letters of the Greek alphabet.

The Greeks and their language

3.2. The Greeks and their language

3.2.1. Alexander the Great

In 480 BC, the Hellenes, as the Greeks called themselves, defeated Xerxes I (Ahasveros) king of the Medes and Persians at Salamis. Because the Medes and Persians had prepared very well for this war (see Esther 1:3-4), they lost all hope of ever beating the Greeks again. This victory gave the Greeks the confident belief that they would become the next world empire.

The person who would become the most important leader of the Greek empire was Alexander the Great, son of Philip II, the King of Macedonia. He played a crucial role when Macedonia conquered the Greeks in 336 BC. Alexander received his education from one of the best philosophers of his time, Aristotle, who tutored him from the age of 13 to 16 in rhetoric, literature, science, medicine, and philosophy. Alexander succeeded his father to the throne of the empire in 334 BC, at the age of 20. His first goal was to liberate the Greeks, who were still under the yoke of the Persians, even though they had defeated them at Salamis in 480 BC. After conquering all of Asia Minor in 334 BC, Alexander defeated the Persians at Issus in 333 BC. The following year he marched to Egypt. Egypt accepted him as their liberator and as a Pharaoh. Alexander's goal was to establish a world unified by the influence of Greek culture, a Hellenistic world. His reign is compared in the apocalyptic vision of Daniel 8 to a goat that was 'coming from the west over the surface of all the whole earth' (v. 5).

We do not know exactly when and how, but Palestine also came under Alexander's control. When Alexander died at the age of 32, his four generals divided his empire among themselves. One of these generals, Ptolemy, took control of Egypt and made the new city of Alexandria his capital. More Jews from Palestine were added by him to the Jewish population in Alexandria. The Jewish population of Egypt at this time was sufficient for Alexandria to become an important centre of Hellenistic Judaism. These Jews came under the influence of the Greek culture and language. Godly Jews, however, did not live by the morals of the Greeks. They kept the Law of God. Since most of them could no longer read the Hebrew language, the need for the Old Testament in the Greek language became evident. A translation of the Old Testament Pentateuch was prepared. This translation, which consisted of the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, is known as the Septuagint (the Greek word for seventy) because of a tradition that said that seventy (actually seventy-two) elders translated the work in seventy-two days. It is said, that at a later period elders translated all the books of the Old Testament. The title Septuagint, abbreviated as LXX, was then applied to the whole Bible. The New Testament was heavily influenced by this translation.

The Hellenistic period was not only a matter of the Greek language. It was also an issue of living and thinking like a Greek. In the second book of the Maccabees, we find an illustration of this influence on the Jewish people around 170 BC.

When the king gave his assent, Jason, as soon as he had seized power, imposed the Greek way of life on his fellow-countrymen... He went so far as to found a gymnasium... and to fit out the noblest of his young men in the broad-brimmed felt hat... Jason set no bounds to his impiety; indeed the hellenising process reached such a pitch that the priests ceased to show any interest in serving the altar; but, scorning the Temple and neglecting the sacrifices, they would hurry, on the stroke of the gong, to take part in the distribution, forbidden by the Law, of the oil on the exercise ground; setting no store by the honours of their fatherland, they esteemed hellenic glories best of all (2 Maccabees 4:10-15).

The gymnasium for example was an event where men were competing naked. The word 'gymnasium' is derived from the Greek word *gymnos*, which means 'naked'. Some Jewish men 'undid' their circumcision so that it would not show when they were competing. This issue may also raise questions for our day. How far can we go as Christians in adopting the trends of our world today?

In the New Testament, an incident indicated that the differences between the Hebraic and the Hellenistic Jews were still in existence. In Acts 6:1 we read the following.

Now in those days, when the disciples were growing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Greek-speaking Jews against the native Hebraic Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.

Who were the Greek-speaking Jews? The KJV translates the word as 'Grecians'. The Strong's number for the word is 'G1675' and the Greek word is *Hellenistai*. These Jews grew up in the Hellenistic world and spoke Greek. We do not know how much of the Hellenistic culture they adopted. It is clear, however, that the Hellenistic Jews considered themselves as a separate group, different from the 'Hebraic Jews'. They spoke about 'their widows'.

3.2.2. Koine or Hellenistic Greek

What are the characteristics of the Hellenistic language? Even though Alexander did not live long, he made a lasting impact on the world. He gathered an army that consisted of people from many parts of his empire. These people used Greek to communicate with each other. The cities that he conquered also took Greek as their language of communication. These developments led to a significant change in the Greek language. The so-called Classical Greek, in which the great Greek literature was written, became Koine Greek, common Greek. It was the lingua franca, the common communication language between the people of the Greek empire. The Greek culture and language conquered the world, and the world conquered the Classical Greek language. Greek became the language of the world. This period of the Greek language is known as the Koine Greek or Hellenistic period (330 BC-AD 330).

3.2.3. History of the Greek language

3.2.3.1. Classical Greek

During the so-called Classical Greek period, the Greeks divided human beings into two categories. The people who speak, live and think like a Greek, and those who do not, the barbaroi. The barbaroi, in the mind of the Greeks, were foreigners who did not speak Greek, and did not live or think like Greeks. Thayer's definition for the word includes the following:

Used by the Greeks of any foreigner ignorant of the Greek language, whether mental or moral, with the added notion after the Persian war, of rudeness and brutality.

In Acts 28:2 we have an incident in which, according to the text, barbaroi showed kindness to Paul and others. This is not what Greeks normally expected from barbaroi. They would have expected 'rudeness and brutality'. The message from this text in Acts 28 is clear: do not generalise when making statements about people whom you do not know. The NT uses the word in a general sense of foreigners.

The Greeks produced a number of literary works in the various Greek dialects, such as Doric, Aeolic, and Ionic. The poems of Homer and Hesiod, the history of Herodotus and the medical works of Hippocrates were all written in the Ionic dialect.

From the Ionic dialect the Attic developed. Attic was the language in which Plato wrote his philosophical treatises, Aristophanes his tragedies, Thucydides and Xenophon their histories.

The Classical Greek language differs from the Hellenistic language. In the past, New Testament scholars studied Classical Greek and interpreted the Bible based on that form of the Greek language. This is still evident in the great works of the 19th century. Gradually scholars started to challenge the differences between Classical Greek and the Greek of the New Testament. Some scholars referred to the Greek of the New Testament as Holy Ghost Greek. The discovery of thousands of papyri documents in Koine Greek changed that view forever. The Greek of the New Testament was neither Classical nor Holy Ghost Greek. It was the common Greek of that time. This discovery changed the study of NT Greek in the 20th century and afterwards.

3.2.3.2. Byzantine and Modern Greek

From the time of Constantine in AD 330 until the fall of Byzantium to the Turks in AD 1453, the Greek language was known as 'Byzantine Greek'. It was a continuation of the Koine Greek. Out of this language Modern Greek developed, which is spoken today by millions of people in Greece and Cyprus.

The Greek alphabet

3.3. The Greek alphabet

It is now time to look at the Greek alphabet. Is it different from our English alphabet? You know more Greek letters than you ever imagined. Actually, our alphabet was taken from the Greek which was taken from the Hebrew language family. Even the word alphabet was taken from the first two letters of the Greek alphabet, Alpha (A) and Beta (B). The Greek alphabet has twenty-four letters, two less than in English. It has seven vowels and seventeen consonants. When you look at the next table with the Greek alphabet, you will be able to recognise most of the small letters. If you have studied mathematics, you will recognise even a few more. There are ten Greek letters that are the same as in English. These are:

α|β|δ|ε|ι|κ|ο|ζ|τ|υ|

α|β|δ|ε|ι|κ|ο|ζ|τ|υ|

Some Greek letters look like English letters, but are pronounced differently.

Greek letter|English equivalent|English look alike|

γ|g|y|

η|■|n|

ν|n|v|

ρ|r|p|

χ|ch|x|

ω|■|w|

There are nine Greek letters which differ from English letters, but most are recognisable from mathematics.

ζ|θ|λ|μ|ξ|π|σ|φ|ψ|

z, dz|th||m|x|p|s|ph|ps|

The next table gives you all the Greek letters in their alphabetical order.

Character|Name|Transliteration|

Capitals|Small|||

A|α|alpha|a|

B|β|beta|b|

Γ|γ|gamma|g|

Δ|δ|delta|d|

Ε|ε|epsilon|e|

Ζ|ζ|zeta|z|

Η|η|eta|■|

Θ|θ|theta|th|

Ι|ι|iota|i|

Κ|κ|kappa|k|

Λ|λ|lambda|l|

Μ|μ|mu|m|

Ν|ν|nu|n|

Ξ|ξ|xi|x|

Ο|ο|omicron|o|

Π|π|pi|p|

Ρ|ρ|rho|r|

Σ|σ (ς)|sigma|s|

Τ|τ|tau|t|

Υ|υ|upsilon|u or y|

Φ|φ|phi|ph|

Χ|χ|chi|ch|

Ψ|ψ|psi|ps|

Ω|ω|omega|■|

With all the letters of the alphabet covered, you are almost able to read everything in Greek. There are four more things that you must take into consideration.

(1) When two Greek vowels appear together they are pronounced as one vowel. This combination of vowels is called a diphthong. The word diphthong is derived from the Greek and means 'two sounds' or 'two tones'. English examples of diphthongs include the 'oy' in 'boy' and the 'ow' in 'cow'.

αι|ai|

αυ|au|

ει|ei|

ευ|eu|

οι|oi|

ου|ou|

(2) The γ (gamma) sounds like ng before γ, κ, χ, or ξ. This is called a nasal sound.

γγ|ng|

γξ|ng|

γκ|ng|

γχ|ng|

(3) When a word begins with a vowel, its pronunciation may have a rough breathing, (■), which is pronounced like h. This sign is often left out in the text of ES and TW.

(4) Greek has four punctuation marks:

1. The comma (,);
2. The semicolon or colon, expressed by a point above the line (·);
3. The full stop (·);
4. The English question mark (?) is indicated by the Greek semicolon(·);.

Greek uses three kinds of accents:

1. The acute (´);
2. The grave (`);
3. The circumflex (˘).

With this information you will be able to read your Greek New Testament in Greek. The best thing for you to do now is to try to read 2 John 1:1-3 (GNT).

1 ο πρεσβυτερος εκλεκτη κυρια και τοις τεκνοις αυτης ους εγω αγαπω εν αληθεια και ουκ εγω μονος αλλα και παντες οι εγνωκοτες την αληθειαν 2 δια την αληθειαν την μενουσαν εν ημιν και μεθ ημων εσται εις τον αιωνα 3 εσται μεθ ημων χαρις ελεος ειρηνη παρα θεου πατρος και παρα κυριου ιησου χριστου του υιου του πατρος εν αληθεια και αγαπη .

Were you successful? This is a text without the accent signs in Greek. I chose a simple straightforward text.

One way to read the Greek New Testament is to have both the Greek text and the transliterated version open. The following screenshot was taken from TW.

[See image06]

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As you read the transliterated text, you will realise that the transliteration is not always perfect. It only serves as a guide. By way of practice, write your own names with Greek characters.

Conclusion

3.4. Conclusion

At this time, the purpose is not to understand everything you read. The idea is to read Greek, letter by letter, word by word! And trust me, if you continue to practise, one verse at a time, you will make good progress. As we move along you will see the benefit of this. You will be able to follow discussions in technical commentaries where Greek words are quoted. So, please try it again.

In the next chapter we will discuss Greek nouns and some Greek words.

Introduction

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, elements of Greek grammar are introduced, and the following points explained:

- English borrowed a number of words from Greek. Because of this, English readers are familiar with a number of Greek words.
- Greek is an inflected language. A change to the ending of a word gives it a different meaning.
- Resources in TW and ES allow students to explain grammatical nuances in the Greek New Testament

Is Greek grammar different from English? Are there similarities between the two languages? This chapter will illustrate Greek grammar by giving examples from the New Testament.

As you start to read the New Testament in Greek you will realise that there are differences between Greek and English, but there are also some similarities. Let's start with the influence of Greek on English vocabulary.

Greek vocabulary

4.2. Greek vocabulary

Just as with the Greek alphabet, you already know many Greek words. Many English words are derived from Greek. You may not be aware of them, since they are part of the English vocabulary. How many of the following words in the next paragraph do you think were derived from Greek?

At school we studied biology, economy, philosophy, and grammar. We use megaphones; we send telegrams, watch television. We travel in taxis and airplanes to tropical countries.

The first word is 'school'. It is derived from the Greek word *schole*. In Classical Greek this was used for the time that a person kept for himself. The time of *schole* was the time when one learned important things and discussed issues with others. This is where our concept for school comes from; it is the time when we learn important things!

Other words in the list that are derived from Greek include:

- Biology (*bios* = life + *logos* = teaching)
- Economy (*oikos* = house + *nomos* = law, rules)
- Philosophy (*philos* = love + *sophia* = wisdom)
- Grammar (*gramma* = that what is drawn, letter)
- Megaphones (*mega* = big + *phono* = voice)
- Telegrams (*tele* = far off + *gramma* = that what is drawn, letter)
- Taxis (*taxis* = arrangements)
- Tropical (*tropikos* = of the turning of the sun).

You probably also know a number of Greek words that appear in the New Testament.

Greek word|English Bible|

Theos|God|

Iesous|Jesus|

Angelos|Angel|

Episkopos|Bishop, overseer |

Presbuteros|Presbyter, Elder|

Euangelistās|Evangelist|

Prophētes|Prophet|

Thronos|Throne|

Alpha|Alpha|

■mega|Omega|

This list illustrates that many English words were derived from Greek. However, we should not try to establish the meaning of an English word by means of its Greek etymology. In the example given above, 'school', we should be careful to say that 'school' in Greek means the time that a person has for himself, in which he can do what he wants. School today is certainly not the time when one can do what one wants.

There are also differences between Greek and English vocabulary. However, the meaning of these words can easily be established with the help of the dictionary. Let us consider a few words from the Greek New Testament.

4.2.1. Vain glory

In Galatians 5:26 Paul exhorted the believers as follow:

- Let us not be desirous of vain glory (Gal. 5:26 KJV)
- Let us not become conceited (Gal. 5:26 NET)

The word translated 'conceited' by the NET is interesting. The Greek word is κενοδοξοι (kenodoxoi). According to Robertson, the word is derived from kenos and doxa. Vincent gives a more detailed study of the word. Originally the word meant 'vain opinion, error'. People were having 'vain opinions' of themselves. Vincent said the following about the word: 'This compound means having a vain conceit of possessing a rightful claim to honour.' It was a vain, empty glorification of oneself. This person was not looking for the glory of God. One dictionary explained the word as 'being proud without any good reason for it'.

Paul said in this verse that people who are being proud of themselves without any good reason are provoking others and are being jealous of others. Will this explanation of the text help you the next time you preach on this passage? Using TW and ES can help you do the same in-depth study for every sermon you preach or bible study that you teach.

4.2.2. Sincere

In 2 Timothy 1:5, Paul said that he recalled Timothy's sincere faith. What did Paul mean when he said 'sincere'? The KJV speaks about 'unfeigned'. The Greek text speaks about ανυποκριτου (anupokritou) faith. Thayer gives the following definition of the word: 'unfeigned, undisguised, and sincere'. The word also means 'not hypocritical', that's why it is translated as 'sincere'. Timothy's faith was not hypocritical; it was sincere. He was not a person with a 'Sunday's holy faith'. This word is related to the Greek word for an actor, hupokritis. Timothy's faith then was sincere; he was not acting it out.

4.2.3. From the beginning

In Luke 1:3, Luke said he had a perfect understanding of all things that happened during the life of Christ from the very first. The NET translated 'the very first' with 'from the beginning'. The Greek

word here is G509 ἀνωθεν (an[■]then). Thayer gave three definitions for the word:

1. From above, from a higher place. a. Of things which come from heaven or God.
2. From the first, from the beginning, from the very first.
3. Anew, over again.

The translations followed the second meaning, which is the best in this context. However, in other verses, the first or the third meaning might be the best. In John 3:3, the Lord Jesus speaks about being 'born ἀνωθεν (an[■]then)'. The best translation here is born 'anew, over again' (KJV) or 'born from above, from God' (NET). Vincent gives a detailed discussion on the possible translations of this word in the New Testament (see also Robertson). A question that can be asked here is this: what does it mean to be 'born an[■]then'? Can you explain it to a person who is not a Christian?

The lesson to be learned from this discussion is that the context should guide us in our understanding of the meaning of the word. Generally, words do not have a neutral, blank meaning. Words have meaning in their context.

For bible study and preaching, I recommend a more advanced dictionary. Robertson and Vincent are very helpful, but sometimes they do not discuss all the relevant words. And their discussions have sometimes been superseded by modern works.

How would you explain the words 'grace, peace, mercy' that John used in his greeting in 2 John 1:3? What is the difference between these three words?

Greek nouns

4.3. Greek nouns

Let's study Greek nouns. Greek nouns behave differently from English nouns. Greek is a highly inflected language. A change to the ending of a word gives it a different meaning. Greek will do that with the article, nouns, adjectives, and pronouns. The following table will give you an indication of the appearance of nouns, pronouns, article, and adjectives in the New Testament.

