August 2022

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150 MISTRANSLATIONS IN THE BIBLE PART 5

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#91 = LUKE 1:3

THE VERSE:

It seemed good to me also, **having had perfect understanding** of all things **from the very first**, to write unto you in order, most excellent Theophilus, (Luke 1:3)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

This translation implies that God actually gave Luke “perfect” understanding from the very beginning. But that is not at all what Luke said. We are dealing with two mistranslations in this verse.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

The first mistranslation concerns the expression “**having had perfect understanding**”. This is the translation for the two Greek words (though in the Greek text these two words are not presented next to each other) “**akribos parekoloutheko**ti”.

1) The Greek adverb “akribos” means “**diligently**”, rather than “perfect”.

2) And the Greek verb “parakoloutheo” means “to follow after, **to trace out**, to search out”. This Greek verb applies to “understanding” in the sense that this understanding has been searched out by examining the facts. It does **not** refer to understanding that has **been given to us**. Rather, it implies that we have put out effort to arrive at this understanding.

Some of the translations that capture the correct meaning of these two Greek words in this verse include the following translations:

1) 1865 Anderson New Testament = ... having obtained exact information ...

2) 1890 Darby Bible = ... accurately acquainted with ...

3) 1901 ASV = ... having traced the course of ...

4) English Majority Text Version = ... having followed up accurately ...

5) 1881 English Revised Version = ... having traced the course accurately ...

6) 1902 Godbey NT = ... having followed carefully ...

7) 1869 Noyes Translation = ... having accurately traced up ...

8) 1568 Bishops Bible = ... as soon as I had searched out diligently ...

9) NRSV = ... after investigating everything carefully ...

10) 1912 Weymouth NT = ... after careful investigation of the facts ...

The point here is this:

It is clear that Luke was not claiming “perfect understanding”. What Luke tells us is that **he himself made a very focused effort** to search out the facts, and to then arrive at a good understanding of what had taken place during Jesus Christ’s ministry. And because he believed that he had in that way come to a good understanding, therefore he decided to write another gospel account of Christ’s ministry.

At no point, neither in this verse, nor in any other verse, does Luke claim any divine inspiration for himself. Luke does not say that God stirred him up to write another gospel. He states quite clearly that **it was his own idea** (“it seemed good to me ...”) to write this gospel.

Luke himself was not a minister, let alone an apostle, and Luke had not personally witnessed any part of Jesus Christ’s ministry. Luke’s understanding was based entirely on what he had been told by other people, some of whom had been eyewitnesses of Christ’s ministry. But all of the things Luke has written in his gospel account are secondhand information, rather than Luke himself being personally acquainted with any of the events he has recorded.

The second mistranslation in this verse concerns the expression “**from the very first**”. This is supposed to be a translation of the one Greek word “**anothen**”.

This Greek adverb “anothen” means “**from above**”. It doesn’t really mean “from the very first”. It doesn’t have anything to do with time. The focus of this word is not time; in this verse the focus is **origin**.

When Luke says that he made a diligent effort to search out all the facts “from above”, he is saying that he approached his research into exactly what had happened during Christ’s ministry **from a godly perspective**. That is what “from above” refers to. It is God who is “above”.

That perspective helped Luke to reject gossip and speculations and exaggerations. At Luke’s time there

were all kinds of stories circulating about Christ's ministry (see Luke 1:1), and this perspective enabled Luke to separate the wheat from the chaff, to separate fact from fiction.

Luke was not referring to any timing, as in "from the very first". Luke didn't come into God's Church until about two decades after Christ's ministry. He was a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul, and Luke no doubt met some of the original apostles when he went to Jerusalem with Paul.

The only two translations I have found which translate "anothen" correctly are:

1) English Majority Text Version = ... from above ...

2) 1795 Haweis NT = ... from above ...

The point is that the thought of "from the beginning" made more sense to the translators themselves, and so they simply assigned the meaning "from the very first" to this Greek word "anothen". However, they in fact knew that they weren't being totally honest in doing so.

How do I know that? Here is the answer.

The expression "**from the very first**" is obviously just another way of saying "**from the beginning**". So why didn't they just say what they really meant? Why didn't they just say "from the beginning"? Why couch their real intended meaning in the expression "from the very first", when the Greek text doesn't contain any words for "first" or "very first"?

They couldn't do that because **the previous verse, Luke 1:2, already contains the expression "from the beginning"**. And there it is a correct translation of the Greek words "**ap arches**". The Greek preposition "apo" means "from". And the Greek noun "arche" means "beginning".

So while in verse 3 the translators really meant "from the beginning", they couldn't say that, because the previous verse shows us that Greek for "from the beginning" is "ap arches". Therefore they simply created the synonymous expression "from the very first". That is in spite of the fact that in the Greek text there is no word for "first". There is only the adverb "anothen".

Now if in Luke 1:3 Luke himself really meant to say "from the beginning" or "from the very first", then Luke would simply have repeated the expression "ap arches", which he had used in the previous verse. There was no problem in Luke using the same expression in successive statements. But in verse 3 Luke didn't mean to say "from the beginning". Luke meant to tell us **how** he went about getting his information for this gospel. He approached this task from a godly perspective, an attitude of diligently rejecting all false information. Luke worked very conscientiously.

The majority of translators didn't understand what Luke was really saying, and so they read their own interpretations into Luke's statement. This is not a major problem, but it does show what translators

sometimes do when they don't understand what they are trying to translate.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

It seemed good to me also, **after investigating everything carefully from above**, to write unto you in order, most excellent Theophilus, (Luke 1:3)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

Because many people had taken it upon themselves to try to write accounts of Jesus Christ's ministry, therefore Luke decided to thoroughly research everything he could find out about Christ's ministry. In so doing he evaluated everything from a godly perspective, in order to eliminate things that were clearly not correct.

To write things "in order" means that Luke attempted to present a chronologically accurate account. And in that regard he was mostly correct. Luke was quite familiar with **what** Jesus Christ had said and done.

But in places he presents correct statements from Jesus Christ in **a wrong time-context**. That is not really a significant problem, since we have the other three gospel accounts to establish a correct chronology for the things Jesus Christ said and did during His ministry. These minor matters I have explained at length in my 2007 article "Understanding the Gospel of Luke".

But Luke assuredly did not claim to have "perfect understanding". And neither did Luke claim to have such understanding "from the very first".

#92 = LUKE 11:50

THE VERSE:

That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed **from the foundation of the world**, may be required of this generation; (Luke 11:50)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

We are here dealing with a mistranslation in the expression "the foundation of the world". This expression is explained in great detail in my 2011 12-page article titled "**What Does The Foundation Of The World Really Mean?**". Please see that article for the details.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed **from the throwing down of human society**, may be required of this generation; (Luke 11:50)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

I suspect that Luke himself, whose background did not include a familiarity with Israel's history as a part of his own national heritage, did not understand the actual time referenced by the expression "the throwing down of human society" (the correct meaning of the Greek expression mistranslated as "the foundation of the world"). "The throwing down of human society" always refers very specifically to **the time of the flood**, when God very forcefully killed all but eight human beings. That was a very powerful "throwing down".

So Luke himself erroneously assumed that this Greek expression "kataboles kosmou" refers to the time of Adam, which it does not. Here is **the proof** for this misunderstanding on Luke's part. We need to compare what Jesus Christ actually said, as recorded by the eyewitness Matthew, with what Luke claims that Jesus Christ said.

The eyewitness Matthew records:

That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, **from the blood of righteous Abel** unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom you slew between the temple and the altar. (Matthew 23:35)

Nothing before or after verse 35 says anything at all about "the foundation of the world". At that occasion Jesus Christ simply did not use the expression "kataboles kosmou".

Now here is how, based on second-hand accounts, Luke records this same event:

That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed **from the foundation of the world**, may be required of this generation; **From the blood of Abel** unto the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. (Luke 11:50-51)

Luke has erroneously added the expression "from the throwing down of human society" to the words of Jesus Christ. That was an unintended mistake on Luke's part. The eyewitness Matthew did not record that expression because Jesus Christ didn't say those words.

Now the reason why Luke here included this expression "the throwing down of human society" is because in his own mind Luke equated the throwing down of human society with the time of Adam. That was a lack of understanding on Luke's part. But that lack of understanding caused Luke to include this expression "the throwing down of human society" into this specific context here.

So in summary:

First of all, we have a mistranslation of the actual Greek text with the expression "from the foundation of the world". And secondly, those specific Greek words shouldn't really have been included by Luke in this specific verse. They were only erroneously included in this verse because Luke didn't

understand **the correct application** for this specific Greek expression.

#93 = LUKE 12:42

THE VERSE:

And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise **steward**, whom *his* lord shall make ruler over His household, to give *them their* portion of **meat** in due season?

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

This verse contains a mistranslation.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

This verse is the parallel statement to Matthew 24:45. See that section for a detailed discussion regarding the content of this verse.

Some additional comments on Luke's version of this statement by Jesus Christ.

