



The Wartburg Project

February News

2015

We continue to make good progress with the translation process and editing process.

Progress on the Translation Front

Key:
Bold = completed initial draft
Blue = recently completed
*Asterisk = assigned or in progress
<i>Red Italic</i> = not yet assigned
✓ = reviewed by 3 technical reviewers

OLD TESTAMENT

Pentateuch	Historical I	Historical II	Poetical	Major Prophets	Minor Prophets
<i>Genesis</i> Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	Joshua * Judges * Ruth <i>1 Samuel</i> <i>2 Samuel</i> * 1 Kings (ch 6-7) * 2 Kings <i>1 Chronicles</i> (ch 1-9, 23-26) <i>2 Chronicles</i> (ch 3-4)	Ezra Nehemiah * Esther	<i>Job</i> Psalms Proverbs * Ecclesiastes ✓ Song of Songs	Isaiah 1-12 * Isaiah 13-39 Isaiah 40-66 * Jeremiah <i>Lamentations</i> Ezekiel Daniel	* Hosea * Joel * Amos Obadiah * Jonah * Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai * Zechariah Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Gospels – Acts	Epistles I	Epistles II & Prophetic
✓ Matthew	Romans	Hebrews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mark ✓ Luke ✓ John Acts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Passion History 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * 1 Corinthians 2 Corinthians ✓ Galatians Ephesians ✓ Philippians Colossians 1 Thessalonians 2 Thessalonians 1 Timothy 2 Timothy Titus ✓ Philemon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ James 1 Peter 2 Peter ✓ 1 John ✓ 2 John ✓ 3 John Jude Revelation
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Completed Initial Drafts are in various phases of review and editing. The Wartburg Project process is rigorous and will take time. Some books are being carefully checked by “technical reviewers.” Other books are being read by “popular reviewers.” After all of this input, we seek to produce the most accurate and clear translation we can.

Progress on the Publication Front

As a result of the progress made on the New Testament, the Wartburg Project was able to make available a downloadable *Passion History* to pastors for use during the upcoming Lenten season. *Northwestern Publishing House* agreed to distribute the *Passion History* and to date, over 1,000 copies have been downloaded. Each congregation is given the right to make copies for their own worship services. See the copyright page for more information.

While there is much work to be done, we hope to introduce a New Testament and Psalms promotional paperback edition tied to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Fall 2017. Lord willing, a complete Bible will be introduced at a future date not many years after that.

We have received offers from publishers to be our exclusive publisher. We may be able to make an announcement about this fairly soon.

Progress on the Administrative Front

We have set up a Financial Office in Midland, MI, with well-qualified officers. We have set up an Administrative Board to deal with publication arrangements. We will introduce them and other new-comers to the project in an updated “Meet the Brothers” in March. There is much happening behind the scenes on the “business” and “legal” fronts.

Pastor Keller is taking a sabbatical for 30 days this May/June to work full time on editing the New Testament translation. Prof. Brug is retiring this summer. In retirement, he will be able to spend more time on the translation project. If sufficient funding comes in through donations, the translation work will not take as long to complete since we will be able to fund more sabbaticals.

We appreciate all the support, encouragement, and prayers. We thank God for his blessing and ask for his help. If this translation turns out to be a blessing for many, may God alone have all glory and praise!

Here are two articles that give some insight into issues that arise in translation and editing.

Something Old, Something New, Something Borrowed, Something Blue

Something old...

We are making use of something old: “**Only-begotten**” (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9). The reason is not that we are convinced by etymology that this is the only option. And we are not criticizing other translations that don’t use “only-begotten.” We just find this to be a very good translation in some cases.

The Greek term μονογενής (*monogenes*) essentially means “only” in the sense of “unique” or “one of a kind.” In context, there can be different aspects of what makes the referent unique. For example, in John 3:16, what makes Jesus unique? It seems that the uniqueness is in his being God’s only-begotten Son. No one else is God’s only-begotten Son. That is only true of Jesus.