Nouns, Pronouns, Article, and Adjectives in the New Testament (excluding vocatives)|

Case|Nouns|Pronouns|Articles|Adjectives|

Nominative|7794|3145| 6009|3049|

Genitive|7681 |4986 |5028 |1195 |

Dative|4375|3565 |2944 | 936|

Accusative|8815 |5009 |5889 |2435 |

How does Greek inflect its nouns? For example, the noun *theos*, means 'God'. If I want to say 'to God', I will say: *theōi*. If I say *the-e*, it means 'God!' *Theou* means 'of God'. Where Greek changes the ending, English adds a preposition to convey the correct meaning. The good thing about the different endings in Greek is that you can immediately recognise the function of each noun in a sentence. Each ending indicates a particular function. The ending 'os' in *theos* indicates that it is the subject of the sentence. It is called the nominative case. Greek has five different cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative and vocative. Besides the case, a noun or an adjective in Greek has a number (singular or plural) and gender (masculine, feminine, or neuter). When you deal with a Greek noun, adjective, or pronoun you should ask the following questions:

1. What is the part of speech? (noun, adjective, pronoun. We will deal with other parts of speech later).
2. What is the case? (nominative, genitive, dative, accusative or vocative).
3. What is the number? (singular or plural).
4. What is the gender? (masculine, feminine or neuter).

ES and TW will answer these questions for you through their dictionary called RMAC (Robinson's Morphological Analytical Code).

[See image07]

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Look at the word presbuteros (πρεσβυτερος) in 2 John 1:1. The grammatical code after the word is A-NSM. Robinson's Morphological Analysis Code (RMAC) indicates that the code stand for: Adjective, Nominative, Singular and Masculine.

Table for declension of Nouns|

Word|Part of speech|Case|Number|Gender|Meaning|

πρεσβυτερος|Adjective|Nominative|Singular|Masculine|Elder|

Tools like TW and ES will do all the parsing for you. The only thing that you need to do is to interpret the codes. Here is a basic explanation of the cases in Greek, based on Strong's Greek in a Nutshell (available in ES and TW), which I have updated.

Name|Use|Equivalent|

Nominative|Often the subject of the sentence|(Simple form).|

Genitive|Origin or ownership, producer (subjective) or recipient (objective) of an action|From, of, etc.|

Dative|Position or manner|In, by, for, to, etc.|

Accusative|Direction or object|Toward, into, etc.|

Vocative|Address|O!|

This table is a very simple one to show the differences between the cases. When you deal with the Greek text, the interpretation will not be that simple. Let me give you an example from Revelation 1:1.

αποκαλυψις G602 N-NSFτησου G2424 N-GSMχριστου G5547 N-GSM

This phrase is simply translated as 'Revelation of Jesus Christ'. **■**sou Christou (N-GSM) is interpreted by RMAC as (Noun, Genitive, Singular, and Masculine). How should we interpret the genitive here? Is Jesus Christ the producer or the recipient of the revelation? In order to answer this question, we must now turn to Robertson and Vincent. It is not possible to interpret the cases without the help of these giants at this stage of your journey with Greek. This course does not teach the student to become an independent scholar in biblical languages. It is important to learn from the scholars first. Here are their comments:

Vincent: Of Jesus Christ. Not the manifestation or disclosure of Jesus Christ, but the revelation given by Him.

Robertson: Of Jesus Christ (**■**sou Christou). Hort takes it as objective genitive (revelation about Jesus Christ), but Swete rightly argues for the subjective genitive because of the next clause.

According to these two scholars, then, Revelation 1:1 says that the revelation is given by Jesus. The phrase should not be interpreted to mean 'about Jesus Christ'. If you study their comments further, you will understand why they made that case. Both writers gave a detailed word study of the word 'revelation'.

A more in-depth study of the cases is necessary to interpret them properly. This course assumes that you do not have that knowledge, and that you are prepared to learn from the giants!

In 2 John 1:9, John spoke about the ‘doctrine G1322 of ChristG5547’. What was he referring to? Was it the doctrine ‘about’ Jesus Christ? Or was John referring to the doctrine ‘taught by’ Christ?

Here are a few more examples from the New Testament to illustrate the use of nouns.

4.3.1. Vocative

Even though the vocative does not appear often in the New Testament, we will start with it. In these examples, you should look for the morphological code N-VSM.

Part of Speech: Noun

Case: Vocative

Number: Singular

Gender: Masculine

- Matthew 6:9 πατερN-VSM ημωνP-1GP “Our Father”
- Matthew 17:15 κυριεN-VSM ελεησονV-AAM-2S “Lord have mercy”
- Revelation 22:20 ερχουV-PNM-2S κυριεN-VSM ιησουN-VSM “Come, Lord Jesus.

In Matthew 15:28 Christ exclaimed ωΙΝJ γυναιN-VSF ‘O, woman!’ The particle ω (■) is used here to express emotion. We find it with a similar function a few times in the ministry of the Lord Jesus (see Matt. 17:17; Mark 9:19; Luke 24:25).

4.3.2. Genitive

The genitive is used in a number of ways. One of them is to express possession, as illustrated in the following examples.

- Matthew 26:51 τονT-ASM δουλονN-ASM τουT-GSM αρχιερεωςN-GSM “The servant of the high priest”
- Matthew 26:51 αυτουP-GSM τοT-ASN ωτιονN-ASN “of him the ear.”

The grammatical code (N-GSM) can be explained as follows:

Part of Speech: Noun

Case: Genitive

Number: Singular

Gender: Masculine

The text is very specific. The disciple struck the servant who belonged to the high priest and not the servant of another person. In addition, he cut off the ear belonging to that particular servant. The genitive is also used to refer to an object. It is then called technically objective genitive. A good example of this is found in Mark 11:22.

· εχετεV-PAM-2P πιστινN-ASF θεουN-GSM 'Have faith in God'. The genitive here cannot be translated as possessive, meaning 'have faith of God'. It is not about having the kind of faith that comes from God. God here is the object of the faith. The Lord Jesus wanted his disciples to have God as the object of their faith. Robertson indicates in his commentary that the genitive here is objective, which makes it easy to explain.

Decline the following words in 2 John 1:7.

Word|Part of speech|Case|Number|Gender|Meaning|

Σαρκι|||||

Χριστον|||||

Αντιχριστος|||||

Conclusion

4.4. Conclusion

Is Greek different from English? Yes, it is. However, they have a few things in common. English borrows some of its vocabulary from Greek. In the context of the church, there are some words that were transliterated from Greek. Greek is a highly inflected language. This can be seen in the different forms that a word may take depending on its function in a sentence. ES and TW analyse these Greek words and indicate their grammatical function. They give information on the part of speech, case, number, and gender of the word. Vincent and Robertson provide further interpretation of the meaning of the grammar in the specific context. The next chapter will explain the Greek verb.

Introduction

5.1. Introduction

A previous chapter explained how a proper understanding of the Greek verb can give us a better understanding of the text. This chapter gives a brief overview of the different elements of a Greek verb. The elements are tense, voice, mood, person and number.

Tenses

5.2. Tenses

The tenses in Greek are Present, Imperfect, Perfect, Pluperfect, Aorist, and Future. These tenses need special attention. Greek tenses have two connotations: aspect and time. The aspect refers to the type of action. There are three types of action: continuing (present and imperfect), undefined (aorist and future) and completed (perfect and pluperfect).

The present and the aorist appear the most in the New Testament. The following table is a graphic presentation of the appearance of the tenses in the New Testament.

Tenses in the New Testament|

Tense|Percentage|

Aorist|41.2%|

Present|41.1%|

Imperfect|6.0%|

Future|5.8%|

Perfect|5.6%|

Pluperfect|0.3%|

If you want to study the form and function of Greek tenses, you should pay a lot of attention to the present and the aorist. They represent 82.3% of all the tenses in the New Testament.

The important question for us at this time is: what do these tenses mean? Their morphology is not discussed here, because just like the nouns, TW and ES will analyse the verb for you.

5.2.1. Matthew 7:7

Let us start with the present tense. Its meaning is illustrated by two examples from the New Testament. The present is used of action in progress, or of an event that repeatedly happens. A good example of this is Matthew 7:7:

αἰτεῖτε G154 G5720 ASK...

ζητεῖτε G2212 G5720 SEEK...

κρουετε G2925 G5720 KNOCK ...

If you consult the morphological code, you will see that these verbs are in the present tense. They all have the following code: V-PAM-2P, which is the same as the Strong code G5720. This code is explained as follows:

Tense: Present

Voice: Active

Mood: iMperative

Person: 2nd

Number: Plural

The present tense here refers to an event that should be repeated. In other words, 'keep on asking, keep on seeking, keep on knocking'. And, because the mood is imperative, it is a command to keep on asking. If Matthew was not thinking about repeated action, but just wanted to say ask, seek and knock, he would have used the aorist tense.

Robertson and Vincent did not comment on this verse. Let me quote from a modern grammar:

The force of the present imperatives is 'Ask repeatedly, over and over again . . . seek repeatedly . . . knock continuously, over and over again' (Wallace 1996:521).

5.2.2. 1 John 3:9

A problem in 1 John 3:9 can be solved by understanding the Greek tense behind the word. The KJV reads: 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin'. Is this verse saying that Christians do not sin? Some have interpreted the verse to mean that. Which Greek tense did John use in the phrase: *αμαρτιαν ου ποιει* (*harmartian ou poiei*)? The verb in this phrase is *ποιει* G4160 V-PAI-3S. The grammatical code can be explained as follows:

Tense: Present

Voice: Active

Mood: Indicative

Person: third

Number: Singular

The V at the beginning of the code indicates that the word is a verb. The verb is in the present tense. This is what Robertson said about this phrase: 'Linear present active indicative as in verse 4 like *αμαρτανε* in verse 8. The child of God does not have the habit of sin.'

In the second part of the verse he suggested the following translation: The present active infinitive *αμαρτανειν* can only mean 'and he cannot go on sinning'. John made a very bold statement here. A believer does not have the habit of sinning; he cannot go on sinning. He does sin, but that is not his habit. The NIV brought this out clearly in its translation.

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.

The aorist is the most frequently occurring tense in the NT. Because of the different forms it can take, it is divided into aorist I and aorist II. They both mean the same thing. TW and ES will indicate the difference. Burton (§ 35), said the following about the aorist.

The constant characteristic of the Aorist tense in all of its moods, including the participle, is that it represents the action denoted by it indefinitely; i.e. simply as an event, neither on the one hand picturing it in progress, nor on the other affirming the existence of its result.

5.2.3. John 1:21

In John 1:21 the priest and Levites who were sent from Jerusalem asked John who he was. The Greek word for 'they asked' is ηρωτησαν (rētēsan) G2065G5656V-AAI-3PTHEY ASKED. This grammatical code is explained as follows:

Tense: Aorist

Voice: Active

Mood: Indicative

Person: third

Number: Plural

It was a simple question, not referring to a repeated action.

5.2.4. 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

The aorist and the perfect tense are used in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

απεθανεν (apethanen)G599 G5627 DIED V-2AAI-3S

εταφη (etaphe)G2290 G5648 HE WAS BURIED V-2API-3S

εγηγερται (egegetai) G1453 G5769 HE WAS RAISED V-RPI-3S

The first two verbs are in the aorist tense and the third is in the perfect tense. The aorist does not focus on the duration of the events or the results afterwards. Its focus is on the fact that the thing happened. Christ died as a fact, and he was buried as a fact. These are undeniable facts of the gospel. The next phrase is in the perfect tense. Paul did not just want to speak about the resurrection as an event that took place, as a fact. He wanted to emphasise the lasting results of it. He therefore used the perfect tense. Christ died as a fact, He was buried as a fact; however, He is raised with lasting results; He will never die again.

5.2.5. Acts 19:18

In Acts 19:18 there is an interesting account; a group of people who believed and came forward to confess to their deeds. I wonder when they believed. Had they just accepted the good news and become believers, or did they start believing some time ago? The Greek text reads:

των T-GPM πεπιστευκοτων V-RAP-GPM(ton pepisteukoton) 'Those who believe'. The verb is a (RAP) peRfectum, Active, Participle. Robertson and Vincent did not comment on this verse. This phrase is translated as follows:

Those who had believed (Acts 19:18 NET).

Many that believed (Acts 19:18 KJV).

Those who were now believers (Acts 19:18 ESV).

Many who became believers (Acts 19:18 NLT).

The perfect here is explained by one commentator as follows:

'Believers', absolutely, cf. 18:27, 21:20, 21:25. They had embraced Christianity but had not hitherto given up their evil practices (Page 1886:206).

It means that just like many Christians in our day, they continued with their evil practices after they had become believers. Luke did not use an aorist here to indicate the fact that they were believers. He used a perfect tense, to refer to those who had believed and were still believing.

The next word in the verse is ηρχοντο (■rxonto)V-INI-3P'came'. Robertson commented on this word. According to him, the Imperfect tense should be understood as, 'kept coming, one after another'.

This basic introduction will not explain the detail of Greek tenses. It serves as an introduction to the differences between Greek and English grammar. Scholars also differ in the way they explain the meaning of the tenses. My advice is; always check with an authority in the field. A modern grammar that is helpful for interpreters is the one by Daniel Wallace (1996).

Voice

5.3. Voice

Greek verbs also have three voices: active, passive and middle.

5.3.1. Active

In the active voice, the subject performs the action. Εσωσεν (es σ en) G4982 V-AAI-3Sημας (mas) G2248 P-1AP 'He saved us' (Titus 3:5). The subject here is God. He saved us. This truth is illustrated beautifully somewhere else, when the multitude in Revelation 7:10 shouted in a loud voice: 'Salvation belongs to our God, to the one seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

5.3.2. Passive

In the passive voice, the subject is acted upon or receives the action. Χριστος (Christos) G5547 N-NSM κηρυσσεται (k σ russetai) G2784 V-PPI-3S 'Christ is preached' (1Cor. 15:12). Christ is not preached by himself, but by others, his messengers.

5.3.3. Middle

In the middle voice, the subject produces and receives the action. However, one has to be careful. Do not rely on your own judgement. Consult the scholars. Απεχεσθαι (apexesthai) G567 V-PMN 'Keep yourself away from' (1 Thess. 4:3).

Mood

5.4. Mood

Greek has four moods: the indicative, the subjunctive, the optative, and the imperative.

The Moods in the New Testament|

Indicative|81.4%|

Subjunctive|9.7%|

Imperative|8.5%|

Optative|0.4%|

There are two other forms that are studied together with the moods: the infinitive (a verbal noun) and the participle (a verbal adjective). Most verbs in the New Testament appear in the indicative mood.

5.4.1. Indicative

Among other things, the indicative presents a fact or makes a statement. 'In the beginning was [indicative] the word' (John 1:1).

5.4.2. Subjunctive

The subjunctive mood is used in a number of ways. It may express probability; it may be used to exhort or command oneself and associates.

αγωμεν G71 V-PAS-1P και G2532 CONJ ημεις G2249 P-1NP 'Let us go also' (John 11:16).

In the aorist tense it is used with a double negative to express a future negation.

ου G3756 PRT-N μη G3361 PRT-N εκβαλω G1544 V-2AAS-1S 'I will not not cast out = I will certainly not cast out' (John 6:37). John uses the subjunctive with double negation for some promises made by Christ. Believers:

- will never (ου μη) walk in darkness (John 8:12).
- will never (ου μη) see death (John 8:51).
- will never (ου μη) perish (John 10:28).
- will never (ου μη) die (John 11:26).

5.4.3. Imperative

The imperative is used to express a command, a prayer or a request. In John 5:14 Jesus said: μηκετι G3371 ADV αμαρτανε G264 V-PAM-2S 'Stop sinning' (NIV). Robertson made the following

comments about this phrase:

'No longer go on sinning.' Present active imperative with μηκετ, a clear implication that disease was due to personal sin as is so often the case... He had suffered for 38 years. All sickness is not due to personal sin (9:3), but much is and nature is a hard paymaster.

5.4.4. Optative

The optative appears 68 times in the New Testament. It expresses a wish or a prayer, translated by 'may it be'. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23 Paul expressed the wish that God αγιασαι G37 V-AAO-3S'may sanctify' the believers.

An exercise

5.5. An exercise

According to the KJV John said the following in 1 John 4:2 and 2 John 1:7:

Jesus G2424 Christ G5547 is come G2064 in G1722 the flesh (1 John 4:2).

Jesus G2424 Christ G5547 is come G2064 in G1722 the flesh G4561 (2 John 1:2).

The verbal forms in these two verses are translated in the same way. The NET translates them differently.

Jesus as the Christ who has come in the flesh

(1 John 4:2)

Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh (2 John 1:7)

Can you explain the reason why the NET did that? What is the difference in meaning between the two verses? Your first step would be to parse the verb. What does RMAC say about these verbs? The next step would be to establish if the same verbal form was used in both passages. If not, what is the difference? Consult Robertson and Vincent. If you have access to other commentaries based on the Greek text, you may want to consult them as well.

Conclusion

5.6. Conclusion

A Greek verb has three elements that contribute to its meaning: tense, voice and mood. The Greek verb provides further information about its number and person. The Greek verb will answer the following five questions about its morphology:

- What is the tense? Present, Imperfect, Perfect, Pluperfect, Aorists, or Future.
- What is the voice? Active, Passive or Middle.
- What is the mood? Indicative, Subjunctive, Optative, or Imperative.
- Which person is it? First, Second or Third.
- What is the number? Singular or Plural.

ES and TW will give the answer to all these questions. The important thing now is for the student to interpret the meaning of these elements in their context. My advice here is the same as I gave earlier. Consult the scholars of both past and present generations. Draw your conclusions after carefully considering what they have done.