1) Luke clearly presents this statement in a completely different context from Matthew's account. Matthew presents this within the context of the Olivet prophecy. Luke, on the other hand, presents this statement more than 8 chapters before Luke presents the Olivet prophecy (in Luke 21).

2) Where Matthew records Jesus Christ as speaking about a faithful and wise "**servant**" (Greek "doulos" meaning "slave"), Luke has Jesus Christ speaking about a faithful and wise "**steward**" (Greek "oikonomos", the Greek word for a manager of a household). This tells me that Luke didn't grasp the significance of Jesus Christ's use of the word "therapeia" in this context, and that Luke therefore used the word "oikonomos" instead of the word "doulos".

3) Where the Greek word translated as "meat" in Matthew 24:45 is "trophe", a general term for food or nourishment, the Greek word in Luke's account is "sitometrion", which literally means "a measured amount of corn". This word refers specifically to the responsibilities of a steward. Luke's choice of this word was no doubt influenced by his perception that this is speaking about an "oikonomos" rather than just a "doulos".

I suspect that these slight changes in focus in Luke's account, when compared to the record preserved by Matthew, are due to Luke having had to rely on secondhand accounts for his information. That is also indicated by Luke placing this statement into a completely wrong time context.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

And the Lord said, Who then is a faithful and wise steward, whom his lord **has appointed over His service**, to give them their portion of grain in due season?

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

See the comments in the section devoted to Matthew 24:45. The above text reflects a translation of the words Luke actually used, rather than the words Luke **should have** used.

#94 = LUKE 17:21

THE VERSE:

Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is **within you**.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

This translation is used to imply that the kingdom of God is something that is in the hearts of people. That is completely wrong!

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

The Greek words here translated as “within you” are “**entos humon**”. The marginal reading renders this more appropriately as “**among you**”.

The Greek preposition “entos” means: inside, within, among, in the midst. The Greek pronoun “humon” is the genitive plural, meaning “of you”. So the expression “entos humon” means “in the midst of you”. This could mean either “inside of you” or it could mean “among you”. But it must be plural “you”.

A clear understanding about every other statement regarding the kingdom of God in the New Testament is essential in establishing the intended meaning in this verse here.

We might keep in mind that at no stage of His ministry did Jesus Christ ever speak to people in the Greek language. His whole ministry was conducted in the Aramaic language, with occasional quotations from the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. So the things Jesus Christ said in Aramaic have been recorded for us in Greek.

You might also examine my article on “The Gospel of Luke”, in which I have compared 77 passages in Luke’s Gospel with the corresponding passages in the other gospel accounts. Besides Luke not having witnessed any part of Christ’s ministry personally, Luke also repeatedly displays a less accurate understanding of the details pertaining to the events and conversations he has recorded in his gospel account. The 77 examples in my article clearly demonstrate that Luke repeatedly introduces minor details that are at odds with the other accounts provided by the eyewitness authors.

I mention these things here because, while the Greek expression “entos humon” can convey the idea of “among you”, it would have been clearer if Luke had used the expression “mesos humon”, which expresses “among you” in a less ambiguous way. For example, in John 1:26 John the Baptist is recorded as saying “there stands one **among you** (“mesos humon”) whom you know not”.

While I have no way of knowing this for sure, I suspect that the Aramaic expression John the Baptist used in John 1:26 and the Aramaic expression Jesus Christ is recorded by Luke to have said in Luke 17:21 were the same.

So where the Apostle John recorded John the Baptist’s statement in Greek as “mesos humon”, Luke recorded Jesus Christ’s statement in Greek as “entos humon”. Luke could have chosen the Greek adjective “mesos” instead of the Greek preposition “entos” to translate Christ’s Aramaic words less ambiguously into Greek.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is **among you**.

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

Jesus Christ is the King in the kingdom of God. When Jesus Christ is present somewhere, then the kingdom of God is also present. Since Jesus Christ was standing there in person before them, therefore the kingdom of God was also represented right there before them.

A careful comparison of the verses before and after Luke 17:21 shows that Luke is recording events that Matthew has recorded in Matthew chapter 24. Now the context of Matthew 24 is that Jesus Christ has repeatedly castigated the Pharisees as “hypocrites” (all of Matthew 23). Previously, in Matthew 12:38 - 45, Christ referred to the Pharisees as “an evil and adulterous generation”. When the Pharisees again tried to provoke Christ in Matthew 16:1 - 4, Christ again called them “hypocrites” and “wicked” and “an adulterous generation”. And in Matthew 21:31 Jesus Christ told the chief priests and elders that “the publicans and the harlots **go into** the kingdom of God before you”.

So an examination of all of Jesus Christ’s dealings with the Pharisees makes clear that the meaning of Luke 17:21 cannot possibly be that the kingdom of God was “within” those Pharisees, because such a statement contradicts every other reference Jesus Christ made to and about the Pharisees.

Furthermore, the kingdom of God is not something that is “within” anybody! The kingdom of God has a King (Jesus Christ), and a territory (initially it will be this planet earth, to later be extended to the whole new universe), and a constitution (the laws of God), and subjects (all those who will eventually comprise the Family of God). The only thing regarding this kingdom that will be “within” anyone will be **the constitution** of that kingdom. Every member of God’s Family will have internalized the laws of God to the point where those laws will perfectly reflect the mind of every member of God’s Family.

#95 = LUKE 23:43

THE VERSE:

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto you, **today you shall be with Me in paradise**.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

The implication is that Jesus Christ and the thief went to paradise that same day. This is false.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

In the Greek manuscripts all the words on one line were originally written together without any spaces between words. Also, there obviously was no space for any punctuation. These factors made reading difficult, and frequently a text could be ambiguous.

There is no mistranslation here. Rather, the **uninspired punctuation** that was provided much later has the same effect as a mistranslation. The punctuation achieves a completely unintended meaning.

In the previous verse the thief had referred to **the future**, by saying: “Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom”. The thief was looking for future favor from Jesus Christ. It is in this response to the thief looking to the future that Jesus Christ replied: “I can tell you right now, today, that, **when that time comes**, you will be with Me in the presence of God the Father in the New Jerusalem (which is what “paradise” refers to)”.

Jesus Christ’s own testimony slightly more than three days after this conversation makes clear that Christ Himself had not yet been to “paradise”; He had not yet been in the presence of God the Father. In John 20:17 Christ told Mary: “I am **not yet** ascended to My Father”. So Jesus Christ Himself did not go to “paradise” the day He died on the stake, and therefore neither did the thief.

The problem with this verse is not the translation, but the uninspired and wrong punctuation that was provided by translators and editors.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

And Jesus said unto him, Verily **today I say unto you** that you shall be with Me in paradise.

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

In response to the thief’s good attitude Jesus Christ was encouraging him by saying: I can tell you today, right now, that one day you will be with Me in God’s kingdom. Christ was referring to the thief coming up in the second resurrection for the opportunity to be in the Kingdom of God.

#96 = LUKE 24:1

THE VERSE:

Now **upon the first *day* of the week**, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. (Luke 24:1)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

The implication here is correct. The women did indeed go to the sepulcher early Sunday morning, shortly before sunrise.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

There is a mistranslation, which luckily comes up with the correct answer.

The Greek text “**mia ton sabbaton**” is again the **genitive plural**, which we also saw in Mark 16:2. It is not singular. Thus it cannot mean either “of the Sabbath” or “of the week”. It can only mean either “**of the Sabbaths**” or “**of the weeks**”.

The context again makes clear that here it cannot mean “of the Sabbaths”. Therefore the correct meaning **here** in Luke 24:1 is “**of the weeks**”. And again there is **no word for “day”** in the Greek text. And the expression “of the weeks” is in reference to counting the seven weeks to Pentecost.

As already mentioned in the section with Mark 16:2, "the first of the weeks" had started after sunset on Saturday evening. And "very early in the morning" indicates that this was Sunday morning around sunrise.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

Now **upon the first of the weeks**, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain *others* with them. (Luke 24:1)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

In practice this amounts to being "very early in the morning on the first day of the week". This amounts to being the same point in time as is identified in our KJV translation.

In this case a wrong translation has luckily produced a correct result, as far as the time when they went to the sepulcher is concerned. I have discussed this verse only because we have already seen the same discussion with Mark 16:2.

#97 = JOHN 1:1-2

THE VERSES:

In **the** beginning was the Word, and **the Word was with God**, and **the Word was God**. The same was in **the** beginning with God. (John 1:1-2)

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

There are three problems with this translation.

First, there is a Greek word in the text that has not been translated into English. Second, the word order in one phrase has been reversed, taking away from the clarity of the Greek expression. Third, the definite article “the” in the expression “the beginning” is not present in the Greek text.

1) In our English text “and the Word was with God” is a translation of the Greek expression” kai ho logos en pros **ton theon**”. The direct article “ton” has not been translated into English. A correct translation of this Greek expression is “and the Word was with **the God**”.

This is a very emphatic way of spelling out that there were **two Gods** in the beginning. John 1:14 identifies “the Word” as Jesus Christ. So the Greek expression here tells us that in “the” beginning “**the Word** was with **the God**”, meaning that in “the” beginning Jesus Christ was with God the Father.

