TRANSLATION Matters

DEC 2021/JAN 2022



Photo: Robert Couse-Baker

Let there be LIGHT...

We are in the season that celebrates light shining in the darkness. For Christians, Advent marks the birth of Jesus. "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overpowered it." (John 1:5-6).

For Jews, Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights or Dedication, commemorates the reclaiming and rededication of the temple. Did you know Jesus celebrated Hanukkah?

Is Jesus the Messiah?

This was the question posed by Jewish leaders when they confronted Him at the temple. We read in John 10:22-24: "Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

150 years earlier, Antiochus, the Hellenistic Syrian king, had desecrated the temple. When the Maccabees miraculously reclaimed the temple, they cleansed it and restored all the artifacts including the 7-branched menorah. Though they had oil for only one day, they decided to light the candles. A miracle took place and the oil lasted eight days until new oil arrived. Hanukkah is celebrated for 8 days, and 8 candles are lit from a central candle called the shamash or servant candle. It is usually raised above the others and from it all other candles are given light. Jesus called Himself the Light of the world, recalling the prophet Isaiah: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth." (Isaiah 49:6).

On the day to celebrate the restored temple, Jesus claimed, "I and the Father are one. (John 10:30)." The Jews would try to kill Him. "Destroy this temple," Jesus had said, "And I will raise it up in three days." (John 2:19). This would happen later at the cross, but even though He was crucified, the darkness could not overcome Him, and He rose to life.

The resurrected Jesus has appointed us to be the light of the world. He has filled us with the oil of His Spirit. In this season, let's shine His light into the darkness, so all nations will come to His light.

Season's greetings

Alan Webster

In this edition, we will look at the Bible's source languages of Hebrew and Greek and the importance of staying true to the original script.

Hebrew



Interesting facts about the Old Testament or Tanakh

The Hebrew Bible is made up of 3 sections: the Torah (books of Moses), Nevi'im (prophets) and Ketuvim (writings), which form the acronym Tanakh.

The Old Testament comprises 39 books, 929 chapters, 23,214 verses, 593,493 words.

There are 27 known authors of the Old Testament, written over 1000 years.

The shortest book is Obadiah and the longest is Psalms.

The Tanakh is written mainly in Hebrew, but also contains Aramaic.

The earliest manuscripts date back to the 1st century BC, known as the Dead Sea Scrolls, and were discovered in 1947 by a Bedouin shepherd.

The Hebrew word for light is 'ohr' and forms the base of the word Torah and menorah.

It will take you about 52 hours to read through the Old Testament.

The role and importance of an exegete in Bible translation

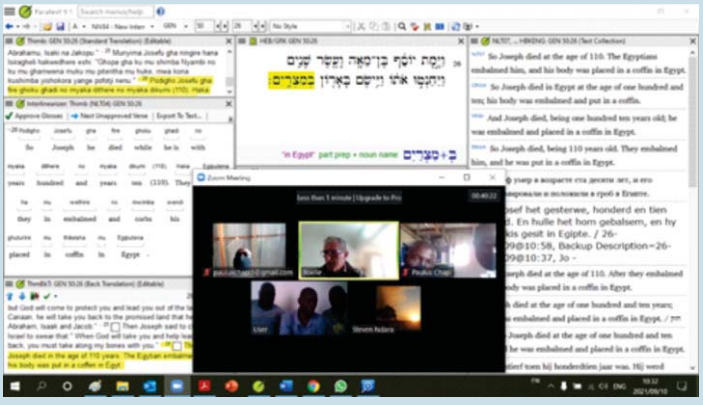
by Roelie van der Spuy

An exegete is a person checking a Bible translation against the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

They are the first line of responsibility to assure that the translated text is as close to the original as possible. They work in partnership with a translation consultant who does the final checking before signing it off as ready for publication.

Some exegetes come equipped with two years of Hebrew and Greek, as well as Linguistic studies. In some instances, pastors and teachers are well-suited to the task because of their formal Biblical and Theological training. The exegete helps the translation team to develop key terms that translate well into the target language, and guides them in being true to the original background and intent of the Scripture portions.