Introduction

6.1. Introduction

Greek has a number of small words. These are the particles, prepositions, article and conjunctions; words like 'in, and, but, to'. They are small but very important. Just like the other parts of the sentence that we have looked at so far, the resources provide help. Strong's numbers will allow you to identify the Greek word behind the small words. Since these words are not conjugated, you should be able to identify them directly in the Greek text. This chapter serves as a brief introduction to the small words in Greek. I will comment on 'the article' in the next chapter.

Conjunctions

6.2. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are connecting words. They are very important. They connect words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs. Depending on the conjunction used, we will know if the phrase is independent (coordinating) or dependent (subordinating).

Greek has two types of conjunctions: coordinating conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions. Coordinating conjunctions connect two equal grammatical phrases. The phrases are not subordinate to (depend on) each other. English has coordinating conjunctions such as: for, and, nor, but, or, yet. 'You and I are Christians.'

Subordinating conjunctions introduce clauses that are dependent on another clause. In English this dependency will be expressed by using words such as: if, although, when, in order that, because. 'When I became a Christian, you were still young.'

6.2.1. Coordinating conjunctions

The following are the more common coordinating conjunctions in the New Testament, with one or two examples.

6.2.1.1. και (kai)

The particle kai is the most common conjunction in the New Testament. A quick search in E-Sword reveals that the word appears 9,337 times in the New Testament.

Most sentences in the Gospel of Mark, for example, start with this particle, translated as 'and' in the KJV. και (kai) at the beginning of a sentence is often left untranslated in English, whereas Greek wants to indicate a continuation of the story.

Mark 1:5-7 in the KJV and the NET.||

|KJV|

1:5|And (kai) there went out unto him|

1:6|And (kai) John was clothed with camel's hair|

1:7|And (kai) preached, saying|

Kai connects nouns, adjectives, numerals and adverbs. 'Peter and (kai) the other apostles answered' (Acts 5:29 KJV).

Sometimes kai is used consecutively, to link an event that followed the previous one. 'Neither do men light a candle, and (kai) put it under a bushel' (Matt. 5:15 KJV).

Kai is also used to explain what was said before. The KJV translated John 1:16 as follows: 'And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace'. This verse is unclear as it is. The kai (and) in this verse serves to explain what we receive. Another way of translating this verse is how the NET did: 'For we have all received from his fullness (kai: that is) one gracious gift after another.' [The note between brackets was added by me].

Depending on the context, και (kai) may also be translated as 'also, even, now, so, then, but'.

6.2.1.2. δε (de)

The second major conjunction is δε (de), which is found 2,832 times in 2,556 verses in the New Testament. According to Thayer it is translated variously as 'but, moreover, and'. This small word makes a big difference to the meaning of a text.

In Romans 6:23, we read: 'For the payoff of sin is death, but [de] the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' (NET). Just like the other conjunctions, de is sometimes left untranslated.

De is often used with men, to express contrast: on the one hand . . . on the other hand. In Matt. 9:37, we read: '[On the one hand] the harvest is plentiful, but [on the other hand] the workers are few' (Matthew 9:37 NET).

6.2.1.3. γαρ (gar)

Gar is found 1,016 times in 991 verses in the New Testament. It is often translated as 'for'. It is used to give a reason or an explanation for what was said before. It is one of the words at the beginning of Romans 6:23, giving the reasons for what was in verse 22.

But now, freed from sin and enslaved to God, you have your benefit leading to sanctification, and the end is eternal life. For (gar) the payoff of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (NET).

Paul uses gar often in the book of Romans (see, for example, Rom. 10:2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16). Here is one more example from the well-known verse of John 3:16.

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

What is the purpose of 'for' at the beginning of this verse? According to Thayer the Greek particle gar assigns a reason. In John 3:16, it explains the reason for what was said before. This will take us back to verses 14 and 15. The Son of Man will be lifted up so that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life. Why will they have eternal life? Because God loved the world so much that he gave His Son.

6.2.1.4. ἀλλὰ (alla)

Alla is found 611 times in 603 verses in the New Testament. It was the strongest way to say 'but' in Greek. What follows after alla is in strong contrast to what was said before. It is the word used by Christ in Matthew 4:4:

Man does not live by bread alone, but [alla] by every word that comes from the mouth of God (NET).

See also:

I have not come to abolish these things but [alla] to fulfill them (Matt. 5:17 NET).

Not only this, but [alla] we also rejoice in sufferings (Rom. 5:3 NET).

6.2.1.5. ουν (oun)

Oun appears 518 times in the New Testament. This small word is very often inferential. The writer is drawing a conclusion based on what was said before. It is translated as 'therefore'. Paul used it a number of times in his letters, to conclude what he had taught in previous sections.

Therefore [oun] I exhort you, brothers and sisters (Rom. 12:1 NET).

I, therefore [oun], the prisoner for the Lord, urge you (Eph. 4:1 NET).

Therefore [oun], if you have been raised with Christ (Col. 3:1 NET).

6.2.2. Subordinating conjunctions

The two main subordinating conjunctions in the New Testament are hoti (oti) and hina (ina). Hoti appears 1,189 times and hina 621 times.

6.2.2.1. ■τι (hoti)

Thayer gives the following definitions for hoti, 'that, because, since'. Often it is translated as 'because, for'. Examples can be seen in the Beatitudes in Matthew 5. The second phrase answers the question 'why'? The answer is: because!

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for (hoti) the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

4 Blessed are those who mourn, for (hoti) they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for (hoti) they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for (hoti) they will be satisfied.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for (hoti) they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for (hoti) they will see God.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for (hoti) they will be called the children of God.

10 Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness, for (hoti) the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.

11 Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you falsely on account of me.

12 Rejoice and be glad because your reward is great in heaven, for (hoti) they persecuted the prophets before you in the same way (Matt. 5:3-12 NET).

6.2.2.2. ■να (hina)

Thayer defined hina as 'that, in order that, so that'. Hina denotes purpose or the result. An example of this can be found in the well-known verse in John 3:16.

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so (hina) that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life (NET).

The final part of this verse is the same as in verse 15. Robertson made the following comments about that verse, which are applicable to verse 16:

Final use of hina with present active subjunctive of *echo*, that he may keep on having eternal life (a frequent phrase in John, always in John *aiōnios* occurs with *zoē*, 16 times in the Gospel, 6 in 1John, ageless or endless life, beginning now and lasting forever).

Other examples are:

Do not judge (hina) so that you will not be judged (Matt. 7:1 NET).

But this has happened (hina) so that the scriptures of the prophets would be fulfilled (Matt. 26:56 NET).

But now I ask you ... (hina) that we love one another (2 John 1:5 NET)

Prepositions

6.3. Prepositions

Prepositions are important words. They indicate the relationship (of time, place, and circumstance) between two entities in a sentence. They modify verbs, nouns and adjectives.

In Matthew 28:20 the Lord Jesus said *καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ ὑμῶν εἰμι* (*kai idou egō meth humōn eimi*) 'And remember, I am with you always' (NET). The preposition 'with' (*μεθ meth*) describes the relation between the two entities 'I' (Jesus) and 'you' (His disciples). This phrase can be paraphrased as 'I will always accompany you'.

In Ephesians 5:2 the prepositional phrase *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* (*en agapē*), 'in love' modifies the verb *περιπατεῖτε* (*peripateite*) 'walk'. The believer is not just commanded to walk, but to walk in love.

However, when you translate prepositions from one language to another, you must understand that it will not be possible to find a preposition in the two languages with an identical meaning.

I recall a Greek student who translated a Greek preposition wrongly. He worked on Matthew 28:19. The Lord Jesus commanded his disciples to baptise the nations *εἰς* (*eis*) 'in' the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (NET). In this verse he translated *εἰς* (*eis*) as 'in'.

When this student came to Luke 15:21, he translated *εἰς* (*eis*) with 'in' as he did in Matthew 28:19. In Luke 15:21 the prodigal son confessed his sins before his father. According to the Greek text he said: 'Father I have sinned *εἰς* (*eis*) the heaven'. The student translated: 'Father I have sinned in the heaven'. He took the preposition *εἰς* to mean 'in'. In this case he was incorrect. The theology that resulted from that translation is very bad. People are not sinning in heaven. *Eis* here should be translated as 'against'.

Prepositions are difficult to translate from one language to another. In my mother tongue we have far fewer prepositions than English. One preposition is used to cover most of the English prepositions accurately. When dealing with Greek prepositions one has to be very careful. Do not base a doctrine on your understanding of a particular preposition. A preposition may be used as a synonym of another one. I will illustrate this with a few more examples of *εἰς* (*eis*) 'into'.

What is the meaning of the preposition *εἰς*? There are passages in the New Testament, where *εἰς* seems to have the meaning *ἐν* 'in'. Depending on the context, according to Thayer, *εἰς* can be translated as 'into, unto, to, towards, for, among'.

- When it is used after verbs that indicate a motion, it is translated as 'into, towards'.

Matthew 9:7 *εἰς* 'towards' his house.

Acts 17:10 *εἰς* 'towards' the synagogue.

· When the movement is directed towards a surface, it is not possible to use the preposition 'towards'. In those cases, 'on' may be a better translation.

Matthew 27:30 εις 'on' his head.

Matthew 5:39 εις 'on' the right cheek.

· Sometimes εις is use as a synonym for εν (in).

Mark 10:10 and εις 'in' the house.

· The meaning of εις sometimes overlaps the meaning of epi (on).

He was sitting 'on' (εις) the Mount of Olives opposite the temple (Mark 13:3, NET).

As these examples demonstrate, there may be an overlap in meaning between prepositions.

εις appears more than 1,700 times in the New Testament. The preposition that appears the most is εν (en). It appears more than 2,700 times. Εν (en) often refers to a location, a space or place where something or someone is found.

Matthew 2:1 εν 'in' Bethlehem of Judah.

Hebrews 4:7 εν 'in' David, meaning 'in the Psalm of David'.

Other Greek prepositions|

προ, before|επι, upon|

προς, towards|κατα, down|

περι, around|δια, through|

απο, away from|αντι, over against|

υπο, under|υπερ, above|

εκ, out of|ανα, up|

μετα, with|συν, with|

παρα, beside||

The definitions listed in this table are not the sole meanings. The context and the cases that they take will decide the meaning. The following diagram, taken from Wallace (1996:358), gives a good illustration of the use of prepositions with the different cases that they take.

[See image08]

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To establish the exact meaning of a given preposition, one should consult an advanced Greek lexicon.

Other Particles

6.4. Other Particles

A final category of small words in Greek is the particles. These small words do not belong to one of the major parts of speech, even though they have grammatical functions. The word 'to' in the English infinitive 'to be' is a good example of a particle. Actually, the two categories of small words discussed above, conjunctions and prepositions, are also particles. This section is therefore named 'other' particles. Greek has different kinds of particles.

The negative particles οὐ (ou) or οὐκ (ouk) and μὴ (mē) 'no, not' are well-known.

In Greek these two negative particles can be used together, as a double negative. This usage is not found in English.

The one who follows me will never (οὐ μὴ) walk in darkness, but will have the light of life (John 8:12 NET).

I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means (οὐ μὴ) disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished (Matt. 5:18).

You will certainly not (οὐ μὴ) enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20 NIV).

You will never (οὐ μὴ) enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5:20 NET).

The double negative in Greek is translated as a strong negative in English: 'certainly not, never, by no means'.

Conclusion

6.5. Conclusion

The small words discussed in this chapter play an important role in the understanding of the New Testament. Differences in interpreting the prepositions, for example, result in opposing theological views on the coming of the Lord Jesus or the purpose of baptism. This basic survey, however, did not go into that discussion. It is clear that even though these words are small, they play a major role in the interpretation of the text of the New Testament. Again, as with other parts of speech that we have seen so far, Robertson and Vincent make helpful comments on important passages.

Introduction to Greek for non-Greek students

7.1. Introduction to Greek for non-Greek students

The previous chapters gave a general introduction to the Greek language. In this chapter, I explain how to study the Greek text with TW and ES. The book of 2 John is used as a point of departure. You may use another book, passage or verse from scripture to do what we are doing here. Whichever one you choose, you should always try to understand the meaning of the text in its original, before starting to apply and make use of the meaning. Some parts of this chapter may appear to be technical. It is important to go through all of it, maybe a few times, with your Bible open!

The following steps will be taken:

- I will read 2 John in the NET translation and a few other translations.
- I will read 2 John, section by section in the Greek text (Greek Interlinear TR +#), having the transliterated text (Translit ES) and the Greek text with morphological code (Greek LXX+# and Byz/MT NT +#) open.
- I will study the text of verses 1-3 in detail, paying attention to the grammar and the words, with the help of Robertson and Vincent.

Reading 2 John in English

7.2. Reading 2 John in English

What am I looking for in the English text? As you will recall, the English bible can serve as the entry point to the Greek text. In the first phase of the study, I will not do that. I am reading the English bible with another purpose. I want to familiarise myself with the passage that I will be dealing with, in its own context. Then, I will try to divide the text into various sections. I will look for differences between the translations that I am using.

I choose the NET and the KJV because these two translations differ from each other in a number of ways. The KJV is an older translation, and followed an older Greek text tradition. The NET is a modern translation and followed a different Greek text tradition. If you have the NET Bible with full notes, you will see where the Greek texts differ. These differences in the Greek text should be investigated further, with the help of advanced commentaries. I strongly recommend that you get the NET bible with full notes.

The first step, then, is to read 2 John in the two English translations a number of times. Do that until you are familiar with the content of the letter.

Prepare your own outline of the text. I give my outline here, section by section. You can compare yours with mine.

The NET identifies verses 1-4 as the Introduction and Thanksgiving. Do you agree with that? It seems to me that verses 1-3 are the normal greeting and verse 4 is the thanksgiving. In that case, I would suggest Greetings for what NET identifies as Introduction. My general outline for the first part of the letter will be as follows:

- Greetings 1:1-3.
- Thanksgiving 1:4.

In New Testament times the Greetings consisted of three parts: the writer (the elder, verse 1a), the recipients (the elect lady and her children, verse 1b and 2) and the Christian greetings (verse 3).

(a) From the elder, (b) to an elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth (and not I alone, but also all those who know the truth), 2 because of the truth that resides in us and will be with us forever.3(c) Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father, in truth and love (2 John 1:1-3 NET).

In ancient letters, the name of the writer was mentioned at the beginning of the letter. In most of his epistles, Paul says something about himself, such as, 'servant of Christ', 'apostle' (Rom. 1:1). The normal Hellenistic way of greeting was *chairein* ('greetings'), as we can see in Acts 15:23. It reads literally: 'The apostles and elders and brethren greeting (*chairein*)'. But Paul used another form of greeting, *charis* ('grace'), and added to it the normal Hebrew way of greeting, namely, 'peace'.

My outline for this section then is:

- Greetings 1:1-3
- o The Writer (1:1a)
- o The Recipients (1:1b-2)
- o Christian Greetings (1:3)

Are there differences between the translations? There is one noteworthy difference. The NET speaks about 'an elect lady', while the KJV called her 'the elect lady'. In verse 3 the KJV has 'Grace be with you ... ', whereas the NET says 'Grace ... will be with us'.

Verse 4 may be considered as a thanksgiving. This pattern is found in Paul's letters. Paul's letter often had a prayer, wish or thanksgiving. We find this in all his letters, except for Galatians and Titus (see for example Col. 1:3-8; 2 Cor. 1:3-7; Eph. 1:3-14).

I rejoiced greatly because I have found some of your children living according to the truth, just as the Father commanded us (2 John 1:4 NET).

According to NET the second pericope of the letter consists of verses 5-11. This section is entitled Warning Against False Teachers. As I read the section, I would like to group verses 5-6 together. The theme in these two verses seems to be 'walking in love'. In verse 7 he will introduce the false teachers, called deceivers.

5 But now I ask you, lady (not as if I were writing a new commandment to you, but the one we have had from the beginning), that we love one another. 6 (Now this is love: that we walk according to his commandments.) This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning; thus you should walk in it (2 John 1:5-6 NET).

In verse 5 John reminded the lady of the commandment that Christians had from the beginning. The commandment is 'that we love one another'. Verse 6 elaborates on what this love means. It means that we should walk according to God's commandments. So, my outline for these two verses will be:

- Walk in love (1:5-6)
- o Love one another (verse 5)
- o Walk according to his commandment (verse 6).

Verse 7 starts with the word 'for' in the NET (as also in the KJV).

For many deceivers have gone out into the world, people who do not confess Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh. This person is the deceiver and the antichrist! (2 John 1:7 NET)

YLT (Young's Literal Translation) starts the verse with 'because'. This word indicates a clear relation between verse 7 and the previous verse. Even though verse 7 starts with a new theme, it builds on what was said before. Why should believers walk according to his commandment (verse 6)? 'Because' (verse 7 YLT) 'many deceivers have gone out into the world' (2 John 1:7a NET). Verse 7 then is about the deceiver, the antichrist. I will treat verse 7 separately, and give it the

following title:

- The deceiver and antichrist (verse 7)

What are the differences between the translations? The KJV speaks about 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh', whereas the NET speaks about 'Jesus as Christ coming in the flesh'.

In verses 8-9 the elder warns the believers in the light of what he said before. Because there are deceivers, they should watch out and remain in the teaching of Christ.

8 Watch out, so that you do not lose the things we have worked for, but receive a full reward. 9 Everyone who goes on ahead and does not remain in the teaching of Christ does not have God. The one who remains in this teaching has both the Father and the Son (2 John 1:8-9 NET).

The outline for verses 8-9 then is as follows:

- Watch out and remain in the teaching of Christ (1:8-9)

- o Watch out (verse 8)

- o Remain in the teaching of Christ (verse 9)

Verse 8 shows a major difference between the NET and the KJV.