2) In our English text “and the Word was God” is a translation of the Greek expression “**kai theos en ho logos**”. Here the word for “God” does not have the definite article. So here it is speaking about “a God”. And the Greek word order really means “**and a God was the Word**”. This is a very emphatic way of saying that Jesus Christ has **always** been “a God”, from “the” beginning.

So in these two expressions in verse 1 the Apostle John has identified God the Father as “**the God**”, and he has identified Jesus Christ, the Word as “**a God**”.

The correct translation of these two expressions in verse 1 makes very clear that Jesus Christ has always been God. And this is stated very emphatically. It refutes the claim made by Unitarians that Jesus Christ was supposedly created by God the Father.

3) The Greek text does not have the definite article for the expression “in the beginning”. This expression in both verse 1 and verse 2 is a translation of the Greek expression “en arche”. And this Greek text means “**in a beginning**”.

Now the Apostle John was clearly trying to refer to a time **before** the creation of man, and **before** the creation of this universe, and **before** the creation of all the angels. John was referring to a time when only God the Father and Jesus Christ existed, and nobody else, and when this present universe had not yet been created. That is what John is speaking about.

Question:

So why did John not say “in the beginning”? Why did he say “in a beginning”?

Answer:

Because for God there has never been such a thing as “the beginning”!

That is why Jesus Christ identified Himself to Moses as “**I AM THAT I AM**” (Exodus 3:14), the One who has always existed. And that is why the Apostle Paul identified Jesus Christ with “having **neither beginning of days nor end of life**” (Hebrews 7:3).

“The beginning” is when something starts. But with God the Father and Jesus Christ there is no start; there is no beginning.

That’s why Genesis 1:1 likewise only speaks about “a beginning”.

This present universe had a beginning, when it was created. And all the angels had a beginning, when they were created. And for all the created God Beings, who will make up the entire Family of God in the new heaven and the new earth, there will have been a beginning.

But for God Beings who have always existed there is no such thing as “the beginning”.

“**The beginning**” would imply that God the Father and Jesus Christ at some point had come into existence. And for Them to have come into existence at some point would in turn require someone to have created Them. And that process would carry on endlessly ... that someone would have had to create those who came into existence at “**the** beginning”.

The most important and profound characteristic of God is that God has no beginning, that God has always existed. And when speaking about God the Father and Jesus Christ, the expression “**the beginning**” is not just unsuitable; it **is plain wrong**! There was no beginning for God.

The argument that Genesis 1:1 speaks about “a beginning”, but John 1:1 speaks about “the beginning” is **stupid**! There has never been such a thing as “the beginning” when we speak about God.

So why did John then even refer to “a beginning” in these two verses?

It was John’s intention **to identify the time** when the two God Beings started Their plan to create material matter, as well as create other spirit beings. So in the next verse John says:

All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made. (John 1:3)

That was “a beginning”. And it was before anyone or anything had been created by these two God Beings.

The point is this:

The correct expression “in a beginning” references a certain point in time in the very distant past. Now if, hypothetically speaking, John had written “in the beginning”, it would still reference the exact same point in time in the very distant past. Either way it would be a reference to when only God the Father and Jesus Christ existed, before They created all the angels, and before They created the universe.

And either way it is a statement that Jesus Christ has always been “a God”, and that He has always co-existed with God the Father. The difference between “a beginning” and “the beginning” does not in any way at all change or influence Jesus Christ’s status. It makes no difference to Jesus Christ’s immortal past existence as a God.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THESE VERSES:

In **a** beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with the God**, and **a God was the Word**. The same was in **a** beginning with God. (John 1:1-2)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THESE VERSES:

In these verses the Apostle John is stating very plainly that Jesus Christ is a God, and that He has always co-existed with God the Father.

#98 = JOHN 3:3 & 3:7

THE VERSES:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

Marvel not that I said unto you, you must be **born again**. (John 3:7)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

These verses, together with 1 Peter 1:23, are used to claim that the Bible teaches that we must be “born again”. But that is not correct.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

We are dealing with mistranslations in both of these verses.

These mistranslations are thoroughly explained in my 2013 30-page article “What The Bible Teaches About ‘Born Again’”. Please see that article for all the grammatical technicalities involved in this question.

Briefly:

The Greek expression for “born again” in John 3:3 is “gennethe anothen”, and in John 3:7 it is “gennethenai anothen”. The Greek verb “gennao” means both “to be born” and also “to be conceived / begotten”. And the Greek adverb “anothen” does not mean “again”. It means “above, upwards”. This is explained in the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, as well as in other reference works.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THESE VERSES:

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be **born from above**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)

Marvel not that I said unto you, you must be **born from above**. (John 3:7)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

To be “born from above” is not something that takes place during this physical life. “Born from above” is a reference to what takes place at the first resurrection, when 144,000 people will be resurrected (or changed, if they are alive at that point in time) as spirit beings into the Family of God.

“Born from above” refers to the transition from physical life to spirit life. Any individual who is still a mortal physical human being has not been “born from above”, and most certainly not (falsely translated) “born again”.

See the “Born Again” article for all the details.

#99 = JOHN 5:18

THE VERSE:

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because **He not only had broken the Sabbath**, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (John 5:18)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

The implication here is that Jesus Christ sometimes broke the Sabbath commandment. But that is totally wrong.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

We have a very serious mistranslation in this verse, which will require a detailed explanation.

First let's consider **the context** for this verse, and then we'll examine this verse itself more closely.

There was a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years (John 5:5). Jesus Christ saw this man on the Sabbath (John 5:9) lying on a thin mat, about the size of our typical 1-2 inch thick gym mats today, by a pool called Bethesda (John 5:2). Jesus Christ then said to this man "rise, take up your bed (i.e. this thin mat) and walk (i.e. go home)" (John 5:8).

That is all Jesus Christ did in this incident: speak one short sentence!

Apart from speaking one short sentence in about 5 seconds, Jesus Christ didn't do anything at all! The point is that here Jesus Christ didn't actually do any kind of work at all! No work of any kind was involved.

That is the first point to keep in mind here: that Jesus Christ Himself didn't actually do anything at all! So then the next point to consider is this: well, Jesus Christ Himself may not have done any work, but He instructed someone else to do some work. He instructed the man who had been paralyzed for 38 years to carry his bedroll on the Sabbath. So therefore Christ caused someone else to break the Sabbath.

That line of reasoning is also flawed.

For a start: on the Sabbath day the man was lying on a mat by the pool called Bethesda. **But he had not slept there for the night!** Some of his friends or relatives had carried him there earlier that Sabbath morning. They obviously had also carried his thin bedroll for him to lie on. The same would have been true for many of the other sick people lying there at that pool, that on the Sabbath morning friends had carried their mats for them.

But that wasn't something the Pharisees had ever taken exception with. So they didn't object to several people carrying this paralyzed man and his bedroll from the house where the man lived to the pool **every Sabbath morning**; but it was a huge problem for them for that paralyzed man to stand up and to then carry his own thin bedroll back to his house.

This was nothing other than **staggering hypocrisy** on the part of the Pharisees ... to approve of other people carrying that man and his bedroll Sabbath morning after Sabbath morning, but to rise up in self-righteous indignation when the man actually carried his own bedroll back home, because he had

been healed.

So we are dealing with blatant hypocrisy on the part of the Pharisees. So much for the context. Now let's examine verse 18.

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only **had broken** the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:18)

The expression "He not only **had broken** the Sabbath" represents the translation of the Greek words "ou monon **eluen** to sabbaton". The Greek verb "eluen", translated "had broken", is the imperfect active indicative third person singular of the Greek verb "**luo**". So the Apostle John used the Greek verb "luo" to describe what Jesus Christ had done here.

Now let's consider our English verb "to break". This verb "to break" implies an action that will cause something to be separated into two or more smaller parts. We can break a plate or a glass or a jar into two or more pieces. We can break up a monopoly into two or more smaller organizations. We can break a stick into two or more pieces. But we cannot really "break" the Sabbath into two or more pieces by our actions. Nothing we do can "break" that 24-hour Sabbath period into smaller pieces, right?

So when we in English use the expression "to break the Sabbath" we really mean "**to transgress the Sabbath**" or "**to violate the Sabbath**". But we are not "breaking" it into smaller pieces. You follow?

So the English translation "He had broken the Sabbath" really means "**He had transgressed** the Sabbath". That is the implication of our English language translation.

No, I am not trying to split hairs! The point is that while in English we can use the word "break" to also mean "to transgress", in New Testament Greek there were completely different words for "to break" and "to transgress", with no overlap in meaning between these words.

The **NT Greek words** which really refer to "**breaking**" something include the following:

- rhegnumi = to break (e.g. bottles) into pieces;

- katagnumi = to destroy by breaking;

- klao = to break bread into pieces;

- klasis = the noun for the action of breaking bread into pieces;

- klasma = another noun for breaking into fragments;

- thlao = to crush;

- sunthlao = to crush into pieces together; etc.

The point is this: It would not have been appropriate to use any of these verbs for “breaking” the Sabbath, because they all imply a literal breaking of something. In New Testament Greek nobody would have spoken about “breaking” the Sabbath, even though we today freely use that expression in English.