Consider Hebrews 1:5: “For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son. Today I have begotten you?”¹_{WP} The eternal begetting of the Son makes Jesus unique.

God’s Word to the Nations (GWN) consistently used “only” for μονογενής (*monogenes*) in the text of the translation. GWN also offered a very balanced presentation of μονογενής (*monogenes*) in Appendix 6 in the back of the book. This presentation concluded that “in John’s Gospel where it is used of Jesus... it could mean ‘the only-existing’ (‘the only-one-there-is’ or ‘one-of-a-kind’), or... it could have the special meaning of ‘only-begotten.’”²

Kittel’s massive *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* states: “In Jn. μονογενής denotes the origin of Jesus. He is μονογενής as the only-begotten... μονογενής probably includes also begetting by God.”³ Other translations use “only-begotten” as well, including KJV, NKJV, and NASB. So, we are not really breaking any new ground here. We are making use of something old.

Yet, μονογενής (*monogenes*) does not always mean “only-begotten.” Context reveals what is unique. There are slightly different nuances in different contexts. Many Bible readers have become accustomed to “one and only” as the regular translation. But that doesn’t necessarily fit the best for every context either. Consider, for example, Hebrews 11:17-18. The context is Isaac’s relation to Abraham. Was Isaac really Abraham’s “one and only” or “only-begotten” son? Since Ishmael was already born, that was not really the case. But if we keep in mind that the term carries a meaning related to uniqueness, then we could suggest that Isaac was a “**unique son**” to Abraham. We have this translation in blue for now (more about that later in this newsletter). Hebrews 11:18 explains what made Isaac unique. Perhaps someone has a better suggestion, but at this point “unique” seems preferable to “only-begotten” or “one and only” in this case.

Was Judas carrying a money bag or a money box? (Jn 12:6; 13:29) This is certainly not the most important question someone might ask, but it seems likely that it was a “**money box**.” The term used in John 12:6 and 13:29 for the money container is: γλωσσόκομον (*glossokomon*). Köstenberger explains in his commentary on John (Baker, 2004) that this “originally denoted any kind of box used to

¹ Psalm 2:7 (WP) – “I will proclaim the decree of the LORD. He said to me: ‘You are my Son. Today I have begotten you.’”

² Biblion Publishing, ©1988, pp. 542-544.

³ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol 4, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, p. 741 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

hold the reeds of musical instruments. Later, the term was employed for a coffer into which money is cast (2 Chron. 24:8,10). In the present instance, therefore, the object in question is perhaps not a ‘bag’ (TNIV), but a box made of wood or some other rigid material.”

Something new...

Some of our translation work is breaking new ground in the sense that we are offering translations that haven’t been offered before (or very seldom). For example, we are very aware that our translation “**Amen**” in some cases will be new to many people. Usually, we say this word at the end of a prayer. Sometimes church members joke that “Amen” means that the sermon is done. But Jesus used this Hebrew word at the beginning of a statement, which was quite unique. The inspired Evangelists simply transliterated the Hebrew word that Jesus spoke, instead of using a Greek term. In other words, the inspired writers used “Amen” instead of the Greek equivalent of “Truly” in these cases. The Wartburg Project translation aims to do the exact same thing in English. We are familiar with the word “Amen” at the end of prayers. This use is new to most of us. The basic meaning is essentially: “I solemnly tell you the truth.”

We received many compliments and encouraging words for our translation in Matthew 28:19: “Gather disciples.” We realize this is something new, but we think it fits well.

In John chapter 21, there are two Greek terms for “love” used in the conversation between Jesus and Peter. *Agapao* and *phileo* can sometimes be interchangeable synonyms, but here there seems to be a contrast of some sort. We are experimenting with the use of “care about” and “love” to distinguish these two for the English reader. In the past, most English readers had no clue that there were different terms for love being used in the original language.

Something borrowed...