That we lose not those things which we have wrought (2 John 1:8 KJV).

So that you do not lose the things we have worked for (2 John 1:8 NET).

The question is: Who will lose what was worked for, 'we' or 'you'? This problem brings us back to the Greek text. It will not be possible to solve it based on the English text.

10 If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house and do not give him any greeting, 11 because the person who gives him a greeting shares in his evil deeds (2 John 1:10-11 NET).

In verse 10 the writer explained how the deceiver should be treated. He should neither be received nor greeted. My outline then is:

- How to treat the deceiver (1:10)

- o Do not receive him (10a)

- o Do not greet him (10b)

Verse 11 explains why believers should not receive or greet the deceiver. If you do that, you share in his evil deeds. This verse then is a warning not to share in the evil deeds of the deceiver.

- Do not share in the evil deeds of the deceiver (1:11)

The elder ends the letter with the normal closing and final greeting, which the NET calls Conclusion (verse 12-13).

Reading 2 John in Greek

7.3. Reading 2 John in Greek

The purpose of reading the Greek text now is to continue to familiarise yourself with the Greek characters. In order to do that we will have three texts open on the screen. The first one is the Greek Interlinear text. This text has the Greek text with Strong's codes, followed by a word by word translation of every word into English. It is possible to display the text without the Strong codes in TW.

I suggest that you also open the transliterated Greek text, without Strong numbers next to the text. You may want to open a third text, the Greek text with morphological code (Greek LXX+# and Byz/MT NT +#). This is not obligatory, since the first Greek text comes with the Strong codes. The screenshot below gives 2 John 1:2-3 in TW.

[See image09]

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I emphasise that the transliterated text is only a guide, and I believe that it is still work-in-progress. Some letters, just a few, are not transliterated properly. With what was explained in chapter 3 you should be able to identify each Greek letter. Verses 2-3 in the Greek text read: Δια την αληθειαν την μενουσαν εν ημιν και μεθη μων εσται εις τον αιωνα 3 εσται μεθ ημων χαρις ελεος ειρηνη παρα θεου πατρος και παρα ιησου χριστου του υιου του πατρος εν αληθεια και αγαπη.

Dia ton aletheian ton menousan en emin, kai meth' emon estai eis ton aion.3 estai meth' emon xaris eleos eirene para theos patros, kai para iesos xristos tos uios tos patros, en aletheia kai agape. The transliterated text has a few letters that were not transliterated correctly. In verse 2 την is transliterated as ton twice. It should have been ten, or better: tñn. The 'υ' ending in verse 3 also seems to be a problem in the transliteration. It is transliterated as 's'. Otherwise the transliteration seems to be good. The rest of the Greek text is displayed below with the English translation. Notice also that meth' is a contraction of the preposition meta. Prepositions that ends with a vowel, drops it when it occurs before a word starting with an aspirated vowel.

5 καιANDνυνNOWερωτω I BESEECHσεTHEE,κυρια LADY,ουχNOTωςASεντολην A COMMANDMENTγραφο I WRITEσοι TO THEE καινην NEW, αλλαBUTτην THAT WHICHειχομεν WE WERE HAVING απ FROM " THE" αρχηςBEGINNING,ινα THAT αγαπωμεν WE SHOULD LOVE αλληλους ONE ANOTHER.6 και ANDαυτηTHISεστιν η IS αγαπηLOVEινα THAT περιπατωμεν WE SHOULD WALKκατα ACCORDING TO τας εντολας αυτου HIS COMMANDMENTS.αυτηTHISεστινIσηTHEεντολη COMMANDMENT, καθως EVEN ASηκουσατε YE HEARD απ FROM " THE" αρχηςBEGINNING,ιναTHATεν IN αυτη IT περιπατητε YE MIGHT WALK.7 οτι BECAUSE πολλοι MANY πλανοιDECEIVERSεισηλθονENTEREDειςINTOτονTHEκοσμονWORLD,οι THOSE

WHO μη ομολογούντες DO NOT CONFESS ησούν JESUS χριστον CHRIST ερχομενον COMING εν
 IN σαρκι FLESH ουτος THIS εστιν IS ο THE πλανος DECEIVER και AND ο THE αντιχριστος
 ANTICHRIST.8 βλεπετε SEE TO εαυτους YOURSELVES, ινα THAT μη NOT απολεσωμεν WE MAY
 LOSE α WHAT THINGS ειργασαμεθα WE WROUGHT, αλλα BUT μισθον A REWARD πληρη
 FULL απολαβωμεν WE MAY RECEIVE.9 πας ANYONE ο
 WHO παραβαινων TRANSGRESSES, και AND μη μενων ABIDES
 NOT εν IN τη THE διδαχη TEACHING του OF THE χριστου CHRIST, θεον GOD ουκ NOT εχει HAS. ο HE
 THAT μενων ABIDES εν IN τη THE διδαχη TEACHING του OF THE χριστου CHRIST, ουτος THIS "
 ONE" και BOTH τον THE πατερα FATHER και AND τον THE υιον SON εχει HAS.10
 ει Fτις ANYONE ερχεται COMES προς TO υμας YOU, και AND
 ταυτην την THIS διδαχην TEACHING ου φερει DOES NOT BRING, μη λαμβανετε DO NOT
 RECEIVE αυτον HIM εις INTO "THE" οικιαν HOUSE, και AND χαιρειν HAIL! αυτω TO
 HIM μη λεγετε SAY NOT 11 ο γαρ FOR HE WHO λεγων SAYS
 αυτω TO HIM χαιρειν HAIL! κοινωνει PARTAKES τοις IN εργοις WORKS αυτου τοις HIS πονηροις
 EVIL.12 πολλα MANY THINGS εχων HAVING υμιν TO YOU γραφειν TO WRITE, ουκ ηβουληθην I
 WOULD NOT δια WITH χαρτου PAPER και AND μελανος INK αλλα BUT ελπιζω HOPE ελθειν TO
 COME προς TO υμας YOU, και AND στομα MOUTH προς TO στομα MOUTH λαλησαι TO
 SPEAK, ινα η THAT χαρα JOY ημων OUR η πεπληρωμενη MAY BE FULL.13 ασπαζεται
 SALUTE σε THEE τα THE τεκνα της CHILDREN αδελφης SISTER σου της OF THINE εκλεκτης
 ELECT αμην AM

Now that we can read the text in Greek, we should start with our analysis of the text in Greek. We should study the differences between the English translations and try to explain them. Furthermore, the study of the Greek text should give us more insight into the words and grammatical constructions that were used. This detailed study is limited to 2 John 1:1-3.

A study of 2 John 1:1-3 in Greek

7.4. A study of 2 John 1:1-3 in Greek.

In the previous section, we read the text of 2 John in English and Greek. In this section we will study the text in detail, paying attention to the grammar and the words. You will also remember that we identified a few verses that need more study to establish the correct translation of the text. What should we do now? The first step is to have the Greek and English texts open. They are our point of departure. But, we will also open Robertson and Vincent.

· Greetings 1:1-3

o The Writer (1:1a)

o The Recipients (1:1b-2)

o Christian Greeting (1:3)

7.4.1. The Writer (1:1a)

o G3588 THE πρεσβυτερος G4245 ELDER.

Vincent starts verse 1 with a discussion of the words ‘the elder’. He studied the word diachronically, starting with the original use of the word, followed by its meaning. This kind of word study is helpful. However, you should always bear in mind that the meaning of the word in its context is the one that should be used. It would be wrong, for example, to say that ‘the elder’ in 2 John 1, refers to one of the twenty-four elders in the book of Revelation (see Rev. 4:4). Vincent said as a conclusion of his study that ο πρεσβυτερος (ho presbuteros) in 2 John 1:1 refers to an official position, coupled, presumably, with age. This explanation needs some more elaboration. Who then is this elder? The Greek may give us one more indication, not discussed by Vincent. He is identified in ES and TW as ‘ο G3588 THE’ elder’. The definite article here serves to identify. It means that ‘the’ elder was the well-known one. So who is this well-known elder? This question takes us beyond grammar and word studies. The study note in the NET answered this question as follows:

The author’s self-designation, the elder, is in keeping with the reticence of the author of the Gospel of John to identify himself. This is the same self-designation used by the author of 3 John.

This explanation seems to be reasonable. John was a leader in the church, and at the time of writing he was an old man; he was in his nineties. As such, he could speak with authority.

Questions to think about:

- Is there still room for old people in ministry today?
- Did you know that Paul’s active ministry in the church started when he was almost fifty?

7.4.2. The Recipients (1:1b-2)

εκλεκτη G1588 TO 'THE'ELECTκυρια G2959 LADY και G2532ANDτοις G3588τεκνοις G5043 αυτης G846 HER CHILDREN

We have to turn to Vincent and Robertson again. Robertson makes a comment about the 'children'. This time, Vincent's comment is not a Greek word study. He explained the different ways in which we can understand the phrase '(the/an) elect lady'. The Greek text literally reads 'elect lady'. Greek does not have the indefinite article 'a/an'. Translators should add it if the context demands it. How should we interpret the 'elect lady' without the definite article? It may indicate that she was not named, and we may add the indefinite article 'an' to the phrase: 'an (unidentified) elect lady'. However, the absence of the definite article does not always mean we should add the indefinite article in English.

A good example can be found in John 1:1. The final phrase in Greek reads: και θεος ην ο λογος. This is usually translated as 'and the Word was God'. The Jehovah Witness bible, however, translated this verse as: 'and the word was a god'. Your NET notes and Robertson on this verse explain to you why this verse should not be translated as the JW's bible did. A good way to express the absence of the definite article in John 1:1 according to the NET is: 'what God was the Word was'.

Some take the phrase 'elect lady' to mean a local church, while others take it to mean an individual. If John is referring to an individual, he may have had a lady in mind. We should then translate:

- 'to the lady Electa'
- 'to the elect Kyria', or
- 'to Electa Kyria'.

Vincent gave some sound advice: 'It is impossible to settle the question satisfactorily'. The same is true for 'her children'. Robertson said the following about this:

As with *eklekt*■ *kuria*, so here *tekna* may be understood either literally as in 1 Timothy 3:4, or spiritually, as in Galatians 4:19, Galatians 4:25; 1 Timothy 1:2. For the spiritual sense in *tekna* see 1 John 2:1, 1 John 2:12.

Grammar and word study does not help us to settle this question satisfactorily. The use of the indefinite article may indicate that John was referring to a local church. However, it is not conclusive. The passage also allows for the interpretation that he was speaking to a particular Christian lady. You may want to do further reading, to come up with an interpretation that you can support.

ουςWHOMεγωι αγαπω LOVEενIN αληθεια TRUTH, καιANDουκNOTεγωιμονοςONLY, αλλαBUT καιALSOπαντεςALLοιTHOSEWHOεγνωκοτεςHAVEKNOWNτηνTHE αληθειαν TRUTH, 2 διαFOR SAKE OFτηνTHE αληθειανTRUTHτηνWHICHμενουσαν ABIDESενINημινUS, καιANDμεθWITHημωνUSεσται SHALL BEειςτοναιωνα FOREVER

After reading these verses, it might be better to study them phrase by phrase.

The first phrase is: ους εγω αγαπω εν αληθεια. It is translated as: 'whom I love in the truth (KJV)' and 'whom I love in truth' (NET).

Before trying to explain the difference between the KJV and the NET, we should answer the following question. To whom does ους (whom) refer? In Greek this is normally easy to find out. You will see that there is agreement between the endings of words that belong together. They have the same case ending. Let me illustrate this by giving some examples from verse 1.

· Ο πρεσβυτερος, 'the elder'. Except for the part of speech, they both have the following code: NSM (Nominative, Singular and Masculine). They go together.

· Εκλεκτη κυρια 'elect lady'. They are both DSF (Dative, Singular and Feminine).

· Τοις τεκνοις 'The children'. They are both DPN (Dative, Plural and Neuter). In this case, you can identify it easily, because they have the same ending 'οις'.

In the three examples it is easy to recognise what goes together. That is not the case with ους. Here we should consult the Greek scholars to help us. Robertson says the following:

Ηους masculine accusative plural, though teknois is neuter plural (dative), construction according to sense, not according to grammatical gender, 'embracing the mother and the children of both sexes' (Vincent).

The elder then is referring to both the elect lady and her children.

Εγω αγαπω 'I love'. It is easy to see that these two words go together. They have the same ending 'ω'. However, it was not necessary for the elder to add the personal pronoun εγω 'I', because αγαπω means 'I love'. That is the case with all Greek verbs. The personal ending is attached to the verb. When the personal pronoun is added, it is for emphasis. The elder is saying: 'I myself love' or 'I love' (emphasis on 'I'). However, do not draw that conclusion on your own. You must always consult the scholars on this issue.

Εν αληθεια 'in truth'. Why did the KJV include 'the' before 'truth'? As you can see, it is not in the Greek text. Vincent recommends that we omit 'the'.

Here is an interpretation question. Why did the elder add this phrase to the text, anyway? Was it not enough to say 'whom I love'? I will leave you with that question.

Και παντες οι εγνωκοτες την αληθειαν. The rest of verse 1, is treated as a parenthesis by the NET. Οι εγνωκοτες 'all they that have known', is a perfect participle. These are people who, according to Robertson, still know the truth. The NET brought this out clearly when it translated: 'all those who know'. Apparently there were people in this community who no longer knew the truth. All those who knew the truth and still know the truth, love their fellow believers. It is an important truth in Christianity. This truth according to John in verse 2, abides in us forever. The elder emphasised two things about the truth in this verse:

Μενουσαν εν ημιν 'resides in us' (present participle).

Μεθ ημων εσται 'will be with us' (future).

Robertson draws attention to the word order of the second phrase. Literally, it reads as follows in Greek: 'With us it shall be'. John emphasises 'with us' and refers to himself and his readers. True Christianity, then, is known by the truth.

7.4.3. Christian Greeting (1:3)

Ἐσται μεθ ἡμῶν 'will be with us'. Verse 3 starts with the phrase that we found in verse 2, but in a different order. The elder is not praying for his readers, nor wishing them the grace of God (see KJV). The future tense here seems to indicate something that is certain (see NET). The things mentioned will certainly be with us, all those who know the truth. It was not for 'you' (KJV) but for 'us'. ἡμῶν is identified as '1st person plural'. But, the translators of the KJV did not come up with this on their own. The manuscript that they translated from had the words 'with you'. Vincent commented on this as follows: 'The best texts read with us'. Differences in translations are sometimes due to variances in the manuscripts. This is discussed in more detail in chapter 11.

The elder used an extended Christian greeting, which consisted of three elements: χάρις, ἐλεος and εἰρηνὴ 'grace, mercy and peace'. These are keywords in the Christian community, which deserve serious study. I will not elaborate on them here. Robertson quoted David Smith as follows: 'Charis, the wellspring in the heart of God; eleos, its outpourings; eirene, its blessed effect'. Westcott shared a similar view when he said:

The succession 'grace, mercy, peace' marks the order from the first motion of God to the final satisfaction of man. 'Mercy' defines as it were the manifestation of the divine 'grace' and prepares for the restoration of 'peace' to man's disordered life (Westcott 1886:225).

Now according to the text these blessings will certainly be with us, those of us who hold on to the truth.

The source of these blessings is: παρὰ θεοῦ πατρὸς καὶ παρὰ κυρίου ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ πατρὸς 'from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father'. Robertson brings the repetition of παρὰ 'from' before the Father and the Son to our attention. It was not necessary to repeat this word. He quoted Westcott, who said: 'It serves to bring out distinctly the twofold personal relation of man to the Father and to the Son'. The blessings come from both the Father and the Son. Robertson also quoted Brooke who said:

The Fatherhood of God, as revealed by one who being His Son can reveal the Father, and who as man (Jesus) can make him known to men.

Ἐν ἀληθείᾳ καὶ ἀγάπῃ 'in truth and love'. The relation between these final words in the verse and the rest of it is not clear. It probably refers to a life in truth and love. This is how some translations understand this phrase:

'In our life of truth and love' (New Jerusalem Bible).

'Who live in truth and love' (New Living Translation).

Conclusion

7.5. Conclusion

How do we bring it all together? Verses 1-3 should be interpreted and understood in the light of the whole letter. The theme seems to be, watch out for false teachers. These are people who do not have the truth. John, as an elder, warns God's people against these false teachers. In verses 1-3, he portrayed a positive picture of a Christian (lady or local church) who remains faithful to the truth. The truth that John is referring to in this letter is clearly about the person of the Lord Jesus. It is not an abstract concept or our cultural understanding of what truth is. Those who do not have the truth deny Jesus Christ as coming in flesh. Furthermore, truth seems to refer to living according to what Jesus commanded us. It is a life of love. We cannot say that we have the truth and do not live a life of love. That is not possible according to John. The final phrase of 2 John 1:3 portrays that beautifully: 'In our life of truth and love' (NJB). John says here that the Father and the Son will bless those who live accordingly with grace, mercy and peace. As an old man, serving the churches of God, John was concerned with what was happening around him. John's concern was that the person and teaching of Christ would be central among God's people. If that concern was appropriate then, what about now?

Introduction

8.1. Introduction

You know more words of the Old Testament languages, Hebrew and Aramaic, than you thought. Christians often use Hebrew names for God, such as Elohim (God), Yahweh (proper name of God, often translated LORD), Adonai (Lord), Tseba'ot (Hosts), Elyon (Almighty) and Shaddai (Almighty, He who is sufficient).

A few English words were taken directly from Hebrew.