Alright, so if we can’t use any of the Greek words that mean “to break” something, then let’s look at the Greek words that mean “to transgress”.

The **NT Greek words** which refer to “**transgressing**” include the following:

- parabaino = to step on something with disdain, i.e. to transgress;

- parabates = to transgress the law (e.g. Romans 2:27);

- parabasis = e.g. Adam’s transgression mentioned in Romans 5:14;

- parerchomai = transgressing in the sense of passing by, Luke 15:29;

- anomos = transgressor in the sense of being without law, Mark 15:28; etc.

The point for us with all these words here is this: In John 5:18 the Apostle John did not use any word that means “to transgress”!

So when the Apostle John used the Greek verb “luo” in John 5:18, then he was not using a verb that either refers to “breaking” anything, or a verb that refers to “transgressing” anything!

New Testament Greek had very distinct words for expressing both the idea of breaking and the idea of transgressing, and John didn’t use a word that conveys either of these two things.

Now let’s examine the NT Greek verb “luo”.

The regular verb “luo” means “**to loose**”! This Greek verb is used 43 times in the New Testament, and in six places in the KJV it is translated as “to break” or as “broken down”.

To make clear beyond any doubt that “luo” never has the meaning of “to transgress a law of God”, we’ll look at how this word “luo” is used throughout the New Testament.

1) It is used to refer to **an animal being released** (i.e. “loosed”) in: Matthew 21:2; Mark 11:2; Mark 11:4-5; Luke 13:15; Luke 19:30, 31, 33.

2) It is used to refer to **a shoe being “loosed”** in: Mark 1:7; Luke 3:16; John 1:27; Acts 7:33; Acts 13:25.

3) It is used to refer to the **burial robes** around Lazarus **being untied** (i.e. “loosed”) in: John 11:44.

4) It is used to refer to **the tongue** of the dumb **being “loosed”** in: Mark 7:35.

5) It is used to refer to **a crippled woman being healed** by being freed (i.e. “loosed”) from Satan’s bond in: Luke 13:16.

6) It is used to refer to **being released from chains** or **from prison** in: Acts 22:30; Acts 24:26.

7) It is used to refer to a divorced person **being released** (i.e. “loosed”) **from** a commitment to **the former spouse** in: 1 Corinthians 7:27.

8) It is used to refer to the apostles having **authority to release** (i.e. “to loose”) **church members from unspecified obligations** or commitments in: Matthew 16:19; Matthew 18:18.

9) In regard to this last point, however, such “release from unspecified obligations” can never go against the Scriptures, because God has not given any church leaders authority to loose (i.e. “to break”) the Scriptures, as mentioned in: John 10:35. So **scriptural obligations cannot be loosed**.

10) It is used to refer to **Satan being released** (i.e. “loosed”) for a short period in: Revelation 20:3; Revelation 20:7.

11) It is used to refer to **the 7 seals** of the book **being opened** (i.e. “loosed”) in: Revelation 5:2; Revelation 5:5.

12) It is used to refer to **the 4 angels being released** (i.e. “loosed”) to gather a huge army in: Revelation 9:14-15.

13) It is used to refer to **a religious congregation** after services **departing** (i.e. “broken up”) **in different directions** to their respective homes in: Acts 13:43.

14) It is used to refer to **the back part of a ship** that had run aground in a storm **being “loosed from”** (i.e. “broken off”) **the front part** of the ship in: Acts 27:41.

15) Peter used the verb “luo” three times in the sense of **solid matter “being loosed”** and thus “melting” or “dissolving” in: 2 Peter 3:10-12.

[COMMENT: In 2 Peter 3:10 the verb “shall melt” is the Greek verb “luo”, meaning to be loosed from its

former state; whereas the verb “shall melt” in 2 Peter 3:12 is the Greek verb “teko”, which means “to make or to become a liquid”. “Teko” is in fact the correct word for “to melt”. So it wasn’t really a good idea for the translators two verses earlier to also translate the verb “luo” as “to melt”. “To melt” conveys basically the correct picture for verse 10, but it is in fact not an accurate translation of the actual Greek word “luo”. The expression “shall be dissolved” in verses 11 and 12 are the other two places where “luo” is used by Peter.]

All the above uses of the word “luo” show us quite clearly that this word doesn’t ever have anything to do with violating or transgressing (i.e. “breaking”) the laws of God. It very clearly has to do with “making loose” some state or condition .

We’ve thus far looked at three of the places where in the KJV “luo” is translated as “breaking” (Acts 13:43; Acts 27:41; John 10:35). Let’s now look at the other places where “luo” is rendered as “to break”.

Here are the remaining three verses that are involved:

Whosoever therefore **shall break** (luo) one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:19)

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only **had broken** (luo) the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. (John 5:18)

If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses **should** not **be broken** (luo); are you angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day? (John 7:23)

Ignoring John 5:18 for the moment, let’s ask a basic question regarding people “breaking” God’s laws:

What is actually involved in these cases? Is it that someone tries to smash God’s laws into tiny little pieces? Do the false teachers just try to shatter God’s laws into numerous fragments? Just what is their approach towards trying to lead us in God’s Church astray?

Here is the point:

The false teachers that are easy to identify are those who blatantly, bluntly and contemptuously try to destroy the validity of God’s laws. Those who openly and with arrogant disdain “break” the laws of God are hardly likely to deceive us. We easily recognize their open hostility to the laws of God (see Romans 8:7). And they are not really a major threat to our understanding of the truth of God.

The real danger for God’s people are not those who flagrantly “break” the laws of God. No, **the real**

danger for God's people are those false teachers who "loose" the laws of God, meaning that they claim that they are not really doing away with God's laws; they are simply "loosening" some of the restraints that applied to Israel in Old Testament times. To promise liberty (see 2 Peter 2:19) from God's requirements is their way of "loosening" God's requirements for us human beings.

So in Matthew 5:19 Jesus Christ was speaking about people who would "loosen the requirements of God's laws", thereby disregarding God's actual instructions embodied in those laws. Can we understand why Jesus Christ used a word that means "to loose" in this statement?

Now let's look at John 7:23.

Christ referred to the fact that the Jews would circumcise a baby boy on the Sabbath, if the Sabbath happened to be the baby's eighth day of life. The Jews did this to comply with "the law of Moses". To have postponed the circumcision to the Sunday (i.e. to the ninth day) in order to keep the Sabbath free of such "work activities" would have amounted to "a loosening" of a part of the law of Moses (i.e. circumcision), something which the Pharisees strongly opposed. So in John 7:23 Jesus Christ was saying:

"If a man on the Sabbath day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses **should not be loosed**; are you angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?"

So in both of these places where "luo" has been translated as "to break" (i.e. Matthew 5:19 and John 7:23) the correct meaning really refers to **"a loosening" of instructions**: in Matthew 5:19 to any attempt to loosen God's instructions, and in John 7:23 to an attempt to avoid any loosening of the instructions of the law of Moses.

Now we are ready to examine John 5:18.

A correct translation of this verse reads as follows:

Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only **had loosened** (luo) the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

The first point to understand here is **the perspective of this specific verse**. Many people, including the translators, assume that this statement represents the views of the Jews. But that is not correct.

This statement does not express the feelings of the Jews! Very few people understand this.

We need to understand that in John 5:18 **the Apostle John was stating his own assessment** of what was bugging the religious leaders amongst the Jews! This verse gives us John's assessment, not theirs!

The Jewish leaders would most emphatically never have said that Jesus Christ had "loosed" ("luo") the Sabbath!

No, in their eyes Jesus Christ had "transgressed" ("parabaino") the Sabbath! And there is a huge difference between "luo" and "parabaino"!

Look at Matthew 15.

Why do Your disciples **transgress** ("**parabaino**") the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do you also **transgress** ("**parabaino**") the commandment of God by your tradition? (Matthew 15:2-3)

Here the scribes and Pharisees were speaking to Jesus Christ about mere non-biblical traditions. And the word "luo" is not used in this context; here they used the word "parabaino", because they viewed all non-compliance with their rules as "transgressions".

So if the Apostle John in John 5:18 had wanted to convey the assessment of the religious Jews, then John would have used the word "parabaino" and not the word "luo". The word "luo" would never have been sufficient to convey the feelings and the attitude of the Pharisees. For them Jesus Christ's actions were nothing short of "parabaino", transgression of the law. But "luo" correctly described **John's own assessment** of what Christ had done.

John understood that with His statement "rise, take up your bed and walk" **Jesus Christ had loosed the pharisaical restrictions** regarding Sabbath-keeping. And that is what John refers to in verse 18. So in verse 18 John basically said that Christ had not only loosed the pharisaical Sabbath restrictions, but He also said that God was His Father.

Keep in mind that in John 5:18 the Jews had **an attitude of murder**; they wanted to kill Jesus Christ. And "luo" is not strong enough to cause people to want to murder someone. Those who wanted to murder Jesus Christ were convinced that Christ was guilty of "parabaino"!