In some cases, we admit that we are retaining what is familiar in the tradition of English Bible translation. Yes, we are actually trying to offer very familiar translations in some key passages. Here are just a few examples that will likely seem familiar to most of our readers:

- **John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”
- **John 14:6** Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.”
- **Mark 10:45** “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
- **Mark 16:15-16** He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
¹⁶Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Something blue...

This might sound a little silly, but this part of the old English rhyme provides an opportunity to offer a glimpse into our process of producing a translation. One of the advantages of using computers is that we can insert colors very easily. If we have a question about a word or phrase, we tend to **turn those words red**. This draws the attention of the reviewers and editors. If one of our reviewers or editors has a

preference between two options, we may **turn those words blue**. For example, in the example of Hebrews 11:17 mentioned above, a reviewer might do something like this: **unique/only**... This simply means that in the choice between these two translations, this particular individual prefers “unique.” It could also mean that a majority of the reviewers prefer that translation. Yet, the option of using “only” has not quite been ruled out yet. Something “blue” refers to a preference.

There are other colors and ways of indicating preferences, but this was just one little glimpse into our work. We’ve made tremendous progress, but we are not finished yet. Thanks for your prayers and support!

BK

Issues in Exodus

We have drafts from Exodus through Joshua and the tech reviews are largely completed, so we are near to putting together an editorial board to sync the translations of these books and to make decisions on debatable issues. Here are some issues that have emerged from the tech reviews of Exodus that reach across the other books as well. Do you have any input on these topics?

- Does the priest wear *garments* or *vestments*? The Hebrew word is more generic than the English term *vestments* but should we go with the specialized word?
- Can God and his works still be *awesome*? Some think the term has become too trite; others do not.
- What is the past tense of *plead*? It is now *pleaded* except as a technical term in court where it is *pled* or *plead*.
- Did Aaron make *a god* or *gods* for Israel? The forms are plural but only one idol was made, and it was intended to represent the LORD. Did Israel ask for gods, but Aaron was trying to put a better spin on it?
- We generally use modern measurements but in some special cases like *omer* which refers both to a measurement and to a type of vessel and the measurement is explained by comparison with other ancient terms, it may be necessary to make an exception and retain the ancient term.
- Since the term “seed” is an important term in Messianic prophecy and “seed” conveys a specific image, should it be retained in passages about descent in the line of the promise, or is “offspring” adequate?
- *Ebed* means servant. In some contexts it refers specifically to high officials. In the stories of the plagues are Pharaoh’s *servants* his high officials or his whole household? Unless the context indicates a limited application, we will stay with “servants.”
- We use *basin* for the large bronze sea and *bowls* for the smaller vessels.
- A lot of variety is being used instead of “behold” for attention-getting terms like *hineh*.
- Use *wave offering* for *nuf*. Include the concept of elevating or lifting up with *terumah*, but in some cases in which the manner of offering is not the issue *special offering* may be appropriate.
- Conflated translations may be appropriate. If a Hebrew term can mean either a lamb or a kid may be offered, include both. The same is true if the term includes both cow and bull. “Gird up your hips” may include both “tuck your robe in your belt” and “to be ready for travel.”
- In the headgear of the priest *tzitz* is *plate*. Is *mitznephet* crown, emblem, diadem, or crest?
- Is *isheh* an offering by fire or a food offering? I had always resisted the idea of a food offering as leaning toward the pagan concept of feeding a god, but passages suggests that food offering may be the correct understanding (not meant literally of course) and we should adjust Exodus Leviticus Numbers accordingly.
- The choice between *vessels*, *utensils*, *equipment* depends on whether things like tongs, shovels, etc. are included in a given repertoire. The table seems to have vessels and accessories; the lamp has

vessels and utensils; the altar has vessels and utensils, the tent has equipment and furnishings. The same Hebrew word can include all of these nuances.

- *Dung* is *manure* outside or inside the animal. *Offal* refers to bowels and their contents, to the inedible, waste parts of the butchered animal, to the “inedible” parts when used as food (tripe), and to “ripening meat.”

These are the kinds of issues that arise constantly in translation. JB