Alphabet|Alef, Beyt|

Amen|■m■n (certainly) |

Camel |G■m■l (desert animal) |

Cane |Q■neh (tube, reed)|

Hallelujah |Halelûy■ch (praise the Lord)|

Hosanna |Hôsh■'■ n■ (please save)|

Kosher|K■sh■r (be appropriate)|

Messiah|M■sh■■ah (anointed)|

Pharisee |P■rash (separate)|

Rabbi |Rabb■■ (master, great one)|

Sabbath|Shabb■t (day of rest)|

Satan |S■th■n (adversary)|

Seraph |S■r■ph (celestial being)|

Shalom |Sh■lôm (peace)|

Sheol|She'ôl (underworld)|

Shofar |Shôph■r (ram's horn)|

There are some Aramaic words in the New Testament, such as:

- Talitha koum 'Little girl, I say to you, get up' (Mark 5:41).
- Abba 'Father' (Mark 14:36).
- Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'(Mark 15:34).

· Maranatha (1 Cor. 16:22). The word transliterated maranatha, may mean: 'Our Lord, Come!'(Marana-tha) or 'Our Lord has come!'(Maran-atha).

8.1.1. Languages of the Old Testament

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and some parts in Aramaic. Almost 99% of the Old Testament was written in the Hebrew language (23,213 verses). The Aramaic section is very small. It consists of a few chapters and verses in Genesis (31:47, two words); Ezra (4:8-6:18; 7:12-26); Jeremiah (10:11); Daniel (2:4-7:28).

8.1.2. Name of the languages

The language of the Israelites is called yehudit, the 'language of Judah' (2 Kgs 18:26; Isa. 36:11; Neh. 13:24; 2 Chron. 32:18) and shephat Kena'an (literally: lip of Canaan) 'language of Canaan' (Isa. 19:18). The name 'Hebrew' ivrit does not appear in the Old Testament.

Aramaic ('■r■m■t) is called Syriack (see Dan. 2:4) and 'Syrian language' (2 Kgs 18:26; Ezra 4:7; Isa. 36:11) in the KJV. A previous generation of Old Testament scholars called the Aramaic language Chaldean.

8.1.3. Language family

Hebrew and Aramaic are related languages. They belong to the Semitic language group within the Afro-asiatic language families. The Semitic languages were the predominant language groups of the Middle East. In scholarly research, these languages are classified into two groups according to their geographic distribution: (1) East Semitic and (2) West Semitic languages. The East Semitic group has only one language, Akkadian, the language of the Babylonians and Assyrians. The West Semitic group is divided into the Northwest (present day Lebanon and Syria) and the Southwest (Arabian Peninsula and Ethiopia) Semitic language. The Northwest has three main families: (1) Amorite and Ugaritic, (2) Canaanite languages, and (3) Aramaic. Hebrew belongs to the Canaanite language group, together with Phoenician, Punic, Moabite, Edomite, and Ammonite. It is no wonder that Hebrew was called 'the language of Canaan' (Isa. 19:18).

[See image10]

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Figure 1: Map of the Semitic languages

Brief history

8.2. Brief history

8.2.1. Hebrew

Due to the similarities of the Semitic languages scholars believe that they all originated from a common language. That common language is called Proto-Semitic. There is, however, no record that such a language ever existed. But the widespread similarities between the languages justify such an assumption. It is clear that Hebrew developed from a Canaanite language. The Israelites probably learned that language when they conquered Canaan. The early Hebrew documents were written in a script that is similar to that of the Canaanites or Phoenicians. Aramaic or a dialect of that language may have been the previous language of the Israelites (see Gen. 25:20; Deut. 26:5).

A wandering Aramean was my ancestor, and he went down to Egypt (Deut. 26:5).

When Isaac was forty years old, he married Rebekah, the daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from Paddan Aram and sister of Laban the Aramean (Gen. 25:20).

The Hebrew language in Canaan had different dialects. The book of Judges gives evidence for this, at least as far as the pronunciation is concerned.

Then they said to him, Say 'Shibboleth!' If he said, 'Sibboleth' (and could not pronounce the word correctly), they grabbed him and executed him right there at the fords of the Jordan (Judg. 12:6).

The history of the Hebrew language is divided into four phases.

(1) Classical Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew belongs to the classical period of the language. Besides the Hebrew bible there are a number of epigraphical materials and ostraca in Classical Hebrew, from the 10th to the 6th century BC. At the end of this period the Jews started to speak Aramaic.

(2) Rabbinic Hebrew (2nd century BC – 9th century AD). During this period some of the important rabbinical documents were written, such as the Mishnah (a collection of existing oral rules based on the Jewish law), the Talmud (commentaries on the Mishnah), and the Midrash (commentaries on the Old Testament). This was the period during which the Dead Sea Scrolls were written.

(3) Mediaeval Hebrew (9th century AD – 18th century AD). During the mediaeval period, Hebrew was the language of scholarly writing and no longer a spoken language. Scholars published many biblical commentaries and other writings during this period. One of these well-known scholars was Rashi. With the Reformation in the church during the 16th century, Hebrew again became an important language for the church. The Reformers studied Hebrew under the Jews. Beginning with Johannes Reuchlin (circa 1522) Christian scholars started to write their own Hebrew grammars for the study of the Hebrew Bible.

(4) Modern Hebrew (Ivrit/Israeli). Towards the end of the 19th century, Hebrew was revived and became a living language. Eliëzer Ben Jehuda, played a significant role in this, by preparing a

major dictionary of the language. The revived language became one of the three official languages of Palestine in 1922, alongside English and Arabic. During the 19th century, Christian theologians wrote many Hebrew grammars. Their grammars were often based on a comparative study of other Semitic languages. That era also produced a number of grammars on other Semitic languages.

The German theologian Wilhelm Heinrich Friedrich Gesenius (1786-1842) can be seen among theologians as the father of the modern study of Biblical Hebrew. Gesenius contributed a grammar and a lexicon to the study of the language, in which he often referred to other Semitic languages. His grammar first appeared in 1807, written in German. This grammar has had 28 editions; the last seven were edited by Emile Kautzsch. In 1910 Arthur Cowley produced an English version, which is available as an ES and TW module.

Modern studies of Biblical Hebrew have been heavily influenced by new studies in linguistics. The language is on the move, and beginner students will not be able to contribute anything to the new direction that the language is taking.

8.2.2. Aramaic

[See image11]

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Figure 2: Overview of the Aramaic language family

Aramaic developed as a language spoken by Syrian (Aramean) tribes in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan. We do not have details about this phase of the Aramaic language, commonly known as Ancient Aramaic. It was the language of Rebecca and Laban (Gen. 25:20). Jacob, and probably Abram, spoke the same language (see Deut. 26:5).

During its time in the Promised Land, Israel fought several times against the Arameans. David defeated king Hadadezer of Damascus (2 Sam. 8:3-8). When the Assyrians conquered the Arameans, they incorporated the latter's language into their own. Assyrians were able to speak Aramaic, which the leaders of the Israelite army also understood.

Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to the chief adviser, 'Speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand it. Don't speak with us in the Judahite dialect in the hearing of the people who are on the wall' (2 Kgs 18:26 NET).

The influence of Aramaic grew steadily. Aramaic became the official language of the Persian Empire. It dominated from around 331 BC until 200 BC. All important documents of the Persian Empire were written in it. The language was therefore called Imperial or Official Aramaic.

The Aramaic passages of the Old Testament were all written in Imperial Aramaic.

During the time of Alexander, Greek replaced Aramaic as the lingua franca. But Aramaic's influence did not die out. From 200 BC to AD 250 Middle Aramaic developed a number of dialects that were used by, among others, Jews and Christians (Syriac) in Palestine.

During the rise of Islam, Arabic replaced many Aramaic dialects as the spoken language. Christians and Jews continued to use Aramaic. This phase of the language is known as the Late Aramaic. It lasted until the 13th century AD.

Aramaic is considered to be a dead language by some scholars. However, Modern Aramaic is still the mother tongue of hundreds of thousands of speakers in present-day Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Turkey.

Characteristics of the OT languages

8.3. Characteristics of the Old Testament languages

Hebrew, Aramaic and the Semitic languages have a few characteristics in common, including some of their vocabulary. A number of words (root letters) which have the same meaning appear in most of the Semitic languages (e.g. the word for 'father', 'day', 'blood'). There are also words with similar forms, but with different meanings.

Some of the grammatical similarities between these languages are discussed briefly:

- Root of three consonants. Most words in the Semitic languages are derived from or built upon three consonants. The three consonants may appear in a verb, noun, an adjective or adverb.
- Vowels are added to the three roots and contribute to the meaning of the word. The root mlk (be king) is an example. Depending on the vowels that are added to it, it may mean: melek 'king', malak 'to rule' (be king), malkut 'kingdom, reign', and so on.
- Prefixes, infixes, and suffixes are added to the three consonants to serve as personal pronouns or to indicate the verbal forms (active, passive, etc.).

o Maleku 'they reigned'.

o Yimlok 'he will be king'.

o Himlik 'to install someone as king'.

o Homlak 'to become king'.

- A root consonant can be doubled to intensify the meaning. The root avad 'to perish', for example, can be intensified to ivvad 'to cause to perish'.
- Semitic languages have consonants which differ from English, and do not have exactly the same sound as an English consonant. They are called gutturals because they are pronounced in the throat.
- Semitic languages have a construction in which two nouns that depend on each other appear together. The construction is called 'construct state'. It is often used to express possession. Thorat Adonay means 'law of the Lord'. The word thorat (law of) is in the construct state, and Adonay (the Lord) in the absolute state.

Hebrew and Aramaic alphabet

8.4. Hebrew and Aramaic alphabet

It might be helpful to learn the Hebrew and Aramaic alphabet. You will then be able to recognize Hebrew and Aramaic characters. It will also be helpful when you read commentaries that are based on these languages. You do not have to analyse or translate in your own the words and sentences that you are reading. TW and ES will help you do that.

8.4.1. Alphabet

In the current editions of the bible, Hebrew and Aramaic have the same alphabet. At first this alphabet consisted of twenty-two consonants. The text of the Old Testament was originally written as a consonantal text, without vowels. Vowels were added to the text at a later stage. The Hebrew and Aramaic texts in ES and TW present some challenges. The fonts are not always displayed properly. The transliterated text missed some of the characters. This is understandable, because English does not have all the characters necessary to express the Hebrew and Aramaic consonants. It is therefore important to have a working knowledge of the alphabet. In this section there is first a table with the alphabet, followed by an explanation of three important issues concerning the consonants.

The following table gives the 22 consonants and the five final forms. The sound section should serve as a guide to pronouncing the letters. Hebrew and Aramaic are written from right to left!

Hebrew and Aramaic alphabet with academic transliteration|

Consonants|Name|Transliteration|Sound|

■|Aleph|■|-|

■|Bet|b|B as in Bravo, V as in Victor|

■|Gimel|g|G as in Golf|

■|Dalet|d|D as in Delta|

■|He|h|H as in Hotel|

■|Waw|w|V as in Victor|

■|Zayin|z|Z as in Zulu|

■|■et|■, ch|CH as in BaCH|

■|■et|■|T as in Tango|

■|Yod|y|Y as in You|

■, ■|Kaph, final kaph|k|K as in Kilo, CH as in BaCH|

- |Lamed|l|L as in Lima|
- , ■|Mem, final mem|m|M as in Mama|
- , ■|Nun, Final Nun|n|N as in November|
- |Samek|s|S as in See|
- |Ayin|■|-|
- , ■|Pe, Final Pe|p, ph|P as in Papa,
F as in Fan|
- , ■|ade, Final ade|■, ts|TS as in CaTS|
- |Qoph|q|K as in Kilo|
- |Reš|r|R as in Romeo|
- , ■■|in, Šin|■, š, sh|S as in See, SH as in She|
- |Taw|t|T as in Tango|

Did you realise that there were two consonants where the transliteration was not a known letter (‘) (’)? As indicated above, some letters do not have corresponding sounds in English. They are gutturals.

There are three important things to be said about the consonants.

- Five of them have an alternate form at the end of a word (see final K, M, N, S, Ts).
- Six of them (B, G, D, K, P/Ph, T) can appear with a ‘dot’, called dagesh qal. They can be easily remembered by the mnemonic BeGaDKePhaT.
- Four consonants are gutturals (‘, h, ‘, ch). The name is derived from the Latin guttur = throat.

Can you recognise these letters without help? Even though they seem to be strange, our alphabet was derived from an earlier version of this alphabet. Even the name ‘alphabet’ came from the first two letters here: alef and bet.

8.4.2. Vowels

In the past, the Jews read the consonantal texts, the text without vowels. This is still done in synagogues. However, as other languages replaced Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews, it was necessary to add vowels to the text in order to preserve the correct pronunciation. The text was also written without spaces between words. As you have seen in the alphabet table there are neither capitals nor small letters in Hebrew.

The scholars who worked on this are called the Masoretes. Their name is derived from the Hebrew word Masora, meaning ‘what was handed down’. The text of the Hebrew bible on which they worked is called the Masoretic Text. The main text that is used by scholars today, is the one produced by the Ben Asher family, around AD 900. Chapter 10 will say more about the Masoretes.

The Masoretes added five long vowels, five short vowels, three half vowels and a sound called shewa to the consonantal text. The work of these scholars is greatly appreciated. In order to help you realise the value of their work, here is a verse from the bible without the vowels and with no spaces between the words. Do you know which verse this is?

frgdsldvthwrlldththgvhsnlbgttnsnthtwhsvrblvthnhmshldntprshbthvvrilstnglf.

If you have not been able to work this out, here it is:

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.

The following table is a list of the Masoretic vowels.

Vowel Length|Sound|

Long|Short|Half||

■|kamets|■|patach|■|chataf patach|a|

■|tsere|■|segol|■|chataf segol|e|

■|cholem|■|kamets|■|chataf kamets|o|

■|shureq|■|kibuts||u|

■|chirek yod|■|chirek||i|

The shewa sign was: ■|transliterated as 'e'.

Vowel signs with academic transliteration and sounds|

Vowels|Name|Transliteration|Sounds|

■|pata|■|a|a as in what|

■|qame|■|a|a as in father|

■|segol|e|e as in echo|

■|ere|ey|ey as in hey|

■|hireq|i|i as in machine|

■|qibbû|u|u as in rule|

■|segol yod|ê|ey as in hey|

■|ere yod|ê|ey as in hey|

■|hireq yod|■|i as in machine|

■|olem|o|o as in snow|

■|olem waw|ô|o as in snow|

■|šûreq|û|u as in rule|

■|hatep-patah|o as in odd|

■|hatep-qames|a as in what|

■|hatep-segol|e as in echo|

Hebrew and Aramaic share the same alphabet. Learning the alphabet that is given in this chapter will allow you to read the original text of the Old Testament. It will also make it possible for you to read Hebrew and Aramaic words in technical commentaries on the Old Testament. The next chapter gives a brief survey of Hebrew and Aramaic grammar.

Read Hebrew and Aramaic

8.5. Read Hebrew and Aramaic

The characters may have appeared very strange to you. In this section, we will take a closer look at them, and you will realise that our alphabet is a grandchild of the Hebrew alphabet. In order to understand that, we have to go back to the old Hebrew alphabet, written with Phoenician scripts.

[See image 12]

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|

Z, ζ|H, η|Δ, δ|Γ, γ|B, β|A, α|

■|■|■|■|■|■|■|

As you can see, the old Phoenician alphabet that was used in Old Hebrew was very close to the Greek alphabet. This is what happened. The Greeks took their alphabet from the Phoenicians. Because Greek is written from left to right, the Greeks turned the Phoenician letters around. You can see that the Alef was turned 45 degrees to the left! Take a look at all the letters. Can you see what the Greeks did with them? In order to help you understand the new Hebrew forms, you should also look at the meaning of the letters.

[See image 13]

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|

N, ν|M, μ|Λ, λ|K, κ|I, ι|Θθ|

■|■|■|■|■|■|■|

The same technique that was used for the previous letters was also used for the rest of the alphabet. The similarity between Greek and Old Hebrew is clearer than with the modern Hebrew characters. Here is the final batch of letters.

[See image 14]

file:///C:/e-sword/intro_biblical_languages/image14.png("file:///C:/e-sword/intro_biblical_languages/image14.png")

||

T, τ|Ω, ω|P, ρ||Σ, ζ|Π, π|O, ο|Ξ, ξ|



You will realise that some characters do not have equivalents in Greek. The Ancient Hebrew Lexicon of the Bible (AHLB) has a description of the reconstruction of the Hebrew alphabet. This dictionary is available to TW and ES.

Conclusion

8.6. Conclusion

Hebrew and Aramaic belong to the Semitic language family. These languages have some similarities.

A brief review of their history reveals that a group of people still speak a modern form of both Hebrew and Aramaic today. This study, however, is based on the biblical form of these languages, such as can be found in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

Learning the Hebrew alphabet will allow us to read the text of the Old Testament in its original language. It will also allow us to make use of technical commentaries that are based on the Hebrew text.

Introduction

9.1. Introduction

This chapter will give a short overview of Hebrew and Aramaic grammar. It will not teach you the grammar of these languages. Having studied this section you should be able to use the tools in ES and TW much better.

Grammar

9.2. Grammar

9.2.1. Nouns

Hebrew and Aramaic nouns can be classified according to:

- a. Gender (masculine and feminine)
- b. Number (singular, dual and plural). Dual is often used to refer to things that come in natural pairs, such as 'two hands'.
- c. State (absolute and construct). Aramaic has a third state, determined/emphatic.