So we need to realize that John 5:18 gives us John's own assessment for why the religious leaders were upset.

But even more so, this verse gives us John's own understanding of what Jesus Christ had actually done! John understood that **Jesus Christ had in fact "loosened" the perverse and utterly hypocritical pharisaical rules for the Sabbath**!

Those pharisaical Sabbath rules are depraved and perverse because they in fact **destroy God's intent for the Sabbath day**! They are an enormous burden! And they are hypocritical because the Pharisees had worked out ways so that they themselves could get around the restrictions they were in fact imposing on other people.

It was really a case of people enacting laws (or rules) and then promptly **granting themselves exemptions** from the very laws they were imposing on other people, very much like what many politicians today have done with the severe covid-19 rules they imposed on the general population, while exempting themselves from those rules.

John's understanding, revealed in John 5:18, was that Jesus Christ had "loosed" all of the rules the Pharisees had invented, including their rules for Sabbath-keeping. John's understanding was that Jesus Christ's statement in Matthew 23:4 also applied to the perverse Sabbath rules the Pharisees had invented.

For **they bind heavy burdens** and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. (Matthew 23:4)

Burdens need to be "loosed", not "broken"! And that's what Jesus Christ did.

John 5:18 refers to some of the burdens that Jesus Christ was "loosening", burdens that the Pharisees had imposed on the population at large. And that disregard for their Sabbath rules infuriated the Pharisees. (Comment: Can you think of any instances, when our politicians today have become infuriated, because people objected to the severe covid-19 restrictions those politicians had imposed on all the people but not on themselves?)

So when you understand what John was really saying in John 5:18, then you should be able to see **the devious perversity of the mistranslation** in our English versions of the Bible.

Instead of highlighting **the evil burdens** the Pharisees had heaped upon the Sabbath, which Jesus Christ had "loosed", the mistranslation implies that Jesus Christ had done something wrong, that He had "broken" the Sabbath.

That insinuation is perverse! At no point did Jesus Christ ever "break" or even "loosen" any of God's laws, the laws that Jesus Christ Himself had given to Israel in the days of Moses. Christ had simply loosened the equivalent of "covid-19 rules", which the Pharisees had invented.

#100 = JOHN 10:16

THE VERSE:

And **other sheep** I have, which are not of **this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be **one fold**, *and* one Shepherd. (John 10:16)

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

There is a subtle but serious mistranslation in this verse.

Our English translation of this verse has the word “**fold**” twice. But in the Greek text there are **two different words**. In plain terms, Jesus Christ did not use the word for “fold” twice. So **why** didn’t Jesus Christ use the same word twice? Christ used two different words because He was referring to two different things.

1) The Greek noun translated “fold” in the expression “this fold” is “**aule**”.

2) The Greek noun translated “fold” in the expression “one fold” is “**poimne**”.

The Greek noun “**aule**” refers to **an enclosed place** near the house, into which the sheep were herded at night. The correct translation for this Greek word is “**a fold**”.

The Greek noun “**poimne**” refers to **a group** of sheep, the sum total of individual animals in that group. The correct translation for this Greek word is “**a flock**”.

So “aule” refers to a place, a location. And “poimne” refers to a group of individuals, a flock. These two words “fold” and “flock” are not synonymous, and they are not interchangeable. They have completely different meanings.

So why did our translators translate both of these Greek words with the one English word “fold”?

That error is due to the fact that they looked to Jerome’s Latin Vulgate translation for understanding. In his Latin translation of this verse Jerome correctly translated the Greek word “aule” with “ovile” into Latin. Then Jerome **incorrectly** translated the Greek word “poimne” also with “ovile” into Latin.

The Latin word “ovile” means “a fold”. The Latin word for “a flock”, which word Jerome should have used but didn’t use, is “grex”. Jerome is the one who gave both Greek words in this verse the meaning “fold”.

All of the early English language translators were very familiar with the Latin Vulgate text. And they didn’t see much of a difference between “fold” and “flock”. And so instead of correctly translating from the Greek text, many English language translators have **simply copied Jerome’s error**, and that is why we have the word “fold” twice in this one verse.

So here is what Jesus Christ was saying in John 10:16, which happened to be on a Last Great Day:

1) By “**this fold**” Christ was referring to the present, i.e. to all those who will be in the first resurrection. That’s “the place” where this fold is found. The 144,000 in the first resurrection make up **that first fold**.

2) The “**other sheep**” which Jesus Christ has are at present not gathered into a specific “fold”. But they will in time comprise “**a second fold**”. These “other sheep” are all the people from the millennium, plus those from the second resurrection, who will eventually become a part of God’s Family. All of them together will be physically alive at the end of the 100-year period. And that is when they will make up “a second fold”.

3) And when all of those people are changed into spirit beings just before the lake of fire takes place, **then** they will be combined with the first fold to form “**one flock**”. That will be when all shall be “one group”.

So the ultimate “one flock” refers to **the entire Family of God**, except for God the Father Himself and for Jesus Christ. God the Father is supreme. Under Him will be Jesus Christ. And under Jesus Christ will be “the one flock”, which has been built on the sacrifice which Jesus Christ brought for all His “sheep”, by giving His life for our sins.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

“And other sheep I have, which are not of **this fold**: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be **one flock**, *and* one Shepherd.” (John 10:16)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

Jesus Christ was here referring to two different things. With “this fold” Christ was referring to the people in the first resurrection. And with “one flock” Christ was referring to the complete Family of God, after the people from the millennium and from the second resurrection have been added to the Family of God.

Needless to say, none of the translators understood this correct meaning.

#101 = JOHN 10:17-18

THE VERSES:

Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might **take** (Greek “**lambano**”) it again. No man **takes** (Greek “**airo**”) it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have **power** (Greek “**exousia**”) to lay it down, and I have **power** (Greek “**exousia**”) **to take** (Greek “**lambano**”) it again. This commandment have I received of My Father. (John 10:17-18)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

What did Jesus Christ actually mean when He said: “I have **power to lay My life down**, and I have **power to take it again**”?

Once He had died on the stake, how could He possibly have had “the power” to get His life back? **The dead don’t actually have any power, do they?** Being dead and having power are contradictory states. Anyone who still has any kind of power cannot possibly be dead. Therefore how could Christ have had any power while He was dead? Did He resurrect Himself?

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

We are dealing with another mistranslation.

Verse 17 starts with the word “therefore”. This tells us that verses 17-18 are tied to the preceding verses. So we should view these verses in context.

In verse 14 Jesus Christ said “I am the good Shepherd”. In verse 15 He said that God the Father knows Him, and that He knows God the Father, implying a very, very close relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ. Then Jesus Christ said: “**I lay down My life for the sheep**”.

This statement about laying down His life represents the subject under discussion in verses 17-18.

Verse 16 addresses additional information which we have just examined in the previous section. It refers to people in the second resurrection ultimately being joined into “one flock” (the sheep analogy) with the rest of God’s Family. While verse 16 adds information to verse 14, it doesn’t change the subject away from verse 15; it doesn’t change the subject away from Christ laying down His life.

The thought presented in verse 15 is continued in verses 17-18.

In our English text we have the verb “**take**” **three times** in verses 17-18. But there are in fact **two** different Greek verbs in these two verses, as I have already indicated in the quoted text above, and these two Greek verbs have different meanings.

So we are dealing with one more mistranslation into English.

Let’s take a closer look at exactly what Jesus Christ actually said in these two verses, examining them phrase by phrase.

1) “I lay down my life, that I might **take** (Greek “**lambano**”) it again” (verse 17).

The Greek word here translated as “I might take” is “labo”, a form of “lambano”. The meaning of “lambano” is “**to receive**”, as well as “**to take**”. The difference between our English words “taking” and “receiving” is that in “receiving” somebody else is the active agent who gives to us what we are receiving, while in “taking” the focus is on our ability to take, whether or not someone else is willing to give. This distinction between “taking” and “receiving” does not exist in the Greek verb “lambano”

because this Greek verb covers both of these meanings.

So here is the correct thought Jesus Christ was conveying with this statement:

My Father loves Me because I lay down My life, so that **I might receive it again** (from My Father).

This is also a correct translation of the Greek text. And this is exactly what Jesus Christ was saying. He was willing to lay down His life, and He had absolute faith that God the Father would give His life back to Him, and He, Jesus Christ, would be the receiver of that benefit from God the Father.

Jesus Christ was not saying that He would "**take it**" again; He was saying that He would "receive it" again from the Father. In other words, the power to have His life restored lay completely with God the Father, and not at all in any way with Jesus Christ Himself while He was dead.

Let's continue.

2) "No man **takes** (Greek "**airo**") it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself" (verse 18).

The Greek word here translated as "takes" is "airei", a form of "airo". Now "airo" is a completely different word from "lambano". "**Airo**" means: **to take up**, to lift, to carry, to take away. This word is mostly used with its literal meaning. And "airo" doesn't mean "to receive".

So we should note that the writer, **the Apostle John, made a very clear distinction between** using the word "**lambano**" for what Christ said about Himself, **and** using the word "**airo**" for something that other people were simply not able to do to Jesus Christ: no human being was able "to take" Jesus Christ's life from Him.