Essential to an effective exegete is their sense of being called to



this work, because it can take years to master.

No translation can bring out all the beauty of the original. For instance, the whole book of Lamentations is written in various forms of acrostic patterns, which can only be appreciated in the original.

Greek

Αα	Ββ	Γγ	Δδ	Εε	Ζζ	Ηη	Θθ	Ιι	Κκ	Λλ	Μμ
Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Delta	Epsilon	Zeta	Eta	Theta	Iota	Kappa	Lambda	Mu
Νν	Ξξ	Οο	Ππ	Ρρ	Σσς	Ττ	Υυ	Φφ	Χχ	Ψψ	Ωω
Nu	Xi	Omicron	Pi	Rho	Sigma	Tau	Upsilon	Phi	Chi	Psi	Omega

Interesting facts about the New Testament

The New Testament is made up of 3 sections: the Gospels, the Epistles (letters) and Revelation.
The New Testament comprises 27 books, 260 chapters, 7,956 verses, 138,020 words.
There are 9 known authors of the New Testament, written within 60 years of the resurrection of Jesus..
The shortest book is 3 John and the longest is the Gospel of Luke.
The language of the New Testament was Koine (common) Greek.
The earliest manuscript of a New Testament text is a fragment from the Gospel of John, which may be as early as the first half of the 2nd century.
The Greek word for light is 'phos' and appears 70 times in the New Testament, 23 times in John.
It will take you about 18 hours to read through the New Testament.

Angela Taylor, of Wycliffe South Africa and SIL International, is producing a wonderful resource to learn biblical Greek.



Alpha with Angela' is a free biblical Greek course on YouTube, recently launched as a sister channel to 'Aleph with Beth', a free biblical Hebrew course. The goal is to make biblical Greek learning free and readily accessible to Bible translators around the world, many of whom have little or no access to the original languages. This course will also benefit the Global Church (pastors, teachers, students) interested in learning biblical Greek. The lessons are designed to be fun and engaging.

Biblical (Koine) Greek, a no-longer spoken language, is taught as a living language. Students are immersed in biblical Greek right from the beginning, since only Greek is used for instruction. The oral, interactive method used in these lessons is a natural and effective way of learning. The beauty of this method is that students don't have to understand English, which makes the lessons accessible to people from any language background. And no textbook is necessary - students can learn at their own pace, and enjoy it!

In addition to the YouTube lessons, there are plans to provide other resources on the website, www.freegreek.online, such as grammar notes and quizzes that accompany these lessons.

The lessons are published on a Creative Commons license so that translators or instructors in remote areas can easily download and distribute them.

Alpha with Angela:
www.youtube.com/channel/UCe0ilqwSO8XVnCw4m3UYC1Q

Himba Celebration

When the son of the main Himba translator stood in front of the congregation and flawlessly told the story of David and Goliath in Himba, we felt like the Israelite army as we cheered the accomplishment. On 30 September 2021, as guests of the Opuwo Pastors Forum in Namibia, three members of Wycliffe South Africa joined the speeches, songs, dances and prayers to dedicate the oral translation of Genesis and Romans. Fifty MP3 players - containing all of the Himba Bible recorded so far – were distributed to leaders who would spread the Word in their community.







The project has now transitioned to phase 3, effective 1 October 2021. The goals for this new phase are to complete oral translations of Acts, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Hebrews by September 2024.

Farewell to Jennie Tsekwa



Jennie Tsekwa has officially served with Wycliffe South Africa since 2017, but has been involved in a volunteer capacity since 2015. She initially joined as an HR consultant, and went on to serve on the leadership team in the role of Head of Personnel and Organisational Development. Jennie has also been involved in a range of strategic projects that cut across various domains in Wycliffe, including ongoing support and involvement in the Partner Development and Communications domain. Jennie will be concluding her current role in Wycliffe South Africa at the end of December and plans to continue to be part of the Bible Translation movement in various other ways, as well as getting more involved in coaching work, diversity & inclusion facilitation, and writing projects.

Wishing all our Wycliffe supporters and friends a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!



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