The Groves-Wheeler Westminster Hebrew Morphology module analyses the nouns for you. As mentioned earlier, the module is not free. The free modules that are currently available will only give you the Hebrew/Aramaic root and its meaning.

Here is an example to illustrate the construct noun in Hebrew. The construct noun is often translated by the English word 'of'. Some well-known construct phrases are 'house of God' and 'the fear of the LORD'. 'House of God' means 'house belonging to God'. The construct (genitive) here indicates possession. In the phrase 'the fear of the LORD', we have a different kind of construct (genitive). It is not the fear belonging to the LORD; in this case, it refers to the fear we have for God. God is not the subject, but the object of the fear.

An example of the Aramaic emphatic state is found in the well-known word Abba. The Aramaic word for 'father', just like Hebrew, is 'Ab'. This makes the Father the unique one, who is addressed in a respectful way, just like the father in a household.

|Absolute|Construct|

|Masculine|Feminine |Masculine|Feminine|

Singular|31,919|10,683|21,561|8,075|

Dual|100|219|361|1,176|

Plural|8,828|2,707|11,646|2,691|

Figure 3: Statistics of Hebrew nouns

9.2.2. Adjectives

Adjectives have gender and number, just like nouns.

An adjective describes or modifies a noun or pronoun. In Daniel 2:45, rav 'great' describes God.

The great (rav) God has made known to the king what will occur in the future.

9.2.3. Article

The Hebrew definite article is always attached to the beginning of a word. It is the letter 'h'.

The Aramaic definite article is always attached to the end of the word. It is the letter ' (alef) or h (he).

Hebrew does not have an indefinite article ('a' or 'an'). It only has the definite article ('the'). One of the ways in which the article is used in Hebrew is to indicate a unique person or thing. When God spoke to Abraham he told him to go 'to a land' (Gen. 12:1 KJV). What did he mean? The NIV is more specific, because it speaks of a specific land. Abraham was to go 'to the land'. The difference here is the article 'the'. God did not want Abraham to go to 'a' land, but to 'the' land, even though he did not mention its name. Unfortunately the free ES and TW modules do not code the article. It might be helpful to read the Hebrew text to appreciate this.

Here is another example to illustrate this. In Genesis 31:21, we find the following phrase 'He arose and crossed the river' (NKJV). Which river is the author referring to? The NASB is more explicit and translated 'he arose and crossed the Euphrates River'. The NASB rightly observes that, 'the river', refers to 'the well-known river', which was the 'Euphrates River'. Most modern translations make this information explicit by adding 'Euphrates' to the translation.

9.2.4. Prepositions

Hebrew and Aramaic have two kinds of prepositions:

- a. inseparable (the letters: b, k, l) and
- b. independent (min, ad, al, im).

Inseparable prepositions are joined to the words they govern. The phrase 'in the beginning' in Gen. 1:1 is written as ■■■■■■■■ with ■ 'in' attached to ■■■■■■■■ 'beginning.'

Independent prepositions are like English prepositions. They are not attached to another word.

These prepositions should be translated with context-sensitivity. It was explained earlier that prepositions are not the same in different languages. For example, it is difficult to find one English preposition that matches the Hebrew 'l' in meaning.

God called (l) the light (Gen. 1:5 NET).

Separate water (l) from water (Gen. 1:6 NET).

9.2.5. Pronouns

Personal pronouns can be independent or suffixed.

An example of a personal pronoun that is attached to a noun can be found in the well-known verse Psalm 23:1. Even non-Christians from time to time will quote verses from this Psalm. In verse 1, the Psalmist said: 'The LORD is my shepherd'. The verse does not say: 'The LORD is a shepherd', although this would have been correct. In Ezekiel 34, God complained about the shepherds in Israel. He then promised in verses 11 and 12:

I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep.

The LORD is a shepherd. In Psalm 23, however, the Psalmist was not speaking in general terms. The pronoun attached to 'shepherd' makes it very personal. The Psalmist said 'the LORD is MY shepherd'. Probably he remembered Jacob, who at the end of his life could say the following about God: 'The God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day' (Gen. 48:15). The Hebrew text in Psalm 23:1 does not have a verb. The Psalmist is not referring only to his present situation. He was saying, as it were, 'the LORD was, is and will always be my shepherd', therefore 'I do not and will not lack anything'!

The two major groups of demonstrative pronouns are 'near' (this, these) and 'far' (that, those).

9.2.6. Verbal pattern

The Hebrew and Aramaic verb has seven or eight basic 'patterns' or binyanim. There is no need to memorise this summary of the grammar. ES and TW will parse the verbs for you.

Hebrew Verbal patterns|

|Simple|Factitive/Resultative|Causative|

Active|Qal|Pi'e|Hi'fil|

Passive|Nif'al|Pu'al|Ho'fal|

Reflexive |Nif'al|Hitpa'el|-----|

The Aramaic verbal pattern, which is similar to Hebrew, is as follows:

Aramaic Verbal pattern|

Active|Passive|Reflexive|

Pe'al|Pe'il|hitpe'el|

Pa'el|pu'al|hitpa'al|

Haf'el|hof'al||

Here is one example of a verb in one of the Hebrew verbal patterns.

And I will bless (08762) them that bless (08764) thee, and curse (08799) him that curseth (08764) thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed (08738) (Gen. 12:3 KJV).

This Abrahamic blessing is well known. However, there are a few things that can be translated differently. The last part of the verse is translated in the NIV as 'and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you'. The NET, however, translates it as: 'and all the families of the earth will bless one another by your name'. Will the families be blessed through Abram or will they bless one another by Abram's name? The answer has to do with our understanding of the binyanim, the stem, of the word translated 'bless' [H1288]. According to TVM [H8738], it is a niphal form of the word 'to bless'. The notes provided by the NET help to clarify the problem.

Theoretically the Niphal can be translated either as passive or reflexive/reciprocal. (The Niphal of 'bless' is only used in formulations of the Abrahamic covenant, see Gen. 12:2; 18:18; 28:14.) Traditionally the verb is taken as passive here, as if Abram were going to be a channel or source of blessing. But in later formulations of the Abrahamic covenant (see Gen. 22:18; 26:4) the Hitpael replaces this Niphal form, suggesting a translation 'will bless [i.e. 'pronounce blessings on'] themselves [or 'one another']'. The Hitpael of 'bless' is used with a reflexive/reciprocal sense in Deut. 29:18; Ps. 72:17; Isa. 65:16; Jer. 4:2. Gen. 12:2 predicts that Abram will be held up as a paradigm of divine blessing and that people will use his name in their blessing formulae. For examples of blessing formulae utilizing an individual as an example of blessing see Gen. 48:20 and Ruth 4:11.

There are two basic finite conjugations: perfect and imperfect.

'For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You' (Ps. 9:10, NKJV). In the Hebrew Bible this verse is Psalm 9:11. As you know, when the Bible was written originally, there were no verses and chapters attached to it. You will therefore find differences between the verse numbers when you are using different Bible translations. Not all translations use the same numbering scheme. That, however, is not the most important thing that we want to share in this section.

Hebrew differs from English, in that the focus of the verbs is not only on the time (for example, past, present, future). More important is the kind of action that is portrayed by the verb. The verb in the phrase translated 'have not forsaken' according to TVM is a Qal Stem and a Perfect Mood. The NIV says: 'have never forsaken'. The idea expressed here can be paraphrased as 'LORD, you have never, not even once, forsaken those who seek You'!

Other forms of the verb are: imperative (and derived forms), participle and infinitives. Whereas Aramaic has one infinitive, Hebrew has two (absolute and construct). One example is used to illustrate the infinitive and another to explain the participle.

Infinitive. 'In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD' (1 Sam. 1:10). The literal translation of this phrase in Hebrew is: 'and weeping, she was weeping'. The NET has the following translation: 'She was very upset as she prayed to the LORD, and she was weeping uncontrollably'. The translators of the NET added the following explanation. 'The infinitive absolute emphasises the extent of her sorrow. The imperfect verbal form emphasises the continuation of the action in past time.'

Participle. 'Lot sat in the gate of Sodom' (Gen. 19:1 KJV). What was Lot doing there? The word 'sat' according to TVM [H8802] is a Qal participle. If we translate this participle in another way, the customs of those days may help us to understand what he was doing there. In this passage, the participle suggests 'an action or condition in its unbroken continuity'. In order to bring that out, the phrase can be expressed in the following way: 'Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom' (NKJV). So it was not a one-time activity. The NET adds the following notes to its translation:

The expression sitting in the city's gateway may mean that Lot was exercising some type of judicial function (see the use of the idiom in 2 Sam. 19:8; Jer. 26:10; 38:7; 39:3).

Apparently, Lot was one of the senior people in the city, even though they knew he was a foreigner (see Gen. 19:9).

Conjugations are conjugated by person, gender, and number.

[QAL|NIF'AL|PI'EL|PU'AL|HITPA'EL|HIF'IL|HOF'AL|TOTAL|

PERF|9827|1065|1588|113|82|1741|88|14504|

IMPF|10409|1093|1461|79|264|2295|123|15724|

IMPERATIVE|2896|118|436|0|64|740|2|4256|

INF CONS|4599|207|710|1|95|950|5|6567|

INF ABS|518|35|84|1|3|225|6|872|

PART ACT|5605|808|679|186|123|841|108|8350|

PART PAS|1039|0|0|0|0|0|1039|

|34893|3326|4958|380|631|6792|332|51312|

Figure 4 Statistics of Hebrew verbs

[See image15]

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In Daniel 2:8, the KJV reads: 'The king answered'. The TVM (Tense Voice and Mood) parser indicates that 'answered' is [H8750]. This refers to the verbal stem Peal and the mood Participle. TVM provides an explanation for both the Peal stem(see [H8837]) and the Participle (see [H8813]). The Peal represents the base form of the verb, and is equivalent to the Hebrew Qal stem.

Hebrew idioms and phrases

9.3. Hebrew idioms and phrases

The following Hebrew idioms and phrases will give an indication of some of the differences between Hebrew and English.

- 'Edge of the sword' (Gen. 34:26) is literally 'mouth of the sword'.
- 'The bank of the river' (Ezek. 47:6) is literally 'the lip of the river'.
- 'The LORD made a covenant with Abram' (Gen. 15:18) is literally 'the LORD cut a covenant with Abram'.
- 'You will see a king' (Isa. 33:17) is literally 'Your eyes will see a king'.

'Song of Songs' (Song of Solomon 1:1). This is the translation of a Hebrew superlative phrase. The Hebrew phrase 'song of the songs', denotes the song par excellence. Some modern translations try to bring this out in the following way: 'The most beautiful of songs' (TEV) and 'This is Solomon's song of songs, more wonderful than any other' (NLT). Solomon is said to have composed 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs. Out of all his 1,005 songs, this one was the best! This one, which is a love song, was inspired by the Holy Spirit. There are a few other well-known superlative phrases in the Old Testament, such as:

- 'The holy of holies' means the most holy place (Exod. 29:37).
- 'God of the gods and Lord of the Lords' means 'the most high God and the Supreme Lord' (Deut. 10:17). This is the God we worship; there is no one like Him.

Conclusion

9.4. Conclusion

ES and TW have tools to analyse Hebrew and Aramaic grammar. The tools that are available free only analyse verbs. In order to analyse the other parts of speech it is important to purchase the Groves-Wheeler module.

The grammatical explanation given by ES and TW for the tenses is very basic, and should be supplemented with more advanced resources.

The commentary by Keil and Delitzsch is the only advanced commentary that is available free. It is very useful. However, its purpose was not to be a grammatical commentary on the Old Testament. For this, it will be necessary to purchase some advanced commentaries. These are discussed, and some recommended in chapter 12.

The purpose of this chapter was to give a basic survey of Hebrew and Aramaic grammar.

Introduction

10.1. Introduction

The Old Testament is an old book. It consists of thirty-nine books. According to the Jews the number was twenty-four. They considered the two books of Samuel, Kings, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Chronicles as single books (e.g. not first and second Samuel, but the book of Samuel). The twelve Minor Prophets were also known as the book of the Twelve, reducing them by eleven to a single book. The division of Tenach (abbreviation of Torah Nebi'im and Chetuvim) is as follows:

(1) The Torah (the Law). Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Hebrew names for these books are taken from the first word(s) of the book. Genesis for example is 'In (the) beginning', Exodus, 'names', Leviticus 'and he called', Numbers 'in the desert' and Deuteronomy 'words'.

(2) Nebi'im (the Prophets). The name of each book in the Nebi'im (Prophets) is based on the name of the main character, the supposed writer of the book, or a description of the contents. The prophets consisted of:

- The early prophets: Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings.
- The later prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, The Twelve (the Minor Prophets).

(3) Ketuvim (the Writings). This division is composed of:

- the Book of truth: Psalms, Proverbs, and Job;
- the Megilloth (Five Scrolls): Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther;
- The Historical books: Daniel, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles.

The number and order of the books in the Septuagint differs from that of the Hebrew Bible. The order in the present editions of our English Bibles and the names of the books are based on the Septuagint, while the number is based on Tenach. As well as the books normally printed in our Bibles (according to Tenach) there are some books in the Septuagint, known as the Deuterocanonical books or Apocrypha.

The issue of how the Bible came into existence will not be discussed in this course. What we are interested in is how the divinely inspired text was preserved. The bible gives evidence of written records as early as the time of Moses (see Exod. 17:14; 24:4; Deut. 10:4). These original writings are no longer available. The Jewish community kept these holy writings, however, and preserved them from generation to generation. We do not have a record of the early transmission of the text of the Old Testament. The text was guarded and probably copied by the priests and the Levites (Deut. 17:18).

Records started during the time of Ezra and afterwards. The biblical text suggests that in previous generations copies of the text were to be made for kings.

When he (the king) takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites (Deut. 17:18, NIV).

The Transmission of the Hebrew Bible

10.2. The Transmission of the Hebrew Bible

10.2.1. The Sopherim

According to Jewish tradition, a group of people known as Sopherim were responsible for the copying of the text of the Old Testament, after Ezra. The name Sopherim is the plural of the Hebrew word sopher translated as 'writer, scribe, or secretary'. These writers were high government officials who were connected with the palace of the king (2 Kgs 10:12; 18:18,37; Jer. 36:12, 20). We do know some sopherim by name: Seraiah (2 Sam. 8:17); Sheva (2 Sam. 20:25); Shavsha (1 Chron. 18:16); Elihoreph and Ahijah (1 Kgs 4:3); Shebna (2 Kgs. 18:18,37).

The Sopherim worked from around 400 BC to AD 200 on the text. Their work included the establishment of the text that consisted of consonants (consonantal text). They also developed signs to indicate difficult passages in the text. There are eighteen of these passages, which are called tiqqune sopherim (corrections of the sopherim). Why have they changed these passages? According to them, these texts were offensive, and showed a lack of respect for the holy God. What did they do? They used euphemisms to soften the theological implications of the expressions. The first tiqqun is Genesis 18:22. The original text reads: 'the LORD stood yet before Abraham'. This according to the sopherim was not possible. How can the LORD stand before Abraham, especially if 'standing before' means 'interceding before' or 'standing before as a servant'? They therefore recommended reading the text as follows: 'but Abraham stood yet before the LORD', Christians, who have the revelation of God in the New Testament, will not have any problem with the original text. The Lord Jesus revealed God to us in a way that the believers in the Old Testament could never know him. The Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of all, washed the feet of his disciples. He laid down his life for them. He is our servant King!

The following table is a list of the eighteen changes.

Tiqqune Sopherim|

Gen. 18:22|The LORD stood yet before Abraham|

Num. 11:15|Kill me so that I may not look upon your (Yahweh's) evil|

Num. 12:12|Our mother's womb the half of our flesh is consumed|

1 Sam. 3:13|Because his sons cursed God|

2 Sam. 16:12|The Lord will see with His (own) eye|

2 Sam. 20:1|Every man to his gods, O Israel|

1 Kgs. 12:16|Departed to their gods|

2 Chr. 10:16|Returned to their gods|

Job 7:20|A burden to you (God)|

Job 32:3|And they declared God (in the wrong)|

Ps. 106:20|They changed my glory|

Jer. 2:11|But my people have changed my glory|

Lam. 3:20|And your soul will mourn over me|

Ezek. 8:17|And they put the branch to my nose|

Hos. 4:7|My glory they have changed into shame.|

Hab. 1:12|You (Yahweh) will not die.|

Zech. 2:8|He that touches you touches the apple of my eye|

Mal. 1:13|You have snuffed at me|

10.2.2. Zugot

The second group of copyists were called the Zugot. They worked from the second century to the first century BC. The well-known rabbis Hillel and Shammai were considered to be Zugot.

10.2.3. The Tannaim

The third group of copyists is known as tannaim (teachers). A tanna (teacher) was one who studied, repeated and transmitted what he learned from his teachers. The tannaim worked up to the second century AD. Besides passing down the text, these teachers also interpreted it. In their interpretation they followed what according to them was the tradition of interpretation. The oral interpretations of the law were brought together in the collection called the Mishnah.

10.2.4. The Masoretes

The Masoretes worked from AD 500 to AD 950 on the transmission of the text. They prepared the final edition of the Old Testament text. Not only did they continue the work of their predecessors, they added vowels, punctuation and accentuation to the consonantal text. Their notes appear in the margin of the printed text and are known as masora, equivalent to our footnotes. The masora consist of two groups:

(1) masora parva (minor masora). These masora contained short comments and notes in the margin of the text.

(2) masora magna (major masora). These included materials that were placed in the upper and bottom margin of the page and at the end of a whole book (masora finalis). Some of the comments of the masoretes include:

Lev. 8:8: the centre verse of the torah.