This contrast should make clear that **in this particular context** John used the word "**airo**" to mean "**to take**" and the word "**lambano**" to mean "**to receive**". By using two different Greek verbs John was presenting a contrast between the activities represented by those two verbs.

Let's continue.

3) "I have **power** (Greek "**exousia**") to lay it down, and I have **power** (Greek "**exousia**") **to take** (Greek "**lambano**") it again" (verse 18).

Here we'll note two different Greek words. First, the Greek word translated as "to take" is "labein", a form of "lambano". This is the verb we have already seen and discussed.

Next, the Greek word translated as "power" is "exousian", a form of the noun "exousia".

The noun “exousia” means: power, authority, right, etc.

The correct meaning of Jesus Christ’s statement here is:

“I have the authority to lay down My own life, and I have the right to receive My life again”!

Jesus Christ committed Himself, of His own free will, to lay down His life to pay for our sins. And then Jesus Christ had **the right** to receive His life again from God the Father, because that was the agreement God the Father and Jesus Christ had made, that **if** Jesus Christ fulfilled His part of the agreement, **then** God the Father was committed to resurrecting Jesus Christ, giving Jesus Christ “the right” to receive His life again.

So note this distinction:

For us human beings eternal life is “**a gift**” from God (Romans 6:23). When we stay faithful to the calling God has set before us, and strive to live a godly life, then God resurrects us to immortal life as a free gift. In other words, no matter how faithfully we live before God, for us immortal life is never “a right”; for us it is always still “a gift”.

But for Jesus Christ being resurrected by God the Father was not a gift! Getting back His immortal life, after He had lived a perfect life and then died for our sins, was for Jesus Christ “**a right**”! Christ was entitled to receive immortal life again, because He had fulfilled His part of the agreement that He and God the Father had made. Jesus Christ had “the right” to receive His life again.

That is what Jesus Christ was saying in John 10:18.

And Jesus Christ was assuredly not saying that He Himself somehow had the power to resurrect Himself. He couldn’t possibly do that. Only God the Father could possibly resurrect Jesus Christ from the dead. This is further amplified in the following statement.

4) “This commandment have I received of My Father” (verse 18).

There are no Greek words we need to examine in this expression. This expression simply makes the point: I have the right to receive My life again because that is what My Father has committed Himself to doing ... giving Me back My life after I have fulfilled my responsibilities as Savior of mankind.

So in conclusion:

In these verses Jesus Christ was not implying any kind of power or authority for the period of time that

He was dead! He was simply stating He would receive His life back from God the Father. Specifically, it was not going to be the Roman power or even the Pharisees that would take Jesus Christ's life away. No, it was Jesus Christ Himself who was unconditionally committed to laying down His life for our sins. And the Romans were nothing more than the agents in that process.

Furthermore, the statement "this commandment have I received of My Father" is a clear submission by Jesus Christ to God the Father, acknowledging that the restoration of life to Jesus Christ would depend completely on God the Father. At no point did Jesus Christ so much as imply or hint that He might have the power to resurrect Himself.

#102 = JOHN 13:2

THE VERSE:

And supper **being ended**, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray Him;

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

This translation implies that the foot-washing took place after supper. But that is not true.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

It is well known that the Greek expression with the verb "genomenou" (a form of the verb "ginomai") used here should be translated as "and **during** supper".

For example:

ASV, NAS, RSV, WEB, and Darby translate this as "**during** supper". The NIV translates this as "the evening meal **was being served**". Rotherham translates this as "and supper **being in progress**". Young's Literal Translation renders this as "and supper **being come**".

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

"And **during** supper the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son*, to betray him;"

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

The foot-washing took place during the supper, **before** Judas left, and **before** Jesus Christ then instituted the new emblems of the bread and wine to represent His broken body and His shed blood.

#103 = JOHN 14:16; 14:26; 15:26; 16:7

THE VERSES:

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another **Comforter**, that it may abide with you for ever; (John 14:16)

But **the Comforter**, *which is* the holy spirit, which the Father will send in My name, it shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

But when **the Comforter** is come, which I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, it shall testify of Me: (John 15:26)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **the Comforter** will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send it unto you. (John 16:7)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THESE TRANSLATIONS:

The implication in these verses is that “Comforter” is **supposedly a name for the holy spirit**. But that is completely false. Jesus Christ did not ever call the holy spirit “the Comforter”. “Comforter” is a mistranslation of the Greek word that is involved.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THESE TRANSLATIONS:

The Greek word translated as “Comforter” in the above verses is “**parakletos**”. This Greek word is used exactly **five times** in the New Testament, in the above four verses plus in 1 John 2:1. Thus this word appears only in the writings of the Apostle John.

None of the other New Testament writers ever used this word in their writings. None of them ever associated the word “parakletos” with the holy spirit. They all died before John ever used the word “parakletos” in his writings.

Here is the one place we have not yet seen, where “parakletos” is also used by the Apostle John.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have **an advocate** (Greek “parakletos”) with the Father, **Jesus Christ** the righteous: (1 John 2:1)

Here the word “parakletos” is translated appropriately as “advocate”, and here John used this word in reference to Jesus Christ. So John used the Greek word “parakletos” five times:

- four times in reference to the holy spirit,

- one time in reference to Jesus Christ.

This Greek word is clearly not used only in connection with the holy spirit. The only New Testament writer who ever used the word “parakletos” to refer to the holy spirit, also used it to refer to Jesus Christ. So therefore “parakletos” cannot be a name for the holy spirit.

Now let’s examine this Greek word more closely.

The word “parakletos” is formed from the preposition “**para**” which means “besides, **by the side of**”, and the verb “**kaleo**” which means “**to call**”.

So the word “parakletos” literally means “to call to one’s side”. **The purpose** for calling someone or something “to one’s side” is to receive help with something. It refers to receiving help or assistance of some kind. And “advocate” is a reasonably good translation into English, though “helper” is also an equally good translation.

However, the word “parakletos” has nothing at all to do with “comforting”. No part of this word refers to feelings or to emotions. It is emotionally a totally neutral word. **“Calling” has nothing to do with feelings**.

But **“comforting” is a feeling**. And on this count “comforter” is also not an appropriate translation.

The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT) states the following under the entry for “parakletos”:

“The meaning ‘**comforter**’, although adopted in some renderings, **does not fit any of the passages** (i.e. in the NT).” (my emphasis)

In actual fact, the noun “parakletos” refers to someone or something “called to one’s side”, meaning “**called to give assistance**”.

The word was used in Greek society to refer to a legal assistant in court cases, like a lawyer who helps you fight your legal battles, and who sees to it that your legal rights are upheld. That’s a “parakletos”. But it has nothing to do with “comforting”. That is just one more blatant mistranslation.

A brief background to this mistranslation of “parakletos” as “comforter”:

Around 1380 A.D. John Wycliffe translated a Latin text of the New Testament into English. Wycliffe translated John 14:16 as follows:

“And Y schal preye the fadir, and he schal zyue to zou **another coumfortour**, the spirit of treuthe ...” (spelling as presented in the 1879 Clarendon Press, Oxford edition of the 1380 Wycliffe New Testament, revised by John Purvey in 1388, where “fadir” = father, “schal” = shall, “coumfortour” = comforter, “treuthe” = truth, “Y” = I, “zou” = thee, etc.)

Now the Latin Vulgate text, which Wycliffe used for most of his translation, has the Latin word “paracletus”, which means “advocate, defender”. This word was clearly derived from the Greek word “parakletos”. But there were also some alternate Latin versions in existence at Wycliffe’s time, which had a different and incorrect word instead of “paracletus”.

Erasmus produced his simultaneous Greek and Latin versions of the New Testament in 1522, roughly 140 years after John Wycliffe. In his Greek text for John 14:16 Erasmus uses the Greek word “parakletos”, but **in his Latin text** for this verse Erasmus uses the Latin word “**consolarorem**”, which means “**a comforter**” or “a consoler”.

It seems that Wycliffe must have had access to a Latin text which also used the Latin word “consolarorem”, rather than the Latin “paracletus” in John’s Gospel, and thus Wycliffe’s translation as “comforter”.

At any rate, after John Wycliffe in the 1380's had incorrectly used the word “comforter” for the Greek “parakletos” in the Gospel of John, **all subsequent early English translations followed Wycliffe’s wrong lead** and also mistranslated “parakletos” in John’s Gospel as “comforter”. So from Wycliffe, who was a firm believer in the trinity, the word “comforter” found its way into the Tyndale Translation, Coverdale, Geneva Bible, Bishops Bible, and the King James Version, etc. A few modern translations have corrected this by replacing “comforter” with more appropriate words like “advocate” or “helper”.

But “comforter” is clearly a mistranslation!

Getting back to our four Scriptures: Notice that Jesus Christ is quoted four times as using “parakletos” to refer to the holy spirit.

The mistranslation as “Comforter” in the Gospel of John is due to the religious bias of the translators, starting with Wycliffe, who assumed that the holy spirit is an individual, and as such is the third member of the “trinity”.

