



Volume 13 Issue 38

September 30, 2018

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE

When the gospel of Jesus Christ was first being preached by the Apostles, God provided a way for all to hear and understand, even overcoming normal language barriers between different regions through the work of the Holy Spirit in the ability to speak in tongues.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language,” (Acts 2:4-6).

While the gift of tongues provided the ability for the presenter of the gospel to communicate God’s word understandably to individuals who spoke different languages, it was preserved in the written form entirely in the Greek language.

While this undoubtedly provided challenges for non-Greek speaking people to be able to read the gospel, much work has been done to again remove the language barriers by translating the written Word in other languages. While this certainly makes it much easier to read and understand the New Testament in our own English language rather than being forced to learn Greek before one could understand the gospel, we do need to keep in mind that translations of the New Testament from Greek into English (as well as all other languages) were not overseen by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and are solely the work of men. The only language truly overseen by the Holy Spirit (as far as the New Testament is concerned) was the Greek language as inspired men preserved God’s message in the

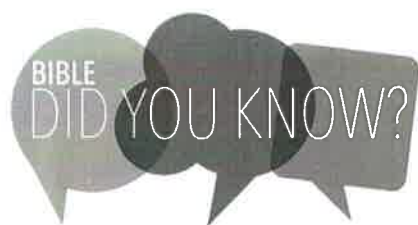
written form. *“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God,”* (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

While I put a great deal of trust in the accuracy of learned language scholars in the English translation of Scripture, significant differences between English and Greek make the necessity for valuable study tools such as Greek lexicons and dictionaries that much greater. One major difference to be noted is that the Greek language has many more words than the English language, often creating a great difficulty for translators to portray the exact meaning of certain Greek words in English (in English one would need to note the context the word “love” fell in to decipher whether it was describing a passionate or familial type of love, while the Greek has 4 different words for love, all specific in nature corresponding to a specific type of love...for example, the conversation between Jesus and Peter in Jn. 21:15-17 contains two different Greek words for love, each specific in meaning, while the English translation simply gives the same word

“love” each time). This creates another challenge, in that the limited number of English words available to precisely match up with the Greek can often lead to less than accurate renderings in meaning in the English text. This means that while translators have done their best to locate the most adequate English words to correspond with the Greek, the inability for certain English words to match up precisely with the exact meaning of the Greek can often lead to misunderstandings in the text when we rely *solely* on the English translation. One example is the passage we read in 1 Thessalonians 5:22: *“Abstain from all appearance of evil.”* Relying solely upon the English rendering we often come to the conclusion that this verse is teaching to abstain from items which may not be evil in themselves but could be misinterpreted as evil on the surface by their appearance. Upon the aid of study tools which allow us to see the original Greek and definition, we find the word translated *“appearance”* had the original literal meaning of form, shape, figure, sight rendering the passage to mean we must stay away from evil in all of its varied forms rather than things

which could be mistaken for evil (it becomes even clearer that this was the intended meaning of the verse by studying the use of the exact same Greek word translated “*appearance*” in other passages: “*and the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a Dove,*” Lk. 3:22... ”*And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form,*” Jn. 5:37). Another example is in the KJV rendering of 1 Thessalonians 4:15: “*For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.*” Our English word “*prevent*” is typically understood to mean to keep something from occurring or to put a stop to something, while the Greek word originally written had the specific definition of to come before or precede. Examples like these certainly make study tools such as Strong’s Concordance, Thayer’s Greek Lexicon, and Vines Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words much needed tools in the library of every Christian seeking to be guided by an accurate understanding of the Word of God (and if your

short on cash and have a computer, simply download the free bible computer software e-sword which will allow you to place your cursor over every word in the Bible and see the original written word and definition). – Daniel Ruegg



“Like snow in summer and like rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool. Like a sparrow in its flitting, like a swallow in its flying, so a curse without cause does not alight. A whip is for the horse, a bridle for the donkey, and a rod for the back of fools. Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will also be like him. Answer a fool as his folly deserves, that he not be wise in his own eyes. He cuts off his own feet and drinks violence who sends a message by the hand of a fool. Like the legs which are useless to the lame, so is a proverb in the mouth of fools.”

Proverbs 26:1-7

FIFTH SUNDAY PHOTOS

Every fifth Sunday of the month, we try to highlight some of great things happening around our congregation that were captured through photography. If you happen to get a good picture of one of those great things, please feel free to post it on our Facebook page, tag us on Instagram (@wellsburgchurch), tweet us at @wellsburgchurch, or e-mail us at minister@wellsburgchurchofchrist.com with a little description of what is happening in the picture.



Charena had a full class of great kids eager to learn lessons from the book of Daniel during our VBS!



The Brooke County Fair brought several new faces willing to test their bible knowledge at our booth. It was a great way to kick off our meeting with Johnie Edwards.



Nancy's house was packed full of loving brothers and sisters in Christ for an encouraging evening singing hymns to God! Praise the Lord for the great love He has filled us with that shines out for one another!



What a blessing that so many of the children were able to be at the sing at Nancy's! Like Jesus, Nancy loves the little children and is always so thankful when they come to visit!