Lev. 11:42: the centre letter of the torah.

Ps. 78:35, 36: centre of the book.

Copyists and their work

10.3. Copyists and their work

The copyist of the Old Testament and his work had to adhere to strict rules which were important. The copyist had to be a competent person. He should not be hostile towards the text, neither neutral nor indifferent. He must be a godly person who revered the text in his heart. As far as his work was concerned (see Dronkert 1964:57-58):

- (1) He had to write the text on the skin of a clean animal.
- (2) He had to draw lines on the scroll before he started to write. If he had written three words on the skin without drawing the lines on it, that scroll was worthless.
- (3) He must use black ink, and the ink had to be prepared according to a special recipe.
- (4) He was only allowed to copy a scroll that was recognised by the leaders of the synagogue as true and trustworthy. He was not allowed to deviate from it. The letters had to be written in the same way as in the original text.
- (5) He was not allowed to write a text from memory, even if he knew that text very well.
- (6) He had to leave a space the width of a hair between the letters and the space of nine letters between the paragraphs. Between two books he had to leave the space of three lines.
- (7) He had to be a Jew, dressed in full Jewish attire. He had to wash his body clean before he started.
- (8) He was not allowed to write the name of God with a pen that was just dipped into the ink.
- (9) If the king called him while he was writing the name of God, he had to ignore him.
- (10) A column should not have more than 60 or fewer than 48 rows. The width of the column should be thirty letters.
- (11) The width of the open space at the top of a column had to be as thick as three fingers. At the bottom it should be as thick as four fingers.
- (12) The masoretes counted all the verses, words and letters of every book. They calculated the middle word and the middle letter. When the copyist finished, the letters of his work were counted. If there were differences, they did not try to find them. The copyist had to start the work all over again.

If a scroll did not meet these criteria, it was buried, burned or banned to a school to be used as a reader.

This careful process of copying the text resulted in trustworthy scrolls. However, manuscripts sometimes reveal differences. These differences are similar to some that are found in the New

Testament. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Some typical differences include the change of letters. As illustrated in a previous chapter, there are some letters in Hebrew that look alike. These are: ■ (b) and ■ (k); ■ (d) and ■ (r); ■ (ch) and ■ (h). Sometimes letters were reversed. That problem is common in many languages.

The text of the Old Testament

10.4. The text of the Old Testament

10.4.1. Hebrew manuscripts

There are various documents in which the text of the Old Testament was preserved. These include Hebrew manuscripts and old translations.

When an Old Testament manuscript was copied, the new document became the authoritative text. The old manuscript was buried or stored somewhere. Because of this practice there were no old manuscripts of the text in use. A number of manuscripts were found at Qumran, the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls. Among the manuscripts discovered, there were biblical manuscripts. These manuscripts contained fragments of various Old Testament books and are dated around AD 70. The manuscripts were written, of course, during the second century BC. Probably one of the most important documents is the so-called Isaiah Scroll. This scroll was found in cave 1 and it is known as 1QIsaa. It contained Isaiah 1-33 and 34-66. Other manuscripts include a commentary on the book of Habakkuk (1QpHab) and a Psalms scroll (11QPsa).

As indicated earlier, the most important manuscripts of the Old Testament, before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, were the so-called Ben Asher manuscripts. There are three important manuscripts.

(1) Codex Leningradensis (L). The Codex Leningradensis is a complete manuscript of the Old Testament. This codex was compiled by Rabbi Aaron Moshe Ben Asjer around AD 980. This text is the basis for the scholarly Hebrew bible known as Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS).

(2) Codex Cairensis (C). The Codex Cairensis contained the early and the later prophets. It was vocalised around AD 895 by Moses ben Asjer.

(3) Codex Aleppo. The Codex Aleppo contained the whole of the Old Testament and is dated around the first half of the 10th century AD.

10.4.2. Old translations

There are a number of older translations that were based on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. These include the Greek and Aramaic translations. The Targumim were Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament. Two well-known Targumim are Onkelos (on the Pentateuch) and Jonathan (on the early and later prophets). They are of limited value for establishing the original reading of Old Testament texts. More important than the Aramaic are the Greek translations. The Septuagint and its many revisions are often a word for word translation of the Old Testament text. These translations are called witnesses to the Hebrew text. ES and TS have available English translations of these two witnesses.

Example from the book of Samuel

10.5. Example from the book of Samuel

One example from 1 Samuel 1 is used to illustrate the issue of textual differences.

1:5. But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah.

The problem in this verse lies in the word that the NET and many other translations translated by 'double'. It is the Hebrew word **appayim**, with Strong's number H639. The number of **Appayim** is dual. Dual is often used to refer to things that come in natural pairs, such as 'two hands'. **Appayim** is often translated as 'face'. This is seen in the expression 'face down to the ground' (cf. Gen. 19:1; 42:6; 1 Sam. 24:9; 1 Sam. 25:41; 1 Sam. 28:14 etc.). A literal translation, that takes the dual number of the word into consideration, would be 'two faces'.

Keil and Delitzsch translated the phrase as follows: 'one portion for two persons'. They took the literal meaning of the word, 'two faces', to mean 'two persons'. Their translation is substantiated by detailed notes in their commentary.

A third option is the translation found in the LXX. It reads:

And to Anna he gave a prime portion, because she had no child, only Helkana loved Anna more than the other; but the Lord had closed her womb.

It translated 'a prime portion' instead of 'a double portion'. What should you do in a case like this? It is important to consult scholarly discussions on the matter. You will realise that this issue does not affect any major doctrine of the Christian faith. You should therefore not make a big problem of it. You do not want to preach a sermon on how to translate **appayim** in 1 Samuel 1:5. I recommend a careful study of the notes in the NET and Keil and Delitzsch. Here are the notes in the NET, supporting 'a double portion'.

The exact sense of the Hebrew word (**appayim**, "two faces") is not certain here. It is most likely used with the preceding expression ("one portion of two faces") to mean a portion double than normally received. Although evidence for this use of the word derives primarily from Aramaic rather than from Hebrew usage, it provides an understanding that fits the context here better than other suggestions for the word do. The meaning "double" is therefore adopted in the present translation. Other possibilities for the meaning of the word include the following: "heavily" (cf. Vulg., *tristis*) and "worthy" or "choice" (cf. KJV and Targum). Some scholars have followed the LXX here, emending the word to 'efes and translating it as "but" or "however." This seems unnecessary. The translators of the LXX may simply have been struggling to make sense of the word rather than following a Hebrew text that was different from the MT here. The NET is very careful. The translators defend their own translation, but also indicate the different translation options. This is the best way to handle the holy text.

Conclusion

10.6. Conclusion

The text of the Old Testament was faithfully preserved by the community of believers in the Old Testament. Those who were responsible for transmitting the text did that with the uttermost care. The manuscripts of the Old Testament which are still available, along with the old translations, allow us to study the text of the Old Testament in detail. Differences in translations of the bible may be due to differences in manuscripts. In the next chapter this is discussed in more detail, with the New Testament as the point of departure.

Introduction

11.1. Introduction

The New Testament was completed in period of about 50 years. With the spread of Christianity there was also a need to copy the writings of the apostles. In earlier days, individual copyists copied the manuscripts. In later times, it was the practice to dictate the text to a group of scribes. By doing that, a number of manuscripts were prepared at the same time. Just like in the case of the Old Testament, words in these manuscripts sometimes differ from each other. In order to establish the text as closely as possible to the original, scholars apply the discipline of textual criticism to it.

What is textual criticism?

11.2. What is textual criticism?

Textual criticism is the careful study of existing copies of a document, with the intention of establishing the text of the original document. It is also known as lower criticism. Textual criticism of the Bible involves the study of various copies, manuscripts, translations and quotations of the Old and New Testament text.

Why textual criticism?

11.3. Why textual criticism?

There are at least two reasons why textual criticism is important for students of the bible.

1. The autographs, the documents written by the original writers, are no longer available. Nobody can tell us where these documents are, only God knows. The autographs could have led to idolatry among the Christians, as was the case with the brazen serpent among the Jews in the Old Testament. A good hypothesis is that the original documents were worn out and had to be replaced by new manuscripts. The texts of the Old and New Testaments have been preserved in different manuscripts.

2. The second reason why textual criticism is important is because there are differences between the various manuscripts that we have in our possession currently. Students of the bible want to know how the differences came to be, and what the original text looked like. It should be emphasised that the differences in the manuscripts are minor and do not touch on any major doctrine of the Christian faith.

History of the text of the Bible

11.4. History of the text of the Bible

When the books of the New Testament were written, the early church started to make copies for churches in other parts of the Roman Empire. The copies began to develop certain characteristics. An example of this can be seen in the Lord's Prayer. Some manuscripts do not have the words: 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen' (see Matt. 6:13). They are included in the KJV, but not in the NET. Why do we find these words in some old manuscripts? They were probably a liturgical note of a scribe, in his manuscript. When the manuscript was copied, it was taken as part of the text.

According to some manuscripts the Lord Jesus said the following in Matthew 5:22:

But I say to you that anyone who is angry with a brother will be subjected to judgment (NET).

This seems to be a general statement. In the KJV, however, there was an addition. It reads:

But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment (KJV).

The KJV was based on a different manuscript.

Some manuscripts of Ephesians do not have the words 'in Ephesus' (see Eph. 1:1). This makes the letter a general letter, with a message for the whole church in Asia at that time.

An interesting difference is found in John 1:18. This is seen when comparing the NET with the KJV.

No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him (John 1:18 KJV).

No one has ever seen God. The only one, himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known (John 1:18 NET).

The difference is whether the original text said υιος 'Son' (KJV) or θεος 'God'. Vincent said the following about this phrase:

The only begotten son (ο μόνογενής υιός). Several of the principal manuscripts and a great mass of ancient evidence support the reading μόνογενής Θεός, 'God only begotten'.

Another and minor difference in reading relates to the article, which is omitted from μόνογενής by most of the authorities which favor Θεός. Whether we read the only begotten Son, or God only begotten, the sense of the passage is not affected. The latter reading merely combines in one phrase the two attributes of the word already indicated – God (John 1:1), only begotten (John 1:14); the sense being one who was both God and only begotten.

Robertson and the notes in the NET also discuss this phrase in detail. Robertson, Vincent and the NET with notes discuss differences in the manuscripts that are worth considering.

A remarkable development in the history of the manuscripts is that manuscripts in a particular area seem to have the same textual variants. Scholars therefore classified the manuscripts according to 'families' or 'text types'. The following text families are known today: 'Alexandrian', 'Western' and 'Byzantine'.

This classification of the manuscripts into families is based on the similarities of variant readings within a group of manuscripts. If a group of manuscripts has fifty or more readings in common, which are not found somewhere else, than those manuscripts are considered to be from the same source.

Differences in the manuscripts

11.5. Differences in the manuscripts

What kind of differences are there in the manuscripts? There are two groups of differences:

- (1) those that were created intentionally, and
- (2) those that happened by accident.

11.5.1. Accidental changes

11.5.1.1. Division of words (1Tim. 3:16)

Earlier, I spoke about the fact that the biblical text was written without spaces between words. When words were divided, some changes took place. A good example can be seen in 1 Timothy 3:16. Most manuscripts divide the first part of the verse as follows: και ομολογουμεως μεγα- 'And without controversy great'. However, some manuscripts identified four instead of three Greek words here and divided the text as: και-ομολογουμεν-ως-μεγα- 'And we confess how great'. A good example of this problem in English is: godisnowhere. How should we divide these words? 'God is now here' or 'God is nowhere'.

11.5.1.2. Homoeoteleuton

What is Homoeoteleuton? It is a Greek word meaning 'same ending'. Homoeoteleuton appears when an author skipped a word or phrase between words with the same ending.

An example of this is seen in 1 John 2:23. Most manuscripts have the following:

πας ο αρνουμενος τον υιον ουδε τον πατερα εχει ο ομολογων τον υιον και τον πατερα εχει

No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also (ESV)

The Byzantine text family skipped the words ο ομολογων τον υιον και between the two occurrences of τον πατερα εχει. The Byzantine text which is followed by the KJV reads:

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father

The KJV, however, added the words lost due to homoeoteleuton in italics.

11.5.1.3. Haplography

Haplography occurs when a letter or word is written once, instead of twice or more times. An example is found in 1 Thessalonians 2:7, where one í 'n' is missing in some manuscripts.

Εγενηθημεν νηπιοι 'instead we became little children' (1Thess. 2:7 NET)

Εγενηθημεν ηπιοι 'But we were gentle' (1Thess. 2:6 KJV)

11.5.1.4. Dittography

Dittography occurs when a letter, word or phrase that was supposed to be written once is written twice. In Mark 12:27 some manuscripts wrote the word θεος 'God' twice (see KJV).

He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: (Mark 12:27 KJV)

He is not the God of the dead but of the living (Mark 12:27 NET).

11.5.1.5. Metathesis

Metathesis occurs when the order of letters is changed in a word. An example of this is found in Mark 14:65. Some manuscripts read ελαβον 'receive' while others have εβαλλον 'hid'.

And the servants did strike him (Mark 14:65 KJV).

And the guards received him (Mark 14:65 ESV).

11.5.1.6. Iotacism

Iotacism is a problem that could easily appear in the transmission of manuscripts. It occurs when a scribe wrote the wrong vowel. Most of the long vowels and diphthongs were pronounced like the 'i' (iota) in Koine Greek. An example of this is found in passages in the New Testament where some manuscripts have the word 'you' and others have 'we, us'.

Who has qualified you υμας (Col. 1:12 NET)

Who has qualified us ημας (Col. 1:12 NKJ)

Both υμας and ημας were pronounced as imas.

11.5.2. Deliberate changes

Some changes in manuscripts were made deliberately. This was done for various reasons. The change in Matthew 6:13, for example, was liturgical.

In Mark 1:2 it was to get rid of an alleged discrepancy. 'As it is written in the Prophets (Mark 1:2 NKJ)' became 'As it is written in Isaiah the prophet' (Mark 1:2 NAU).

Manuscripts tried to harmonise parallel passages in the Gospels. Some manuscripts added the word 'God' to the passage in Matthew 19:17, which is taken from Mark 10:18.

There is none good but one, that is, God (Matt. 19:17 KJV).

There is only one who is good (Matt. 19:17 NET).

The text in Mark reads 'No one is good except God alone' (Mark 10:18 NET).

In 1 John 5:7, the changes in the manuscripts were made for doctrinal reasons. A scribe added an explanatory note to his manuscripts, and it was copied into other manuscripts as part of the text.

For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three are in agreement (1John 5:7-8 NET).

In the KJV, which included the scribal note, it reads:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (1John 5:7-8 KJV).

Some changes in the manuscripts are for grammatical reasons. The major differences in the text of the New Testament, apart from 1 John 5:7-8, appear in John 7:53-8:12 and Mark 16:9-20. However, none of these passages teach a doctrine that is not taught somewhere else in the New Testament. Due to the textual differences in manuscripts, it may be wise not to build a teaching exclusively on these texts.

Practice of textual criticism

11.6. Practice of textual criticism

John 3:13 illustrates what scholars do when they find differences in the manuscripts.

No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven (NKJ).

No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven – the Son of Man (NET).

The textual difference here is the addition of the phrase 'who is in heaven' in the NKJ. This problem is discussed in detail in the notes in the NET and Robertson. Vincent just suggested that the addition should be omitted. What are the witnesses for this verse? In other words, what are the manuscripts? The table below lists the various readings that are available in the manuscripts, which are then classified according to their family.

Readings|Byzantine|Alexandrian|Western|

(1) ο ων εν τω ουρανω (who is in heaven)|AEFGHK MSV

Byz Lect Basil, Chrysostom, Didymus, Nonnus, Theodoret

|892, Coptic

(Boharish)

Dionysius

Origen|Old Latin

Vulgate

Syriac

(Harclean)

Hippolytus

Novatian

Hillary|

(2) Not in the text ||p66,75 a b L 33, Coptic

(Sahidic, Bohairisch), Ethiopic, Origen, Dydimus||

(3)

ο ην εν τω ουρανω (who was in heaven)|||Old Latin (ms. e), Syriac (Curetonian)|

(4) ο ων εκ του ουρανω (who is from heaven)|||0141 80 Syriac

(Sinaitic)

|

When the various readings have been collected and classified, scholars start the process of evaluating the evidence. The first step is to evaluate the external witnesses. What are these witnesses?

- Greek manuscripts, copies of the text.
- Translations of the text, bible translations into other languages.
- Lectionaries, selections of texts from the bible.
- Quotations in the writings of Church leaders.

What can be said about the various witnesses, variants of the text? Are these witnesses trustworthy? After a conclusion is reached, the internal evidence will be studied. How is this reading within the passage in which it appears? How does it compare to the rest of the book?

11.6.1. External witnesses

1. Reading 3 'who was in heaven' and 4 'who is from heaven' are very weak. Reading 3 is only represented in two old translations. Reading 4 is represented by two Greek manuscripts and one old translation. Reading 3 and 4 tried to eliminate the problem that Jesus was in heaven while he was speaking to them on earth.

2. Reading 2 is supported by a small group of manuscripts. They all belong to the same Alexandrian text family. These Greek manuscripts, however, are very important manuscripts and should be considered seriously. There are a few old translations that omit the reading as well. Is it possible that the text is omitted for the same reason as with reading 3 and 4? Or is it possible that the readings were marginal notes of a scribe?