Now the Apostle John was undoubtedly aware of the meaning which “parakletos” had in the secular Greek society, referring to someone who came to your side to help you, an advocate. So John used the word “parakletos” to refer to “**a help or a power that comes to our side to help us**”. This left it open for John to further define that power, whether he was referring to the power of the holy spirit strengthening our minds, or whether he was speaking about the power of Jesus Christ strengthening our minds.

So the four verses where “parakletos” is translated as “comforter” would be better translated

something like this:

And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another **help by your side** (Greek “parakletos”), that it may abide with you for ever; (John 14:16)

But **the help by your side** (Greek “parakletos”), *which is* the holy spirit, which the Father will send in My name, it shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

But when **the help by your side** (Greek “parakletos”) is come, which I will send unto you from the Father, *even* **the spirit of truth**, which proceeds from the Father, it shall testify of Me: (John 15:26)

Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, **the help by your side** (Greek “parakletos”) will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send it unto you. (John 16:7)

As far as those original apostles were concerned: up to that point in time Jesus Christ Himself had been that “help by their sides”. So in the above verses Jesus Christ was saying that when He would leave them, that the holy spirit would do for them what until then Jesus Christ had done for them ... **provide help to understand the truth of God**.

As John then later explained in his first epistle:

My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have **a help on our side** (Greek “parakletos”) **with the Father**, Jesus Christ the righteous: (1 John 2:1)

(Comment: Here instead of translating this as “**by** our side” it is really more appropriate to translate this as “**on** our side”, since Jesus Christ is in fact already in heaven, and thus not really “by” our side. For all true Christians it is the holy spirit that is “by” our side.)

So Jesus Christ is with God the Father; but at the same time Christ is also “the help on our side”, by intervening on our behalf before God the Father. So we all really have two “helpers by or on our side”. Here on earth the holy spirit is that “advocate”. And in heaven before the throne of God the Father Jesus Christ is that “Advocate”.

The word “parakletos” is not a name! It is a term that describes **a function** someone or something will carry out, the function of being a helper. And that help has nothing to do with appealing to our emotions, like supposedly “comforting us”. The holy spirit opens our minds to spiritual understanding. “The spirit of truth” helps us to understand “the truth”.

It should be clear that “parakletos” was not in any way intended to be a name for either the holy spirit or for Jesus Christ. The holy spirit simply does not have a name, any more than water or electricity or magnetism each has a name.

#104 = JOHN 17:24

THE VERSE:

Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me **before the foundation of the world**. (John 17:24)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

We are here dealing with a mistranslation in the expression “the foundation of the world”. This expression is explained in great detail in my 2011 12-page article titled “**What Does The Foundation Of The World Really Mean?**”. Please see that article for the details.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me: for You loved Me **before the throwing down of human society**. (John 17:24)

#105 = JOHN 19:34

THE VERSE:

But one of the soldiers with a spear **pierced** His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

The previous verse states that Jesus Christ was already dead. And so this translation here implies that a soldier pierced His side after Christ had already died. But that is not correct.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

The verb here translated “pierced” is “enuxen”, the aorist active indicative of the verb “nusso”, meaning “to transfix, to pierce”.

In the indicative mood the aorist tense really refers to the past perfect in English grammatical terms. Thus here “enuxen” should be translated as “**had pierced**”.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

But one of the soldiers with a spear **had pierced** His side, and forthwith there **had come out** blood and water.

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

The Apostle John actually witnessed these events personally (verse 35). What had happened is that earlier one of the soldiers **had** pierced the side of Jesus Christ with a spear. When that happened, Jesus Christ cried out in agony and died (Matthew 27:50). That was soon after 3:00 p.m. Later, when the soldiers wanted to speed up the deaths of these three crucified men, they broke the legs of the two thieves (John 19:32). But by that time Jesus Christ had already died, and therefore they did not break His legs (verse 33).

Verse 34 is John's explanation for why the legs of Jesus Christ were not broken. The reason was something another soldier had already done earlier, i.e. stab Christ with a spear.

#106 = JOHN 20:22-23

THE VERSES:

And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, **Receive you** the holy spirit: **Whose soever sins you remit**, they are remitted unto them; *and* **whose soever *sins* you retain**, they are retained. (John 20:22-23)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

These two verses imply **three things**: that the apostles were going to receive the holy spirit right then, which was still before the time of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2; that the apostles would have the power to forgive sins; and that the apostles could refuse to forgive sins. All three of these implications are wrong.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

A Greek verb has been translated into English with the wrong tense.

The verb translated as "**receive you**" in verse 22 is "**labete**". This is the active voice, second aorist tense and imperative mood of the verb "lambano", which verb means "to receive, take, catch, have". The use of **the second aorist tense** here is the key.

Jesus Christ was **not** saying: "you shall receive **right now** the holy spirit"! Christ was emphasizing **what** was going to happen, **without** in this specific context actually stating **when** this would happen.

That is how the two aorist tenses function.

By looking elsewhere in the Bible we can know quite clearly **when** this event referred to here would happen, namely at Pentecost.

For example, in Acts 1:8, which was also after Jesus Christ's resurrection, Jesus Christ said the

following:

But **you shall receive** power, after that the holy spirit is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. (Acts 1:8)

The Greek verb here translated as “you shall receive” is “**lepsesthe**” in the Received Text, and this is the middle deponent voice (basically similar to the active voice for us in English), future tense and indicative mood of the verb “lambano”. So here Jesus Christ very clearly used **the future tense**.

While both John 20:22 and Acts 1:8 apply to a time after Christ’s resurrection and before the Day of Pentecost that year, the words in Acts 1:8 were spoken by Jesus Christ at some point in time **after** the events in John 20:22.

So in Acts 1:8 the giving of the holy spirit was still in the future. Therefore it was also still in the future at the earlier occasion in John 20:22. In simple terms: the second aorist tense in John 20:22 tells us **what** would happen; and the future tense in Acts 1:8 tells us **when** that would happen.

The translators didn’t understand this distinction, and so they translated the verb in the second aorist tense into English with the wrong tense.

While it was easy for the translators to translate the future tense correctly in Acts 1:8, they made a mistake in John 20:22 by translating the second aorist tense into English as the present tense. **That was a mistake!** Here the aorist tense verb (in John 20:22) should really also have been rendered into English with the future tense.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF VERSE 22:

And when He had said this, He breathed on *them*, and said to them, **you shall receive the holy spirit**.

Now let’s look at verse 23. This verse reads:

Whose soever sins **you remit**, they are remitted unto them; *and* whose soever *sins* **you retain**, they are retained. (John 20:23)

The Greek verb here translated as “you remit” is “**aphete**”, the second aorist tense, active voice and **subjunctive** mood of the verb “aphiemi”, which verb means “to leave, to forsake, to forgive”, etc.

The Greek verb here translated as “you retain” is “**kratete**”, the present tense, active voice and

subjunctive mood of the verb “krateo”, which verb means “to hold, take, lay hold on”, etc.

The key here is the use of the subjunctive mood with both these verbs.

This is an example where the majority of translators did not at all convey the meaning of the subjunctive mood in their translation, instead choosing to render both Greek subjunctive mood verbs as if they were used in the indicative mood.

The subjunctive mood in biblical Greek expresses **potential** and **possibility**, rather than something that is certain. The action described with the subjunctive mood **may or may not occur**, depending on circumstances.

There are some English translators who have made an effort to capture the sense of the subjunctive mood in this verse. So, for example, in Young’s Literal Translation John 20:23 is rendered as follows:

If of any you **may** loose the sins, they are loosed to them; **if** of any you **may** retain, they have been retained. (John 20:23, YLT)

Young’s translation has tried to capture this sense of possibility for the subjunctive mood, by use of the expression “**if** ... **may**” for both verbs.

And in Green’s Literal Translation John 20:23 is rendered as follows:

Of whomever you forgive the sins, they are forgiven to them. Or whomever you **may** retain, they are retained. (John 20:23, LIT)

While Green implies an unconditional statement in the first part of this verse, he has acknowledged the **conditional** aspect of the subjunctive mood in the second part of the verse by using the expression “you **may** retain”.

When we understand the subjunctive mood correctly, then we should understand that in these verses Jesus Christ was saying the following:

In John 20:22 Jesus Christ focused on **what** would happen to them in the near future. They would receive **power** in the form of the holy spirit.

This power would **enable them to do something** not possible without access to that power. This power would give them **the potential** to make possible the forgiveness of other people’s sins. Here is how this works.

1) When they would meet new people, the power of the holy spirit would enable them **to discern** who is truly repentant and who is not really repentant!

2) This ability to discern true repentance correctly would give them **the potential** to announce to **people whom they baptized** that their sins had indeed been forgiven **by God**. Such discernment also gives true ministers the potential to withhold such an announcement about forgiveness from people, where the true ministers **discern** that people are not really repentant, and therefore they do not baptize such unrepentant people.

Now people who do not have the holy spirit also **do not have the ability to discern true repentance**. Thus men who were mistakenly ordained into the ministry, but who themselves were still unrepentant, don't understand what real repentance is. They are then likely to baptize other people who are also still unrepentant. This has been a huge problem in God's Church over the past half century or so.