3. Reading 1 'who is in heaven' is found in most of the Greek manuscripts, in most of the old translations and the major works of the church fathers. Origen supports the text both with reading 1 and without the reading (see reading 2). The text is also supported by readings from a wide geographical area: Rome and the West, Greece, Syria, Palestine and even Alexandria.

Based on the external evidence, it can be concluded that reading 1 is the original reading.

11.6.2. Internal witnesses

1. A common rule in textual criticism is that the most difficult reading should receive preference. The principle is: *Lectio difficilior potior* ('the more difficult reading is the stronger'). It can be argued that because reading 1, the original reading, was difficult, reading 2 left it out and reading 3 and 4 changed it. Another recommendation in textual criticism is to select the reading that can explain the other readings.

2. Textual critics recommend that one should go for the shorter reading. This advice should be followed if changes were not made to the text on purpose.

3. Compare the reading with the theology and style of the writer. In John 1:1 John indicates that the word was 'with God' and in 1:14 the word was 'among us'. The Christology of John, his teaching on the doctrine of Christ, supports the longer reading. John also used the phrase 'who is' very often, followed by a prepositional phrase (see 1:18; 3:31; 6:46; 8:47; 12:17; 18:37). This phrase is also used in the book of Revelation, but without the prepositional phrase.

In conclusion: reading 1 is supported by both the internal and external evidence. The note in the NET, however, argues for reading 2, since it is supported by some of the most important manuscripts. The teaching that Christ was in heaven, at the bosom of the Father at the time that he was on earth, is found in other texts in John. John 1:18 reads:

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him (John 1:18 NAU).

Even if the phrase in John 3:13 that we studied is not original, the doctrine behind it is true. It is supported by other verses in scripture that do not have textual differences.

How to preach about texts with variants

11.7. How to preach about texts with variants

Members in the church will come to meetings with different bibles. They will realise that there are differences between the translations. How should you handle these texts, when you preach on them?

In the first place, you should not spend a lot of time on the issue of textual criticism. If necessary, briefly say what the difference is, and continue with the message. The believers are not gathered for a lecture on textual criticism. They want to hear you speaking by telling them, 'thus says the Lord'. You have done your homework, and you have reached your conclusion. If you have done as I have advised you up to this point, you have used the best commentaries that helped you to reach your conclusion.

In the second place, where possible let them see that the differences are minor and do not undermine any major Christian teaching.

My favourite way of explaining a textual difference is by saying: we can translate the Greek manuscripts as follows: 'a' and 'b'. In this passage we should follow translation 'a'.

Finally, it is important to give God's people the assurance that their bible in their own language is the Word of God. The early church did not use the Hebrew and Aramaic Old Testament. They used the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. That translation was their bible. The apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, quoted from that version, as did other writers of the New Testament.

Conclusion

11.8. Conclusion

The majority of differences in the manuscripts have to do with spelling and style. The differences between the various manuscripts that are available are far less than 1% of the whole. And these differences do not touch on any doctrine taught by the Lord Jesus or the apostles. This point cannot be emphasised enough. The history of the transmission of the text of the bible is a miracle. Those who were involved in copying the New Testament did a great job. They knew that with their work they were multiplying copies of the word of God for God's people everywhere. We should have the same attitude today towards the word of God. We should read it, study it, translate it, distribute it, preach it, to everybody in our day. We should make it available in every format that we possibly can: audio, print, electronic and any other media.

Introduction

12.1. Introduction

ES and TW have some amazing resources. Most of them are works of a previous generation and they are now in the public domain. A few recent resources can be accessed. These are:

- Complete Word Study Dictionary.
- Vine's Complete Dictionary of Old and New Testament words.

In this final chapter, I will recommend some resources that can be consulted for further study of the Biblical languages. These works are in two categories. The first group is resources in the public domain that are not available on ES and TW. The second group is modern works that are worth having.

Resources in the public domain

12.2. Resources in the public domain

The works referred to in this section are available at the following websites:

- <http://www.archive.org>("http://www.archive.org/")
- <http://books.google.co.za>("http://books.google.co.za/")

What kind of resources should you be looking for? In order to continue your studies of the biblical languages, you need reference works that are based on them. Commentaries, dictionaries, and grammars are recommended. Not all resources on these websites are faithful to the authority of the bible. Some of the most technical commentaries dealing with the original languages were written by scholars who did not accept the authority of the bible. Those who are able to judge things for themselves will be able to pick out the gems from among the rubbish.

12.2.1. Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek grammars and studies

There are literally hundreds of Greek grammars on these two websites. It is not possible to discuss the resources in detail. Only reference works that are worth having are listed, along with some comments. All these are available on the free DVD, attached to the hard-copy version of this book.

12.2.1.1. Hebrew

Coffey HA 1918. An Accidence of Hebrew Grammar by Henry. Missouri: B. Herder & Co.

Driver SR 1881. A treatise on the use of the tenses in Hebrew and some other syntactical questions (2nd edition revised and enlarged). Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Ewald GHA 1870. Ewald's Introductory Grammar. Translated from the 3rd German edition by JF Smith. London: Asher & Co.

Ewald GHA 1891. Syntax of the Hebrew Language of the Old Testament. Translated from the eighth German edition by J Kennedy. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Mitchell A 1873. The Book of Jonah The text analyzed translated and the accents named Being an easy introduction Hebrew language. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons.

Nordheimer I 1842. A Critical Grammar of the Hebrew Language(2nd edition).New York: Wiley and Putman.

Nordheimer I 1838. A grammatical analysis of selections from the Hebrew Scriptures. New York: Wiley and Putman. This book is a grammatical analysis of 63 passages from the Old Testament. The notes refer to his Critical Grammar for further explanation.

Phillips WT 1880. Elements of Hebrew grammar with a praxis on the book of Jonah. Bristol & Exeter: W. Strong. A basic Hebrew grammar with detailed notes on how to pronounce every word

in the book of Jonah, followed by a grammatical analysis.

12.2.1.2. Aramaic

Brown CR 1893. An Aramaic method. A class book for the study of the elements of Aramaic from Bible and Targums. Part II. Elements of Grammar (2nd edition). Chicago: American Publication Society of Hebrew. This part deals with the morphology and syntax of Aramaic.

Brown CR 1893. An Aramaic method. A class book for the study of the elements of Aramaic from Bible and Targums. Part I. Text, notes, and vocabulary (2nd edition). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Brown provides notes on the Biblical texts and on selected Targumim passages.

Longfield G 1859. An introduction to the study of the Chaldee language: comprising a grammar based upon Winer's, and an analysis of the text of the Chaldee portion of the Book of Daniel. London: Whittaker & Co. A grammar with detailed notes on the Aramaic portion of Daniel.

Riggs E 1858. A manual of the Chaldee language containing a Chaldee grammar (4th edition). New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co. After explaining the Aramaic grammar, Riggs provided passages from the Targumim with notes for translation. He also provided verse by verse grammatical notes for all the Biblical Aramaic passages.

12.2.1.3. Greek

12.2.1.3.1. Grammars

Abbott EA 1906. Johannine Grammar. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Harper WR and Weinder RF 1889. An introductory New Testament Greek method. Together with a manual, containing text and vocabulary of gospel of John and lists of words, and the elements of New Testament Greek grammar. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. An introductory grammar based on the Gospel of John, with explanatory notes.

Moulton JH 1908. Grammar of New Testament Greek (3rd edition with corrections and additions). Volume 1. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Moulton JH 1929. Grammar of New Testament Greek. Volume 2. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Moulton's grammar has been a standard reference grammar for New Testament Greek since its publication.

Robertson AT 1914. A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research (3rd edition). New York: Hodder & Stoughton. A standard reference grammar.

Thackeray HStJ 1909. A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek. According to the Septuagint. Volume 1. Introduction, Orthography and Accidence. Cambridge: University Press. A standard reference grammar of Septuagint Greek. However, the other volumes were never published.

12.2.1.3.2. Lexicons

Abbott EA 1905. Johannine Vocabulary. A comparison of the words of the Fourth Gospel with those of the Three. London: Adam and Charles Black.

Moulton JH and Milligan G 1914. The vocabulary of the Greek Testament illustrated from the papyri and other non-literary sources. London: Hodder & Stoughton. A study of New Testament words based on Koine papyri.

Thayer JH 1889. A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament. Being Grimm's Wilke's Clavis Novi Testamenti, translated, revised and enlarged by Joseph Henry Thayer. New York: American Book Co. The full edition of Thayer's lexicon.

12.2.2. Commentaries based on Hebrew Aramaic and Greek

Throughout the course I have emphasised the importance of commentaries that are based on the original text. ES and TW come with one such commentary for the Old Testament, Keil and Delitzsch. The New Testament is better served with Robertson and Vincent. There are a number of commentaries that are now in the public domain, based on the original languages. It will not be possible to include all these resources on one DVD. I have had to make a selection.

12.2.2.1. Old Testament

Commentaries on a few Old Testament books have been selected and listed in chronological order. These commentaries are included for their linguistic value. They do not necessarily provide an application for the text, and I do not necessarily agree with everything they say. They analyse the Hebrew and Aramaic text and explain the meaning of words and the grammar. If they are used with wisdom and caution, they are helpful.

Spurrell GJ 1887. Notes on the Hebrew text of the Book of Genesis. With two appendices. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Kalisch M 1855. A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament with a new translation. Exodus. London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans.

Kalisch MM 1867. A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament with a new translation. Leviticus, Part I, Chapters 1-10, with treatises on sacrifices and the Hebrew priesthood. London: Longmans, Green Reader and Dyer.

Kalisch MM 1872. A Historical and Critical Commentary on the Old Testament with a new translation. Leviticus Part II, Chapters 11-27, with treatises. London: Longmans, Green Reader and Dyer.

Lloyd J 1886. The Book of Joshua. A critical and expository commentary of the Hebrew text. London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Driver SR 1913. Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel. With an introduction on Hebrew Palaeography and the Ancient Versions and Facsimiles of inscriptions and maps. Second enlarged edition. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Burney CF 1903. Notes on the Hebrew Text of Kings. With an introduction and appendix. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Henderson E 1870. The book of the Prophet Ezekiel. Translated from the original Hebrew with a commentary critical, philological and exegetical. Andover: Warren F. Draper.

Henderson E 1868. The book of the Twelve Minor Prophets. Translated from the original Hebrew with a commentary critical, philological and exegetical. Andover: Warren F. Draper.

12.2.2.2. New Testament

A few great independent classic commentaries are included, and a few collections on the entire New Testament.

Plummer A 1910. An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to St. Matthew. London: Elliot Stock

Swete HB 1902. The Gospel according to St Mark. The Greek text with introduction notes and indices. London: Macmillan and Co.

Heatley HR 1893. The Gospel according to St. Luke. London: Rivington, Percival and Co.

Westcott BF 1908. The Gospel according to St John. The Greek text with introduction and notes in two volumes. London: John Murray

Lumby JR 1891. The Acts of the Apostles. With map, notes and introduction. Cambridge: University Press.

Hackett HB 1858. A Commentary on the original text of the Acts of the Apostles. A new edition revised and greatly enlarged. Boston: Gould and Lincoln.

Lightfoot JB 1895. Notes on epistles of St Paul. From unpublished commentaries. London: Macmillan and Co.

Godet F 1889. Commentary on St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Volume 1. Translated from French. Edinburgh: T & T Clark

Godet F 1890. Commentary on St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Volume 2. Translated from French. Edinburgh: T & T Clark

Lightfoot JB 1887. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. A Revised Text Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations. London: Macmillan and Co.

Robinson JA 1903. St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians .A Revised Text and Translation Exposition and Notes. London: Macmillan and Co.

Lightfoot JB 1898. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations. London: Macmillan and Co.

Lightfoot JB 1897. Saint Paul's Epistle to the Colossians and to Philemon. A Revised Text with Introduction, Notes, and Dissertations. London: Macmillan and Co.

Findlay GG 1898. The Epistles of the Thessalonians. With introductions, notes and maps. Cambridge: At the University Press.

Bernhard JH 1906. The Pastoral Epistles. With introductions and notes. Cambridge: At the University Press.

Westcott BF 1892. The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Greek Texts with Notes and Essays. London: Macmillan and Co.

Mayor JB 1892. The Epistle to St James: The Greek Texts with Introduction Notes and Comments. London: Macmillan and Co.

Hort FJA 1898. The First Epistle to Peter. 1:1-2:17: The Greek Texts with Introductory lecture, Commentary and additional Notes. London: Macmillan and Co.

Mayor JB 1907. The Epistle of St Jude and the Second Epistle of St Peter: The Greek Texts with Introduction Notes and Comments. London: Macmillan and Co.

Westcott BF 1886. The Epistles of St John: The Greek Texts with Notes and Essays. London: Macmillan and Co.

Swete HB 1911. The Apocalypse of St John. The Greek Texts with Introduction Notes and Indices (3rd edition). London: Macmillan and Co.

12.2.2.3. New Testament Series

There are a few classic series on the Greek text of the New Testament that are worth consulting. These include:

Meyer HAW 1884. Critical Exegetical Handbook New Testament. 11 volumes. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.

Nicoll WR (editor) 1902. The Expositor's Greek Testament. 5 Volumes. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company.

12.2.2.4. International Critical Commentary (ICC)

American and British scholars contributed to what was to become the standard academic commentary. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is the best of past critical scholarship. With a few exceptions the commentaries take a liberal approach to the text of scripture. They are included here because of the philological notes on the original language text. It is important to use them in conjunction with a modern Evangelical commentary.

Briggs CA, Driver, SR and Plummer (editors) 1896. The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Edinburgh: T & T Clark. The DVD contains the following volumes:

Skinner J 1910. Genesis

Murphy JG 1866. Exodus

Gray GB 1903. Numbers

Driver SR 1896. Deuteronomy

Moore GF 1895. Judges

Smith HP 1899. Samuel

Montgomery JA 1951. Kings
Curtis EL 1910. Chronicles
Batten LW 1913. Ezra and Nehemiah
Paton LB 1908. Esther
Driver SR and Gray GB 1921. Job
Briggs CA 1906. Psalms
Toy CH 1908. Proverbs
Barton GA 1908. Ecclesiastes
Gray GB 1912. Isaiah
Montgomery JA 1927. Daniel
Harper WR 1905. Amos and Hosea
Smith JMP 1911. Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel
Mitchell HGT, Smith JMP and Bewer J 1912. Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi and Jonah
Allen WC 1907. Matthew
Gould EP 1912. Mark
Plummer A 1920. Luke
Gloag PJ 1870. Acts of the Apostles
Sanday W and Headlam AC 1904. Romans
Robertson A and Plummer A 1911. First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians
Plummer A 1915. Second Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians
Burton EDW 1920. Galatians
Abbott TK 1897. Ephesians and Colossians
Vincent MR 1902. Philippians and Philemon
Frame JE 1912. The Thessalonians
Lock W 1924. The Pastoral Epistles
Moffatt J 1924. Hebrews
Ropes JH 1916. James
Bigg C 1901. Peter and Jude
Brooke AE 1912. The Johannine Epistles

Charles RH 1920. The Revelation of St. John

Commercial resources

12.3. Commercial resources

The resources discussed in the previous section were free, and most of them old. They have to be supplemented by modern resources, with up-to-date scholarship. In this section works are introduced that are user-friendly and helpful for pastors.

Beginners courses in biblical languages

A good starting point for further study is a course in the biblical languages. If you are a college or seminary student, you should seriously consider doing a Hebrew and a Greek course that discuss the morphology and syntax of the languages in detail. For independent students, the following programmes that are based on an interactive CD are recommended:

- Hebrew Tutor: Learn Biblical Hebrew with Your Own Personal Interactive Tutor [CD-ROM]. Nebraska: Quick Verse.
- Greek Tutor: Learn Biblical Greek with Your Own Personal Interactive Tutor with Flash Cards [CD-ROM]. Nebraska: Quick Verse.

The following courses are full beginners' Hebrew and Greek courses:

Mounce WD 2009. Basics of Biblical Greek: Grammar (3rd edition). Grand Rapids: Zondervan. There are additional resources available to the beginner student, including a workbook and a series of audiotapes.

Pratico GD and Van Pelt MV 2001. Basics of Biblical Hebrew. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. There are additional resources available to the beginner student, including a workbook and a series of audiotapes.

There is an introductory Aramaic course available free online. If you complete Biblical Hebrew, you might be able to do this course on your own.

Reymond ED Introductory Lessons in Aramaic
(<http://www.introlessonsinaramaic.com/>("http://www.introlessonsinaramaic.com/"))

References

Besides these beginners' grammars, you will need some advanced references, such as dictionaries, lexicons and advanced grammars.

Van der Merwe CHJ, Naudé JA and Kroeze JH 2002. A Biblical Hebrew Reference Grammar. Edinburgh: T & T Clark.

Chisholm RB Jr 1998. From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew. Grand Rapids: Baker Books House.

VanGemeren WA (ed.) 1997. New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis. 5 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Wallace DB 1996. Greek grammar beyond the basics: an exegetical syntax of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

Black DA 1998. It's Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

Brown C (ed.) 1975. The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology. 4 Volumes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Commentaries

There are commentaries based on the biblical languages available for different audiences. Some of them are geared towards the scholar. Others are for a pastoral audience. I take it for granted that the students of this course are more interested in the commentaries for pastoral purposes. The following commentary series, which is still in progress, is worth considering.

- Hubbert RL (General Editor). New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

- Fee G (General Editor). New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

These two series are the best of evangelical scholarship. A New Testament series that is worth having and is of high evangelical academic scholarship is:

- Yarbrough R and Stein RH (eds.). Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.

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