3) The use of the second **aorist tense** for the first statement in verse 23 (i.e. "you remit") also shows that Christ was emphasizing **what** the holy spirit would enable them to do, **without focusing on when** they would be able to do this.

Now here is the point:

The purpose for this "ability to forgive and to retain sins" was so that true ministers of God would be able **to correctly deal with people who came to them for baptism**!

That's all that John 20:23 is about!

And John 20:23 also applies to God's true ministers today. So today a minister will typically say to a repentant person, whom he has just baptized, words to this effect: "On the authority of Jesus Christ I can now tell you that all your past sins have been forgiven". This is **a direct application of John 20:23**.

Let's consider an example of using this discernment **to retain** a person's sins. This example is recorded in Acts chapter 8, where the Apostle Peter was speaking to Simon Magus. Peter said to Simon Magus:

Repent therefore of this your wickedness ... **for I perceive** that you are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity (Acts 8:22-23).

Yes, through the power of the holy spirit Peter could very clearly **perceive** that Simon Magus was unrepentant and even bitter, and that his heart was not right with God; **and therefore** "his sins would be retained", even though Simon Magus had managed to get himself baptized by a different minister.

John 20:22-23 is something Jesus Christ said to His disciples after His resurrection. The way John has

organized his gospel account, this is **one of the last instructions Jesus Christ gave to all of His disciples**, even though there is another whole chapter that discusses one specific event after this instruction (i.e. John 21).

This is really the parallel of Christ's last instruction to the group, as recorded in Matthew's account, where Matthew wrote:

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, **All power is given unto Me** in heaven and in earth. Go you therefore, and teach all nations all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the age. Amen. (Matthew 28:18-20)

[**Comment**: The correct text for Matthew 28:19-20 is thoroughly discussed in my 2015 article "Our Trinitarian Baptism Formula". The words "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe" should **not** be a part of these verses.]

Here in Matthew 28 Jesus Christ started out by referring to **the power** He had, and then He proceeded to give them a specific command. We have the same thing in John 20:22-23. They were going to receive some of this **power** in the near future, and then they were to make use of this power in fulfilling this command to go and teach all nations.

One of the consequences of such preaching would be that some will "believe" the truth. In this regard Mark recorded this incident as follows:

He that believes and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new languages. (Mark 16:16-17)

Those who believe God's truth need to be baptized. And when faced with requests for baptism from people who have heard the truth preached, then the holy spirit will enable God's ministers to discern **who** they should baptize (i.e. "whose sins they therefore should pronounce forgiven") and who they should **not** baptize (i.e. "whose sins they should retain"). Mark 16:16-17 is a clarification for John 20:23.

The use of the subjunctive mood in John 20:23 also makes **allowance for them to not be infallible** in this regard, but to on occasion make mistakes. Thus Philip made the mistake of baptizing the clearly unrepentant Simon Magus in Acts 8:13. And most of us ministers ever since then have likewise made "some mistakes" with unrepentant people whom we have baptized ... we have not always correctly discerned a lack of true repentance in such people.

John 20:23 should be seen as a companion verse to Mark 16:16-17, **to baptize repentant people**. John 20:23 is **not** some arbitrary conferral of authority to forgive or to retain sins in general.

It is a conferral of an ability that would enable them to correctly counsel people for baptism and to then **correctly discern** who should be baptized, and who should not be baptized.

The act of baptism is a clear statement that sins have been forgiven (see Acts 2:38); the withholding of baptism is **an equally clear statement that sins are still being "retained"**. And the holy spirit enables ministers to make the correct decisions in this regard.

So:

1) Jesus Christ was not saying that the disciples would receive the holy spirit right then in John 20:22. That is simply a wrong translation of the Greek text. The disciples only received the holy spirit on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, and a correct translation of the aorist tense verb in John 20:22 is in full agreement with this.

2) The statements about "remitting" or "retaining" sins are a reference to **authority to baptize repentant people**. It is not a matter of deciding whose sins to forgive and whose sins not to forgive. It is a matter of the holy spirit empowering those apostles **to discern** which people were truly repentant and who should therefore be baptized; and which people were not repentant and who therefore should not be baptized.

Sins being forgiven or not forgiven is **a consequence** to being repentant and then baptized, or unrepentant and then being refused baptism.

That is how the Apostle Peter understood this. And that is why Peter said: "repent and **be baptized** every one of you ... **for the remission of sins**" (Acts 2:38). This is a direct reference to "**whose soever sins you remit, they are remitted unto them**".

#107 = ACTS 15:19

THE VERSE:

Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: (Acts 15:19)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

People have drawn the conclusion from this verse that **the Apostle James was somehow in charge** at that conference in Jerusalem. But that is not correct.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

This wrong deduction is based on a mistranslation.

Regarding the expression “wherefore my sentence is”, in the Greek text there is no noun for “**my sentence**”. “A sentence” refers to a judgment formally announced by a judge or a court of law. “A sentence” **implies authority** over certain proceedings on the part of the person who passes that sentence.

But there is no word for “sentence” or for “judgment”. And so this verse is not speaking about a final judgment being passed.

The Greek text translated as “wherefore my sentence is” consists of the three words “**dio ego krino**”. This expression has the following meaning:

1) “**Dio**” is a conjunction that means: on account of which, wherefore, therefore.

2) “**Ego**” is the pronoun “I”. It is here used for emphasis.

3) “**Krino**” is a verb that means: to judge, to determine.

So instead of saying “wherefore my sentence is” the Apostle James actually said “**on account of** (the facts presented to us) **I judge**”.

But is there really a difference between these two ways of translating this Greek text? Aren’t we splitting hairs? Is there a difference between “my sentence is” and “I judge”?

Yes, there is a difference.

The difference is that James was not at all claiming to make the final judgment on the matter. James was simply presenting his own personal assessment of the matter being discussed.

James summarized what Peter and Paul and Barnabas had presented to the whole group. He concluded that it was all in harmony with what is written in the Old Testament. And therefore he stated what he believed should be done, i.e. he gave his own personal judgment (or assessment) of the matter.

It is not a matter of James somehow having been “in charge” and therefore having the last word, or that James was somehow “presiding” at this conference. In presenting his own personal judgment, James was endorsing what the other men had said before him. In fact, James is not mentioned until **he voices his support for Peter's explanation**, even as Paul and Barnabas had voiced their support for Peter’s explanation.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

Wherefore I judge that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: (Acts 15:19)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

James was certainly a significant leader in the early NT Church. But James wasn't necessarily "in charge" of the Jerusalem Church, where the Apostle Peter also happened to be residing at that time.

In this verse James was simply stating his own personal judgment of the matter. It was somewhat like James was "seconding" the information that Peter had presented, and which information Paul and Barnabas had also endorsed. The most significant part of that conference was the information Peter presented regarding his experience with Cornelius (back in Acts 10).

This specific verse does not have anything to do with any kind of "authority hierarchy" within the Church of God. And it is helpful to remove the words "my sentence is" from our translations of this verse.

#108 = ACTS 17:25

THE VERSE:

Neither **is worshiped** ("**therapeuetai**", a form of "therapeuo") with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things; (Acts 17:25)

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS TRANSLATION:

The implication here is that Paul is talking about "worshiping". But that is not correct. We are in fact dealing with a mistranslation.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THIS TRANSLATION:

The Greek verb here translated as "is worshiped" is "therapeuo". But that is not the Greek verb for "to worship". The Greek verb for "to worship" is "proskuneo", which is used 60 times in the New Testament, and it is always translated as "worship". It has no other meanings.

But that's not the word Paul used, because Paul was not talking about "worship". The word Paul used here is "therapeuo". Now "**therapeuo**" literally means "**to serve as an attendant**". In practice, in every other place where this word is used in the New Testament, "therapeuo" is used to refer to healing, which is one specific form of serving a person. So the word means "to serve", and by extension it is used to mean "to heal".

Now here in Acts 17:25 it very obviously cannot mean "to heal". The statement that "neither is God **healed** with men's hands" is absurd. The translators understood this, and they looked for something that made sense to them. So they chose "neither is worshiped with men's hands", a statement that nobody will argue against.

But instead of looking for something that made sense to them, they really should have just translated **the primary meaning** of the verb “therapeuo”, which is “to serve”.

Look, Paul is speaking about **how we use our hands**. Now our hands are not involved in worshiping, because worshiping is a process that is carried out with the mind. But serving always involves the use of our hands, because serving involves doing something.

A CORRECT TRANSLATION OF THIS VERSE:

Neither **is served** with men’s hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He gives to all life, and breath, and all things; (Acts 17:25)

THE CORRECT MEANING OF THIS VERSE:

This correction doesn’t change anything for Paul’s reasoning here in this verse. But the mistranslation does obscure the correct meaning for the verb “therapeuo”. And the correct meaning here has significant ramifications for the mistranslation in Revelation 22:2. See that section for further details.

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This concludes Part 5 in this series of 7 articles. Part 6 starts with mistranslations in the Book of Romans.

Frank W. Nelte